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WORLDS OF THEIR OWN: SPACE-CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE WORKS OF WORDSWORTH, BYRON, SHELLEY, AND KEATS

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

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INTRODUCTION

Analyzing the effects of the "progress of experimental philosophy," the Romantic critic William Hazlitt has this to say: "There can never be another Jacob's dream. Since that time, the heavens have gone farther off, and grown averse to the imagination . . . ."¹ But in 1818, the date of Hazlitt's essay, there was much evidence to the contrary. While science had indeed altered man's concepts of the universe, it had not made the heavens alien territory to the Romantic imagination, for that imagination was inspired, albeit sometimes by fear, by the wonder, mystery, and infinitude of cosmic space. The Romantic imagination, at its most visionary, could be another Jacob's ladder, creating out of itself a world of its own, an infinite world it could inhabit and populate. No less important to the space-intoxicated Romantic imagination was earthly vastness; that imagination demanded the freedom of space, the power and sublimity inherent in size, and an outer vastness to complement the vastness of its conceptions—all qualities provided by the mountains, deserts, seas, and wildernesses which recur in Romantic poetry. But Romantic space—
consciousness is defined not only by the imagination's Faustian need for varieties of infinitudes, but also by the Faustian fear of limitation. If the "mind is its own place, and in itself / Can make a Heav'n of Hell, a Hell of Heav'n" (Paradise Lost I.254-55), as Satan claims, then the world of its own that the imagination creates could as easily be a fearful, imprisoning one as an unbounded, awe-inspiring world. The Romantic imagination, in its various forms, in fact, creates these dichotomous worlds. Therefore, polarities between vastness and constriction, infinity and imprisonment, spaciousness and enclosed space are important in the works of all the major Romantic poets. Although each poet is unique, the varying types of space-consciousness embodied in his work are an important means in understanding the psychology of the Romantic imagination as well as the thematic concerns of the individual poet.

The kinds of space-consciousness found in any writer's work result from a number of causes, many of which cannot be readily determined. The poet's perception of space significantly influences how he creates it in his works. But even his modes of perception are a blend of influences, both personal and cultural. For this reason, I have tried to determine at the outset what biographical and cultural circumstances seem to be important to the development of each
writer's space-consciousness. Because the perception of space is learned unconsciously and rooted in concrete experience, the personal habits and experiences of each writer are sometimes illuminating. The psychology of the writer's imagination determines both what spatial symbols and constructs recur and his broader attitudes towards space. Although the personal stimuli and individual eccentricities of the Romantic poets differ, some elements are common. For example, it has been essential to consider the effect that their contacts with nature, in its various aspects, had on the development of their perceptions of and attitudes towards space. Their travels—both what they saw and responded to and why they travelled—also played a role in the ways they understood and created space. In some cases, individual eccentricities proved to be significant; for example, Byron's sense of placelessness, Shelley's revolutionary ardor, Keats's illness and his habit of going into trances—all in indirect ways led to special attitudes toward space and the use of particular kinds of spatial symbols.

The intellectual and cultural milieu also affected the ways the Romantic poets perceived and created space. While they were subject, of course, to a great many influences, only a few of these seem to have direct bearing on their apprehension and awareness of space.
The picturesque tradition was especially important in determining the way space was viewed and the kinds of space which were appropriate to poetry; in varying degrees, the poetry of all the Romantics bears the stamp of this tradition, even though each poet transcended its limitations and transformed it. The sciences, too, especially astronomy and geology, contributed to the space-consciousness of these poets, with the exception of Keats. It is not surprising that science played such an important role, for the Romantic poets had active and curious minds; furthermore, in the latter part of the eighteenth century and the early part of the nineteenth century, "scientific discoveries," as Carl Grabo explains, "were not . . . so remote from ordinary experience as to be unintelligible to the layman. It was still the day of the gentleman amateur" and "science was the avocation of many."² Given this intellectual climate and the novelty and mystery associated with scientific discovery, it becomes clear that scientific truth could be assimilated by the Romantic poets and could serve as an important stimulus for the imagination. Both geology and astronomy have far-reaching implications for the development of their space-consciousness. While scientific influences were crucial in that development, literary, religious, and artistic influences seem less important in determining the ways the Romantic poets
understood and created space. In isolated cases, however, it has been necessary to consider non-scientific influences.

After examining various personal and cultural influences on each writer's space-consciousness, I have explored the ways each poet creates a sense of space. In all cases the visual apprehension and creation of space was dominant. This emphasis has been characteristic of civilized western man since about the time of the Renaissance; pictorial visual space was further emphasized by Newton, especially through the Optics, which "encouraged a more intense stress on visual and uniform space."³ While all the Romantic poets attempt to give a sense of space through visual means, each stresses different visual qualities and uses various methods of description. In addition, a sense of space is sometimes evoked through other senses.

The last and most important topic I have considered is the way space illuminates thematic concerns and embodies the poet's cosmic views. I have been concerned with the importance of vastness (sometimes infinity) to the Romantic imagination; that is, the way a wide view "expands the spirit, yet appals" (Childe Harold's Pilgrimage III.1xii) or inspires the poet with thoughts of Him who produced the vast and majestic world.⁴ The sometimes ambiguous responses of the Romantics to space
and spaciousness were also important. Bounded spaces, often viewed as sacred spots or types of Eden protecting the poet or his hero from chaos and vastness, are especially relevant. At the same time, bounded space could symbolize imprisonment and alienation from the wide world. Such paradoxical attitudes toward space help to explain more general themes in the poet's works. I have also examined various spatial constructs and hierarchies which are symbolic and attain mythic significance in each poet's works. Among these are the uses of the classical four-fold topocosm, varieties of heaven and hell, and numerous recurring spatial constructs such as the sea, the grove, the cave, the island, the mountain, and the prison.

Finally, it has been necessary to investigate the way the Romantic imagination envisions a transcendence of space and its limits as scientifically and objectively perceived. Sometimes, this transcendence is described as a freedom of (that is, in) space, sometimes as a freedom from space. In either case, this necessity to eliminate mortal categories of space and time is seen as an important defining characteristic of the Romantic imagination.
FOOTNOTES


4The latter response, awe and thoughts of God, is primarily Wordsworth's. See Basil Willey, "When Men and Mountains Meet," English Studies, 43 (1962), 378-83.
CHAPTER I

THE PARADOX OF WORDSWORTHIAN SPACE:
WIDE REALMS AND SPOTS OF HOLY GROUND

Influences on the Development of
Wordsworth's Space-Consciousness

In his Essay, Supplementary to the Preface (1815), Wordsworth makes several comments which contribute significantly to an understanding of the development of his space-consciousness. He notes that the "art of seeing [is] in some degree learned" and that he "had the good fortune to be born and reared in a mountainous country"; he knew, therefore, that "in nature everything is distinct, yet nothing defined into absolute independent singleness." This principle of unity, inherent in his poetic descriptions of nature, governs both his objective perceptual responses to nature and literary art and criticism when they deal with natural descriptions. Wordsworth's emphasis on visual unity is consonant with twentieth-century theories of spatial perception. Marshall McLuhan claims, for instance, that while space can be perceived through various senses, man has primarily relied, since
about the time of the Renaissance, on the sense of sight. This reliance, he claims, is culturally determined or, in Wordsworth's phrase, the "art of seeing [is] in some degree learned." But more important are the implications of this reliance on visual perceptions, which McLuhan suggests:

When the visual sense is played up above the other senses, it creates a new kind of space and order that we often call "rational" or pictorial space and form. Only the visual sense has the properties of continuity, uniformity and connectedness that are assumed in Euclidean space. Only the visual sense can create the impression of a continuum. Alex Leighton has said, "To the blind all things are sudden." To touch and hearing each moment is unique, but to the sense of sight the world is uniform and continuous and connected. These are the properties of pictorial space which we often confuse with rationality itself.

When space-consciousness is developed primarily through a visual apprehension of space, then space often becomes a unified whole or a "picture." Given Wordsworth's own poetic descriptions which emphasize the harmony and unity of nature, and given his own emphasis on the eye, even though he calls it "the most despotic of the senses," we understand the importance of his visual apprehension of space. We can assume that both Wordsworth's personal life and various cultural circumstances determined the ways in which his space-consciousness developed.

The most important cultural force shaping the development of Wordsworth's poetic powers was the art of
landscape. This art, both in painting and poetry, had pervasive influences in the late eighteenth century; it had ramifications in gardening and in travel (that is, in the types of scenery one was expected to enjoy). And it reinforced the importance of the visual. Landscape painters established patterns by which the landscape was to be viewed and landscape poets—Thomson, Dyer, Cowper, Beattie, among others, contrived literary landscapes that were pictorial, often a series of scenes. In *Wordsworth and the Art of Landscape*, Russell Noyes has examined the influence of this tradition on Wordsworth as well as his contribution to it—in his poetry, in his gardening, and in his travel book, *Guide to the Lakes*. This tradition significantly influenced Wordsworth's space-consciousness.

First and obviously, the practitioners of landscape art stressed natural space. Urban space was not considered conducive to happy viewing; in fact, even geometric (or artificial) spaces in nature were not picturesque—that is, winding paths were preferable to straight ones, and wildness and ruggedness was preferable to smoothness. Wordsworth grew up in the Lake Country, a relatively barren and rugged environment, and he made excursions to Switzerland and Wales which gave him ample material to use in following the dicta of landscape art. Secondly, landscape painters, gardeners, and poets preferred a free and open landscape, a boundless prospect,
an expansiveness in natural space. For this reason poets and travellers climbed hills and mountains to get better prospects. This particular influence on Wordsworth's poetry is obvious—memorably in The Prelude in the ascent of Mount Snowden and the Alps; in the frequent travels to hills and high ruins in his boyhood recorded throughout his verse; in the wanderings in The Excursion; and in such minor poems as "To ______ on her First Ascent to the Summit of Helvellyn" and "View from the Top of Black Comb." Often the rationale for such ascents is simply to receive "the ampest range / Of unobstructed prospect" ("View from the Top of Black Comb," ll. 3-4).

One of the results of the landscape tradition was that it often led to inventories of scenes with the stress on visual effects. Some viewers carried a "Claude glass," a plano-convex mirror through which the scene would appear with exaggerated perspective; some carried notebooks, scrupulously recording the details of a picturesque scene, later to be transcribed in pictorial set-pieces. Although Wordsworth's earliest works, particularly An Evening Walk and Descriptive Sketches, seem to be inventories of isolated scenes perceived for the most part by the outward eye, in his best works he transcends the limitations of the landscape tradition. Ideally, Wordsworth's perception was "now all eye / And now all ear; but ever with the heart / Employ'd, and the majestic intellect"
Although [it was] a strong infection of the age; [it was] never much [his] habit, giving way to a comparison of scene with scene bent overmuch on superficial things....

(Prelude XI.156-59)

Ideally, a scene was recollected in tranquillity, whereby the essence of the scene, not its visual impression, was recreated and its spatial harmonies were composed, not merely its visual details. The landscape tradition perhaps made Wordsworth more aware of the effects space, spaciousness, or scenes could have on the imagination (or at least aware that these natural qualities could be a subject for poetry), but he was also aware of the power the imaginative inner eye could exert on these scenes.

McLuhan also suggests that scientific works, particularly Newton's *Optics*, contributed to an emphasis on visual space. But science has additional ramifications for Wordsworth's space-consciousness. He could not, of course, have avoided the influence of science, for at Hawkshead school where as a boy he "conceived a romantic veneration of Newton," he was well trained in Euclid. And at the time he attended Cambridge, it "gave a large place in its course of studies to mathematics and natural philosophy." Although Wordsworth did not follow the prescribed course of study, he was in an atmosphere in which the sciences, especially geometry and astronomy (both space-oriented in their different ways), were being...
studied and discussed. His reactions to science were not always positive: the scientist could be presumptuous (Excur. IV.955) and his uninspired research, lacking feeling, divided the universe into parts when it should have led to seeing the universe as a harmonious whole (Excur. IV.960-67). But astronomy and geometry, on the whole, had Wordsworth's approval.

Unlike Shelley, for example, Wordsworth does not evidence in his poetry an interest in the details of astronomy (that is, an interest in planetary orbits, gravitational forces, and other problems discussed in Cambridge lectures), but his imagination was certainly stimulated by astronomical phenomena and by the mysteries of outer space. Wordsworth's heightened awareness of outer space led to numerous references in The Prelude and other poems to the sky, to the sun (even its eclipse), moon, stars, and comets. His interest in the vast immensities of outer space can be explained in two ways. First, the human mind is exalted and the imagination stimulated when it contemplates the heavens, heavens which in Wordsworth's time were believed to be infinite. Even the rude viewers in the satiric "The Star-Gazers" who "pry and pore" (l. 29) may have souls which have risen to power and majesty because of this sight of the silent and divine heavens. Second, "as studied at Cambridge, astronomy could be a fascinating subject,
nothing less than the study of the attributes of God."15
A proper awareness of outer space, the heavens, could lead
one to understand the "active principle" of the universe.

The importance of geometry to Wordsworth's space-
consciousness is not readily apparent to a twentieth-
century reader. In the eighteenth century, Ben Ross
Schneider explains,

it was the key that unlocked the secrets of
the universe, for by means of geometry alone
. . . Newton had constructed his system of
the world. Hence, eighteenth-century
philosophers believed that all natural
phenomena could be explained by geometrical
reasoning. Indeed, they believed that the
very "spirit within" which sustained the
whole creation worked by geometrical prin-
ciples.16

Schneider quotes from an eighteenth-century text of
Euclid's Elements in which several of the corollaries are
related specifically to astronomy--how to measure the sun's
distance, for example. Geometry, one of Wordsworth's
favorite subjects, must have reinforced his interest in
astronomical phenomena and as a science of measuring the
earth, it was interesting to "a boy whose eye loved to
dwell on the forms of mountain peaks lifted into space,
and who could even feel the rotation of the earth itself
in the sensation produced by suddenly stopping himself
in the midst of skating at night on Windermere."17
Although it is difficult to see a direct effect of geom-
etry, an abstract science, on the descriptions of space
or spaces in his poetry (that is, he does not recreate the outside world in geometric terms\textsuperscript{18}), Wordsworth's interest in geometry may have affected the attitudes he has about space, earthly and heavenly. Geometry, which "wedded man to man by purest bond / Of nature, undisturbed by space and time" (\textit{Prelude} V.105-6), was to him a science which expressed the essential order of the universe, the "pure / Proportions and relations with the frame / And laws of Nature" (\textit{Prelude} VI.144-46); it was

\begin{quote}
An image not unworthy of the one
Surpassing Life, which out of space and time,
Nor touch'd by welterings of passion, is
And hath the name of God.
\end{quote}

(\textit{Prelude} VI.154-57)\textsuperscript{19}

Love of geometry could lead to an understanding and love of the great "Geometrician" and His harmonious universe.\textsuperscript{20} Outer space or vast earthly space could never be a chaos or a void to Wordsworth; unlike the soldier in "Guilt and Sorrow," he could see that even the bleak and seemingly infinite wilderness of Salisbury Plain expressed the order of creation.\textsuperscript{21}

Although literary and scientific developments are very important cultural influences on his perception and creation of space, Wordsworth's personal background is of crucial importance in determining the kinds of space-consciousness that his works exhibit. Two related biographical facts seem especially significant: that he was raised in a rural setting and that he developed a life-
long habit of walking.

When one walks, particularly in an open, rural setting, one can define his own space; the walker does not have to follow the direction of a road, but can forge his own paths. He does not have to be governed by geometric space (straight lines, perpendicular intersections), but can create private spatial patterns. Furthermore, he is more aware of space when he walks than when he rides, particularly if he is riding in an enclosed conveyance; for in walking he can be more aware of acoustic and tactile space. And walking, because it is slower, allows him to be more aware visually; that is, he can focus more clearly on a scene or a defined space. Because it is slower, he may also be more aware of distances (although a fast conveyance might give him a greater sense of the extension of space). But walking does allow for a fuller and more total sensual response to the environment and therefore to space.

Walking, of course, does not have to be a positive experience. It can be the activity of a disturbed mind, as it often is in Byron's works. The neurotic may need the continual change that walking provides; or it may be a static, circular activity, as it is for Margaret in the first book of *The Excursion*. It can also increase one's sense of isolation and awareness of placelessness as it does for the sailor in "Guilt and Sorrow." But for
Wordsworth, walking is a positive, even necessary experience.

From the early "An Evening Walk" to his later works, Wordsworth's poems amply document his habit of walking. The salutary effect it has on his perceptual awareness is specifically compared to that of other modes of transportation in the second book of *The Excursion*:

The wealthy, the luxurious, by the stress
Of business roused, or pleasure, ere their time,
May roll in chariots, or provoke the hoofs
Of the fleet coursers they bestride, to raise
From earth the dust of morning, slow to rise;
And they, if blest with health and hearts at ease,
Shall lack not their enjoyment:--but how faint
Compared with ours! who, pacing side by side,
Could, with an eye of leisure, look on all
That we beheld; and lend the listening sense
To every grateful sound of earth and air;
Pausing at will--our spirits braced, our thoughts
Pleasant . . .

(II.97-109)

The wealthy, in speeding through nature, lack the visual and auditory awareness of the walker. Riding by carriage can be especially stultifying, as Wordsworth's description of his first visit to Cambridge illustrates. He was particularly aware of the effect of speed on his visual powers; he says, of his attempt to focus on a passing student, "nor was I master of my eyes / Till he was left a hundred yards behind" (*Prelude* III.8-9). And the subsequent hurried list of sights evidences his inability to see anything but isolated places (the Castle, Magdalene Bridge, the Cam), not the whole of the environ-
ment. He creates the same kind of spatial effects when describing his trip down the Rhone by boat:

Swift Rhone, thou wert the wings on which we cut Between thy lofty rocks! Enchanting show Those woods, and farms, and orchards did present, And single Cottages, and lurking Towns, Reach after reach, procession without end Of deep and stately Vales.

(Prelude VI.386-91)

Again, Wordsworth does not focus on any one place, for the movement seems to be so quick that he can only present a series; only the "procession without end" indicates any kind of response to space, a response to distance ("without end") and mere repetition ("procession"). Walking does, however, at least in one case, produce this kind of indiscriminateness in his perceptions, but it is fast walking—"a march" of "military speed" in which the walkers are "eager as birds of prey" (Prelude VI.428, 435).

It is when Wordsworth walks that he is most aware of space and individual spaces. In walking he and his sister roved among "distant nooks" and "bye-tracks" (Prelude VI.208, 209) of the countryside; in the 1850 version of the poem, he is more explicit, for there he says he made "quests" for scenes renowned for beauty, "explored" a streamlet among "spiry rocks," "pried" into dales or "hidden tracts" (1850 Prelude VI.190-95). He continues by describing their climb to the top of a ruined castle from which they looked abroad "and gathered with one mind a rich reward / From the far-stretching landscape"
(1850 Prelude VI.217-18). The "rich reward" here is only the pleasurable experience of perceiving space on a large scale, but this is precisely the kind of experience with vastness that prepared him for the mind-expanding views seen from the Alps and Mount Snowden.

In the walk described above, Wordsworth stressed the visual apprehension of space. The Wanderer in The Excursion (IV.481 ff.), in appealing to the Solitary to take walks, emphasizes not only the expansive views the Solitary could perceive from "yon commanding rock" but stresses also tactile and auditory qualities. He says, "meet the breeze upon their [the ramparts'] tops"; one is more aware of unprotected heights when feeling the breeze, not simply seeing a view. He advises rolling a "stone / In thunder down the mountains"; one is more aware of distance and depths when receiving auditory impressions. In one of the manuscript versions, there is even a suggestion of the olfactory apprehension of heights: "Inhale thereon [the high ramparts] / Celestial air."23

Although the Wanderer's advice degenerates into the merely therapeutic, the poet's exuberant advice following the Wanderer's indicates that walking not only increases one's awareness of objective nature, but that it also stimulates the imagination; perception can lead to creation under the salutary effects of walking. The poet imagines man roaming in pristine and primeval nature
("regions consecrate to oldest time") as "an equal among mightiest energies." The poet's walker sees crags and solid earth which exude shapes and phantoms in the rainy vapours. Including a vast vertical expanse, he mentions the "region of the clouds" and the "hollows of the earth." In the former region it rains "as at a first creation." The ordinary spaces of nature in his imagined walk in the rain become transformed. A crag is no longer an ordinary form but a magical one. In fact, the poet mythologizes the world: the rain is prelapsarian and the world is renewed in his vision just as he is renewed through this walk.25

Paradoxically, then, walking does have the effect sometimes of making Wordsworth less aware of external, objective spatial realities. Because it develops "habits of reflection and sublime contemplation,"26 the poet sometimes withdraws into himself and the space he experiences is imagined or created, rather than perceived. Wordsworth says,

Oft in those moments such a holy calm
Did overspread my soul, that I forgot
That I had bodily eyes, and what I saw
Appear'd like something in myself, a dream,
A prospect in my mind.

(Prelude II.367-71)

In reality, of course, all the seemingly external space that he recreates in his poetry is a "prospect in [his] mind," for his imagination creates what it "sees." But walking is a catalyst for this kind of imaginative
experience. His comment on the function of a road is helpful:

I love a public road; few sights there are That please me more; such object hath had power O'er my imagination since the dawn Of childhood, when its disappearing line, Seen daily afar off, on one bare steep Beyond the limits which my feet had trod Was like a guide into eternity, At least to things unknown and without bound. Even something of the grandeur which invests The Mariner who sails the roaring sea Through storm and darkness early in my mind Surrounded, too, the Wanderers of the Earth, Grandeur as much, and loveliness far more . . . . (Prelude XII.145-57)

Walking on the road increases Wordsworth's awareness of "real" space, that is, objective space, but it does more; it kindles his imagination and makes him envision "poetic" space--both "eternity," here imaged as a place, not merely a timeless condition, and boundless things or boundless space.27 Thus the habit of walking can both increase his sensual awareness of objective space and aid his imaginative apprehension and creation of "poetic" space.28

Although it is obvious that nature was a powerful force in Wordsworth's life, it is not immediately obvious how and why his life in rural settings would affect his space-consciousness.29 It is not that one would lack a strong sense of space in the city--Wordsworth certainly was aware of urban space in a negative way; but rural dwellers and city dwellers may be conditioned differently. Urban and rural space differ in two important ways. First,
rural space is more open; one's view is not blocked by buildings (or "turrets and pinnacles in answering files" [1850 *Prelude* III.5]). And secondly, rural space has a cosmicity that urban space lacks, for urban space and the relationships between urban spaces are artificial, man-made, often geometric. The sky, the only truly cosmic space available to most city dwellers, lacks an horizon, except for those living in very high places. Thus, for many city dwellers the house, "a frame lock'd up in wood and stone" (*Prelude* VI.303), becomes the focus of life, not the space surrounding the house of the solid forms of nature.

The enclosed nature of urban space is of special importance to Wordsworth. He speaks to Coleridge:

> Of Rivers, Fields And Groves, I speak to Thee, my Friend; to Thee, Who, yet a liveried School-Boy, in the depths Of the huge City, on the leaded Roof Of that wide Edifice, thy Home and School, Wast used to lie and gaze upon the clouds Moving in Heaven; or haply, tired of this, To shut thine eyes, and by internal light See trees, and meadows, and thy native Stream Far distant, thus beheld from year to year Of thy long exile.

(*Prelude* VI.274-84)

First, he imagines Coleridge in the "depths" of the city. "Heart" of the city might be as accurate, but for Wordsworth the city does seem down. Depths suggest claustration; one cannot see out horizontally--one can only see up. Coleridge, himself, draws a similar con-
elusion when he describes the prison-like environment of his childhood in the city: "For I was reared / In the great city, pent 'mid cloisters dim, / And saw nought lovely but the sky and stars" ("Frost at Midnight," ll. 51-53). Wordsworth, too, imagines Coleridge looking at the only cosmic space the city offers—the heavens, or imagining a "prospect" in his mind, significantly a scene in open space—a foreground of trees and meadows and a background with a stream. In a cramped city there is often no distinction between foreground and background. Finally, Wordsworth calls Coleridge an "exile," an apt noun since he sees man not only as a social being but as a cosmic being as well, one who is ideally in tune with cosmic forces and one whose natural habitat is with cosmic space.

Even though Cambridge is "huge" (Prelude VI.277) and London is a "wide waste" (VII.76) associated with various kinds of infinitude ("Streets without end, and Churches numberless" [VII.133], "endless stream[s] of men, and moving things," and "illimitable walk[s]" [VII.158, 159]), the city is typically characterized as cramped. Wordsworth's reaction to it is well-developed in his description of Bartholomew Fair, which he calls an "emblem" for the city: "Oh, blank confusion! and a type not false / Of what the mighty City is itself" (Prelude VII.695-96). He begins the description
by imploring the Muse to "lodge us, wafted on her wings, /
Above the press and danger of the Crowd, / Upon some
showman's platform" (Prelude VII.656-58). In the prospect poems, he often ascends a hill to get a fuller perspective, so here to get any kind of perspective, he must be above the "swarm." Wordsworth's reaction here. (and elsewhere) to crowds is almost neurotic; his description approaches the "grotesque":

what a hell
For eyes and ears! what anarchy and din
Barbarian and infernal! 'tis a dream,
Monstrous in colour, motion, shape, sight, sound.
Below, the open space, through every nook
Of the wide area, twinkles, is alive
With heads . . . .

(Prelude VII.658-64)

Even from this height he sees only heads and "as if the whole were one vast Mill, / [The tents and booths]
vomiting, receiving, on all sides, / Men, Women, three-
years' Children, Babes in arms" (VII.692-94).

Wordsworth then generalizes about the city: it is an "undistinguishable world" (VII.699), where all things are "melted and reduced / To one identity" (VII.702-3); it is a "picture [which can] weary out the eye" (VII.707). The city, conceived of as a bounded spatial form (a "picture"), can only be apprehended visually by one who "sees the parts / As parts, but with a feeling of the whole" (VII.711-12). And it is one who has been reared among natural settings who is particularly well-equipped to orient himself to the bounded and crowded space of
Attention comes,
And comprehensiveness and memory,
From early converse with the works of God
Among all regions; chiefly where appear
Most obviously simplicity and power.
By influence habitual to the mind
The mountain's outline and its steady form
Gives a pure grandeur, and its presence shapes
The measure and the prospect of the soul
To majesty; such virtue have the forms
Perennial of the ancient hills; not less
The changeful language of their countenances
Gives movement to the thoughts, and multitude;
With order and relation.

(Prelude VII.716-29)

In the 1850 version of this passage Wordsworth emphasizes even more clearly how the spaciousness of nature can lead one to understand the underlying harmony of all life, even in the midst of a chaotic and hellish city, the constriction of which seems to emblem man's pettiness.

He says:

Think, how the everlasting streams and woods,
Stretched and still stretching far and wide, exalt
The roving Indian, on his desert sands;
What grandeur not unfelt, what pregnant show
Of beauty, meets the sun-burnt Arab's eye;
And, as the sea propels, from zone to zone,
Its currents; magnifies its shoals of life
Beyond all compass; spreads, and sends aloft
Armies of clouds,—even so, its powers and aspects
Shape for mankind, by principles as fixed,
The views and aspirations of the soul
To majesty. Like virtue have the forms
Perennial of the ancient hills; not less
The changeful language of their countenances
Quickens the slumbering mind, and aids the thoughts,
However multitudinous, to move
With order and relation.

(1850 Prelude VII.745-61)

Wordsworth's life in nature had another important effect on the kinds of space he created in his poetry.
Because of his "philosophy" and "myth" of nature, his imagination was content with recreating "natural" space; that is, he created no supernatural environment because to him nature itself was super-natural. When he says in *Tintern Abbey* that his thoughts "connect / The landscape with the quiet of the sky" (11. 7-8), he is not observing merely as a painter might. James Benziger says of this line that Wordsworth did not wish simply to create a composition whose diverse elements harmonized easily and gently rather than one in which opposite forces precariously sustained a balanced tension. In his observation upon the cliff and the sky and in all the others Wordsworth is thinking as a moralist and theologian also. The world of man, of pastoral farms and plots of cottage ground, merges gently, through orchards and hedges not too neatly trimmed, into nature's copse and woodland. And the busy growing world of nature, by way of the cliffs, merges gently with the quiet of the sky. This sky is a symbol of the Divine Quiet, of the "Eternal Silence" of the Intimations Ode and of The Excursion's peace, subsisting at the heart Of endless agitation. (IV.1146-47)

Thus, in Wordsworth's philosophy, by way of the world of nature, the human and the divine are connected with each other. Here in the landscape all are visibly "interfused," even as Wordsworth felt they should be. To others the heavens have declared the glory of God; to Wordsworth the valley of the Wye and the sky above it declared this glory, but they declared first and foremost the unity and harmony of the universe.34

An interesting variation of this idea of the unity of the world is seen in the sonnet "Composed by the Side
of Grasmere Lake."

Clouds, lingering yet, extend in solid bars
Through the grey west; and lo! these waters,
steeled
By breezeless air to smoothest polish; yield
A vivid repetition of the stars;
Jove, Venus, and the ruddy crest of Mars
Amid his fellows beauutously revealed
At happy distance from earth's groaning field,
Where ruthless mortals wage incessant wars.
Is it a mirror?--or the nether Sphere
Opening to view the abyss in which she feeds
Her own calm fires?--But list! a voice is near;
Great Pan himself low-whispering through the
reeds,
"Be thankful, thou; for, if unholy deeds
Ravage the world, tranquillity is here!"

In this poem Wordsworth sets up three spatial levels which
are intermingled; the surface of the lake--on earth--both
reflects the sky and suggests to the imagination a kind of
Hades-like region (the "nether-sphere") as well. Although
he is perhaps tempted to prefer the calm region of the
heavens or the calm fires of the abyss, in the end, Pan,
the mythical god of nature, has the last word. Wordsworth
opts for the natural setting because it allows him to see
both the nature which he loves and beyond visual nature
into other worlds. In this poem, there is a suggestion of
hell as well as a region "at happy distance" from earth
where mythological figures might dwell. But these are
only suggestions. Although Wordsworth read and loved
Milton and Spenser, he never recreated the fairy-lands of
Spenser nor the heaven or hell of Milton. In this respect
he also differs from his fellow Romantic poets. His imagi-
nation was indeed "mythical," but it did not express itself in any full cosmography. "The speaking face of earth and heaven" (Prelude V.12) was enough.

**Wordsworth's Apprehension and Creation of Space**

Before discussing symbolic and mythic space in Wordsworth's poetry, we should examine the kinds of spatial effects he creates and the ways he evokes a sense of space. For some of the reasons suggested above, the spatial effects in his poetry are primarily visual. Of these visual spatial effects, Wordsworth's use of distance is perhaps the most significant and occurs frequently from the early landscape poetry, filled with "prospects," to the later philosophical and theological works. Distance is important because it has the effect of clarifying the larger formal elements of a scene. Seen from a distance, the forms of nature stand out at the same time that they are generalized, and the discordant details of a scene are obscured. Wordsworth mentions these functions of distance in *The Excursion*:

We started—and he led me toward the hills,
Up through an ample vale, with higher hills
Before us, mountains stern and desolate;
But, in the majesty of distance, now
Set off, and to our ken appearing fair
Of aspect, with aerial softness clad,
And beautified with morning's purple beams.

(II.90-96)

There is also something about the aloofness of distance
that allows both the forms of nature and, in the following case, the most natural of human forms—the shepherd, to be emblematic:

Or him have I descried in distant sky,
A solitary object and sublime,
Above all height! like an aerial Cross,
As it is stationed on some spiry Rock
Of the Chartreuse, for worship. Thus was Man
Ennobled outwardly before mine eyes . . . .

(Prelude VIII.406-11)

Because Wordsworth saw him "purified, / Remov'd, and at a distance that was fit" (VIII.439-40), the shepherd can become exalted with sublime and archetypal qualities. "Not a Corin of the groves" (VIII.420), he has instead "power and worthiness" (VIII.416).

Gaston Bachelard in The Poetics of Space suggests another reason why distance is important. He says,

Distance . . . creates miniatures at all points on the horizon . . . . Distance disperses nothing, but, on the contrary, composes a miniature of a country in which we should like to live. In distant miniatures, disparate things become reconciled. They then offer themselves for our "possession" while denying the distance that created them. We possess them from afar, and how peacefully!

Distance, by creating the illusion of smallness, does allow Wordsworth to "possess" a scene. Furthermore, the sometimes chaotic details of a scene can be accommodated. This is particularly true of the scene Wordsworth paints of the country fair at the opening of Book VIII of The Prelude. The scene is interesting both because it is a contrast to Bartholomew Fair, described in the
preceding book, and because of Wordsworth's point of view. The precise point from which he views the scene is not clear. He empathizes with Mount Helvellyn:

 WHAT sounds are those, Helvellyn, which are heard Up to thy summit? Through the depth of air Ascending, as if distance had the power To make the sounds more audible; what Crowd Is yon, assembled in the gay green Field? Crowd seems it, solitary Hill! to thee . . . . (VIII.1-6)

Although Wordsworth seems to be at a distance from the scene, clearly he cannot be on the mountain. He describes the people as "little" (VIII.50), yet mentions many details in the scene which he could not actually perceive from a distance. When he is at a distance, his imagination can work on the scene and thereby deny the distance that made the imaginative act possible. When Wordsworth was at Bartholomew Fair, he could not remove himself to a sufficient distance and was thus bombarded with details; but here, even though the poet sees a crowd below, he can reconcile the disparate details from his vantage point, enough so that this society of men can emblem archetypal man in harmony with nature:

 Immense Is the Recess, the circumambient World Magnificent, by which they are embraced. They move about upon the soft green field: How little They, they and their doings seem, Their herds and flocks about them, they themselves, And all that they can further or obstruct! Through utter weakness pitiable dear As tender Infants are; and yet how great! For all things serve them; them the Morning light Loves as it glistens on the silent rocks,
And them the silent Rocks, which now from high
Look down upon them; the reposing Clouds,
The lurking Brooks from their invisible haunts,
And Old Helvellyn, conscious of the stir,
And the blue Sky that roof's their calm abode.

(Prelude VIII. 46-61)

Because he is at a distant vantage point, he can also
impart his feelings to them. Because he is not enclosed
and constricted, he imagines they are not. Instead, they
are protected and embraced by it.

A related visual effect which sometimes occurs in
Wordsworth's poetry is the use of pictorial perspective. 41
Space, through this technique, is extended and is more
or less divided in the same way that landscape paintings
depict details in the foreground, middle ground, and
background. McLuhan cites King Lear, Act IV, Scene vi,
as the first attempt by a writer to depict in words the
illusion of perspective. 42 But this type of verbal paint­
ing had become well-established in eighteenth-century
landscape poetry. Following in this tradition,
Wordsworth thinks in pictorial terms: he longs "for skill
to paint a scene so bright / And cheerful" (1850 Prelude
X. 569-70). And he paints a scene with three distinct
visual planes:

Without me and within, as I advanced,
All that I saw, or felt, or communed with
Was gentleness and peace. Upon a small
And rocky Island near, a fragment stood
(Itself like a sea rock) of what had been
A Romish Chapel . . .

Not far from this still Ruin all the Plain
Was spotted with a variegated crowd
Of Coaches, Wains, and Travellers, horse and foot,
Wading, beneath the conduct of their Guide
In loose procession through the shallow Stream
Of inland water; the great Sea meanwhile
Was at safe distance, far retired.

(Prelude X.516-21, 524-30)

In the 1850 version, Wordsworth is more explicit about
the details in the foreground (the remains are encrusted
with shells and dark with briny weeds [1850 Prelude X.557]),
but in both versions, the ruin dominates the foreground,
the variegated crowd the middle ground, and the sea the
background. For Wordsworth, some space (and the objects
in it) is better perceived at a distance. Whereas the
variegated crowd might be intolerable to Wordsworth at
close proximity (that is, he might feel cramped by the
crowd), here, they, like the sea, are at a safe distance;
therefore the scene becomes static and pictorial and
Wordsworth can feel gentleness and peace.

A more interesting example of the use of
perspective occurs in Book IV of The Prelude:

Magnificent
The morning rose, in memorable pomp,
Glorious as e'er I had beheld—in front,
The sea lay laughing at a distance; near,
The solid mountains shone, bright as the clouds,
Grain-tinctured, drenched in empyrean light;
And in the meadows and the lower grounds
Was all the sweetness of a common dawn—
Dews, vapours, and the melody of birds,
And labourers going forth to till the fields.

(1850 Prelude IV.323-32)

Although scholars have attempted to identify the
d geographical location of this scene, the precise location
is not important. The important quality here is not its realism or adherence to a real scene the poet once saw, but its emotional substance. The laughing sea, the empyrean light, are felt qualities, not pictorial ones. Through them, we are made aware of a scene with depth and space, with harmony and glory. In many of the remarkable scenes in his poetry (this one leads to Wordsworth's unconscious dedication to poetry), visual space gives way to the emotional qualities the space itself inspires.

Visual spatial effects depend in part on what can be screened out or eliminated and on what is focussed on. Perspective diffuses the focus point; in Wordsworth's creation of perspective there are generally three focal points. But focussing on one point, sometimes actually centering, is perhaps more common in Wordsworth's works than the use of perspective. Wordsworth explains in Guide to the Lakes the importance of a focal point; he says that a tarn is an object in Nature that forms in the mind of an observer "a centre or conspicuous point to which objects, otherwise disconnected or insubordinated, may be referred." The "centre" in Wordsworth's poetry is often a natural form, like the mountain in "There is an Eminence," or like the tree in Book VI of The Prelude, but is occasionally an artificial form like a church "sending out / A gracious look all over her domain."
(Prelude IV.14-15) or like the ruined cottage in The Excursion. Perhaps the most memorable kind of focussing in Wordsworth's poetry is that which has a lone "human centre." Shepherds, the "men who pleased [him] first" (Prelude VIII.182), are often the human centre. The destitute soldier in Book IV of The Prelude is also a famous example. He introduces his meeting of the soldier in the 1850 version in these words:

> When from our better selves we have too long
> Been parted by the hurrying world, and droop,
> Sick of its business, of its pleasures tired,
> How gracious, how benign, is Solitude;
> How potent a mere image of her sway;
> Most potent when impressed upon the mind
> With an appropriate human centre—hermit,
> Deep in the bosom of the wilderness;
> Votary (in vast cathedral, where no foot
> Is treading, where no other face is seen)
> Kneeling at prayers; or watchman on the top
> Of lighthouse, beaten by Atlantic waves;
> Or as the soul of that great Power is met
> Sometimes embodied on a public road,
> When, for the night deserted, it assumes
> A character of quiet more profound
> Than pathless wastes.

(IV.354-70)

The episode which follows shows how vast expanses of space with a human centre exert a strong influence on the mind. The soldier dominates the night wastes like a "natural" centre (a tarn or mountain) by virtue of his static qualities (he has a "station" and remains fixed to his place). Like the other human centres, his individuality is not emphasized, for the technique of centering concentrates on the figure in such a way as to make him
illustrative of all human existence; in the case of the shepherds the essential grandeur of man is emphasized, in the case of the soldier, the basic suffering of all mankind. Centering, then, is a visual device which at the least creates a harmonious picture (the tarn as mere focus point) and in its most developed form is a kind of spatial metaphor to express the underlying unity (and similarity) of all life.

Whereas the eye is most important in apprehending space and whereas Wordsworth evokes space largely by describing its visual qualities, his poetry demonstrates that he recognizes the importance of other sensual receptors. In a late poem, "On the Power of Sound," he addresses the ear, occupied by a "Spirit aerial":

Thy functions are ethereal,  
As if within thee dwelt a glancing mind,  
Organ of vision!  
(11. 1-3)

Throughout The Prelude Wordsworth's communion with nature, "the mighty world / Of eye and ear" (Tintern Abbey, ll. 105-6), is aural as well as visual: he was "now all eye / And now all ear" (XI.143-44), and the outside world is often conveyed to him as sound, "the milder minstrelsies of rural scenes" (XI.250). The sounds of the river Derwent with its "ceaseless music" gave the boy Wordsworth a knowledge of "the calm / That Nature breathes among the hills and groves" (I.284-85), just as "the voice / Of
mountain torrents; or the visible scene / Would enter unawares into [the Boy of Winander's] mind" (V.408-10).

But being aware aurally is not necessarily being aware of aural space. To understand how Wordsworth creates or evokes aural space, the following distinction between visual and aural space should be noted:

The visual is the only sense which creates the illusion of uniform connected spaces. The man who lives in an aural world lives at the center of a communications sphere, and he is bombarded with sensory data from all sides simultaneously. The aurally structured culture has none of the tracts of visual space long regarded as "normal," "natural" space by literate societies.50

Paradoxically, it is Wordsworth's civilized world, the city, which is most often felt as aural space. The "din / Of towns and cities" (Tintern Abbey, 11. 25-26) serves more to define urban space in his poetry than normal geographical, spatial boundaries do and at least as much to define it as the chaos of visual impressions he receives in the city. The description of London in Book VII of The Prelude is characterized by sound impressions: "the Babel din" (VII.157), the "horn[s] / Loud blowing" (VII.166-67), the "roar" (VII.184) which continues until the poet escapes into a sequestered nook, the shrill female vendor's scream (VII.198) and later at Bartholomew Fair, the "hell / For eyes and ears! What anarchy and din / Barbarian and infernal!" (VII.658-60), the "chattering monkies" (VII.667), cracking voices in rivalship (VII.670),
screaming, rattling, thumping, trumpeting, and noisiness of the timbrel—all these noises serve to define a particular world in aural terms. Whereas Wordsworth most often describes the world of nature in more static and visual terms, he emphasizes the chaotic and disharmonious quality of urban life by attempting to evoke an aural as well as a visual world. The result is appropriate, for auditory sensations are much more ambiguous and unfocussed than visual sensations.⁵¹ Reproducing aural sensations in poetry can thereby emphasize the turmoil of London effectively. Furthermore, even the visual sensations Wordsworth describes in the London sections of The Prelude are those characterized by movement. Visual information begins to resemble aural information insofar as it too seems to be a bombardment of data, once it is kinetic rather than static. Describing London aurally is appropriate in another way. Because sound cannot be communicated over vast distances, a sound space is much more intimate than a visual space. Wordsworth conveys the intimacy, for him the unpleasant crowding, of city life by describing London as an aural space.

Occasionally Wordsworth attempts to create space or evoke a sense of space through aural descriptions of a natural rather than an urban scene. The opening stanzas of "Resolution and Independence" indicate the way in which he can define space aurally. Similarly, he creates a sense
of space in the following passage from *The Excursion* by describing sounds and their intervals as they are created and echoed on the distant twin peaks:

"Those lusty twins," exclaimed our host, "if here It were your lot to dwell, would soon become Your prized companions. — Many are the notes Which, in his tuneful course, the wind draws forth From rocks, woods, caverns, heaths, and dashing shores; And well those lofty brethren bear their part In the wild concert—chiefly when the storm Rides high; then all the upper air they fill With roaring sound, that ceases not to flow, Like smoke, along the level of the blast, In mighty current; theirs, too, is the song Of stream and headlong flood that seldom fails; And, in the grim and breathless hour of noon, Methinks that I have heard them echo back The thunder's greeting."

(II.694-708)

The sounds of the wind here even remind the listener of the form, the rocks and caverns, causing the sound. The sound, at least for the hearer in the poem, serves to suggest spatial form or evoke memories of the visual form. Similarly, it is the sound of a bird (not its appearance) which defines a place for the young Wordsworth. He remembers visiting the ruin of an old church inhabited by an "invisible Bird" and "could have made / My dwelling-place, and liv'd for ever there / To hear such music" *(Prelude* II.133-35). The ruin is roofless with fractured walls, but this lack of spatial boundaries is irrelevant; he can call it a dwelling-place because its walls are defined by the distance the bird's song can be heard. Aural space in this case is more suggestive than visual
space.

A sense of space, usually vast spaciousness, can also be evoked by silence. Gaston Bachelard quotes from Henri Bosco's *Malicroix*:

There is nothing like silence to suggest a sense of unlimited space. Sounds lend color to space, and confer a sort of sound body upon it. But absence of sound leaves it quite pure and in the silence we are seized with the sensation of something vast and deep and boundless.

This kind of phenomenon occurs in Wordsworth's poetry. He states in Book IV of *The Prelude* that he loves to walk alone

Along the public Way, when, for the night
Deserted, in its silence it assumes
A character of deeper quietness
Than pathless solitudes.

(IV.364-68)

Then he describes an experience on a silent, deserted road:

Thus did I steal along that silent road,
My body from the stillness drinking in
A restoration like the calm of sleep
But sweeter far. Above, before, behind,
Around me, all was peace and solitude
I look'd not round, nor did the solitude
Speak to my eye; but it was heard and felt.

(IV.385-91)

Wordsworth is here himself "the human centre" surrounded "above, before, behind, / Around" with vast space; the cancelling out of external visual and aural space is an almost necessary correlation to internal visionary expansiveness:

O happy state! what beauteous pictures now Rose in harmonious imagery--they rose
As from some distant region of my soul
And came along like dreams . . . .
(IV.392-95)

Here the visionary experience is not radical though it
does prepare him for the real and climactic experience
with the soldier. But this experience does show how it is
sometimes necessary for the "light of sense" to go out.\textsuperscript{54}
Darkness and silence approach the condition of non-sensual
phenomena and have the purity that Bosco believes is
necessary in order for the imagination to work. Wordsworth
states a similar idea in a later passage in \textit{The Prelude}:

&to my Soul I say
\begin{verbatim}
I recognise thy glory: in such strength
Of usurpation, in such visitings
Of awful promise, when the light of sense
Goes out in flashes that have shewn to us
The invisible world, doth Greatness make abode.
There harbours whether we be young or old.
Our destiny, our nature, and our home
Is with infinitude, and only there;
With hope it is, hope that can never die,
Effort, and expectation, and desire,
And something evermore about to be.
\end{verbatim}
(IV.531-42)

Nonetheless, the senses, particularly sight and
hearing, remain vitally necessary in Wordsworth's
experience. And these senses primarily are the means for
his apprehension and creation of space. Psychologists
explain, however, that in addition to sight and hearing,
the nose, a distance receptor, and touch, an immediate
receptor, are useful in an awareness of space. Smell
sometimes helps in one's orientation in space and in defining space, although most Americans, living in a bland,
undifferentiated olfactory world, are deprived of this kind of spatial awareness. Smell did play important roles in the past, particularly since smell evokes much deeper memories than either vision or sound. Wordsworth, however, is a "modern" man in this respect, for there is little evidence in his poetry that he is aware of olfactory space.

Similarly, a sense of tactile space is rarely conveyed in his poetry. Wordsworth was clearly aware of space through touch, for it is through touch that one becomes most aware of the world, and of all the senses touch allows for the least separation of subject and object. And if the aim of the poet is to show how man is "wedded to this goodly universe" and to show how his mind "to the external world / Is fitted" (Preface to 1814 Excursion, ll. 54, 65-6), one might expect a great awareness of the powers of touch. While we are told of his "repose / Here, under this dark sycamore" (Tintern Abbey, ll. 9-10), it is nonetheless a sense of visual space that he later conveys, not a sense of tactile space. This habit of lounging on the ground, also described in The Prelude, must have made him aware of the tactile qualities of space, just as walking must have; yet his tactile sense is rarely translated into his poetry. The explanation for this absense of tactile space lies in part in his interest in distant scenes; to convey a sense of distant space, the eye, which
can receive information at the greatest distance, is the most useful sense. Olfactory, thermal, or tactile awareness is too immediate, too distinct to convey the unity of distant pictorial space.

Symbolic and Mythic Space

in Wordsworth's Poetry

I have not thus far made a careful distinction between objective and subjective (or created) space. All space, theoretically, in all art, is created; that is, it is not real. But this distinction in Wordsworth's poetry is often unnecessary since the space he creates (and shows himself to be perceiving) is usually not radically different from objective space. Unlike Keats or Shelley, Wordsworth does not create spatial realms which differ from those most ordinary men inhabit. However, the values which he attributes to the external world (space and spaces included) do differ from those of ordinary men and derive from poetic insight; for

. . . Poets, even as Prophets, each with each Connected in a mighty scheme of truth, Have each for his peculiar dower, a sense By which he is enabled to perceive Something unseen before . . . .

(Prelude XII. 301-5)

Wordsworth adds:

. . . in life's every-day appearances I seem'd about this period to have sight Of a new world, a world, too, that was fit To be transmitted and made visible
To other eyes, as having for its base
That whence our dignity originates,
That which both gives it being and maintains
A balance, an ennobling interchange
Of action from within and from without,
The excellence, pure spirit, and best power
Both of the object seen, and eye that sees.

(Prelude XII.369-79)

But what appears in Wordsworth's poetry is not a radically "new world," not a truly fictional world, but what to him is the real world, the world that ordinary men live in, which is simply seen or understood imaginatively. Still, the imagination does confer values which ordinary perception will not yield. It is important to examine, then, Wordsworth's imaginative apprehension of space and the values which derive from his symbolic and mythic consciousness of space.

In Wordsworth (and in some of his characters), there are two seemingly contradictory impulses, each with its own type of spatial referent. One impulse is toward movement, process, progress, becoming, whereas the opposite impulse is toward the externally static and stationary, toward the attainment of a goal or being. The former accounts for the necessity of vast space or spaciousness, for the process of becoming seems to demand a large sphere of action or a vast visual experience. The latter impulse serves to explain the relatively large number of bounded and enclosed spaces in Wordsworth's poetry. At their best, these spaces encourage visionary activity, often, para-
doxically, the kind of activity which allows the imagination to transcend spatial boundaries. Both impulses are important and perhaps equally necessary to Wordsworth. *Descriptive Sketches* expresses the two spatial alternatives—"the spot of holy ground" and the "wide realm," which are almost consistently used.

> WERE there, below, a spot of holy ground  
> Where from distress a refuge might be found,  
> And solitude prepare the soul for heaven;  
> Sure, nature's God that spot to man had given  
> Where falls the purple morning far and wide  
> In flakes of light upon the mountain-side;  
> Where with loud voice the power of water shakes  
> The leafy wood, or sleeps in quiet lakes.

Yet not unrecompensed the man shall roam,  
Who at the call of summer quits his home,  
And plods through some wide realm o'er vale and height,  
Though seeking only holiday delight;  
At least, not owning to himself an aim  
To which the sage would give a prouder name.  

But while Wordsworth's view of life demands both the "wide realm" and the holy spot (and the urges each represents), he also illustrates in his later poetry that either way of life, if overemphasized, can lead to distortion. This distortion forms the basis of some Wordsworth's most interesting narrative poems in which the characters' problems are delineated in part through their relationships to space. These two alternatives, spaciousness and bounded space, will be examined, then, because they operate as important symbols illuminating Wordsworth's themes.
There is no doubt that Wordsworth's emphasis on spaciousness is an especially Romantic (and Pre-Romantic) concern. Marjorie Nicolson, in *Mountain Gloom* and *Mountain Glory*, gives ample evidence for the shift in sensibility which led to the "aesthetics of the infinite". Romantic painters, too, according to McLuhan, attempted to portray "unenclosed space as [a] rebellion against legally constituted spaces." Although the word "rebellion" may be too strong, particularly in the case of Wordsworth, one can certainly assert that freedom, both political and aesthetic, is a positive Romantic value.

Unenclosed space seems to imply freedom to Wordsworth, just by its very nature. The shepherd, praised throughout the eighth Book of *The Prelude*, is characterized by his freedom: "he feels himself / In those vast regions where his service is / A Freeman" (VIII.385-87). Although he later views his ideas as naive and idealistic, the Solitary had had similar feelings about the American Indian:

But contemplation, worthier, nobler far
Than her destructive energies, attend
His independence, when along the side
Of Mississippi, or that northern stream
That spreads into successive seas, he walks;
Pleased to perceive his own unshackled life,
And his innate capacities of soul,
There imaged; or when, having gained the top
Of some commanding eminence, which yet
Intruder ne'er beheld, he thence surveys
Regions of wood and wide savannah, vast
Expanse of unappropriated earth,
With mind that sheds a light on what he sees;
Free as the sun, and lonely as the sun,
Pouring above his head its radiance down
Wordsworth emphasizes his agreement with the Solitary in his footnote, which contains a quotation from William Gilbert, described as one of the "finest passages of modern English prose." After denying that man enlarges his sphere by going into the world by visiting London, Gilbert stresses that in the "vast theatre of nature" (the "long and watered savannah" or the "distant, vast Pacific") man feels himself a freeman.

The preceding quotation from The Excursion also suggests another Romantic value as well as the primary reason why spaciousness is desirable: vastness exercises and exalts the imagination and images the mind's expansiveness; a mighty mind is one which feeds upon infinity. Wordsworth describes Newton as metaphorically "voyaging through strange seas of thought" (1850 Prelude III.63), presumably extensive seas, and Coleridge on Etna's summit "winning from the invaded heavens / Thoughts without bound, magnificent designs" (1850 Prelude XI.455-56).

Sometimes, there is a reciprocal effect; when Wordsworth was imbued with "a new born feeling," he says "it spread far and wide; / The trees, the mountains shared it" (Prelude IV.233-34). And as one might expect, the imagination is typically defined in terms of metaphoric spaciousness: it is "amplitude of mind" (Prelude XII.169) or it
causes "the horizon of the mind [to be] enlarged" (XII.56) or causes Wordsworth "to spread [his] thoughts / And spread them with a wider creeping" (III.113-14), whereas a "false imagination" has "scrupulous and microscopic views" (X.846).

It stands to reason, then, that what Wordsworth thinks restricts his imagination he sees as spatially confined. The space which Wordsworth describes as imprisoning him (as opposed to his characters) is generally urban. Unlike the "holy spot of ground" which is protective and natural, and can lead to mental expansiveness, London and Cambridge, though large in actuality, seem only cramped and artificial, and are damaging to the imagination. What Cambridge will mean to Wordsworth is foreshadowed in his description of his arrival; he sees a student, "striding along as o'er tasked by Time, / Or covetous of exercise and air" (1850 Prelude III.9-10). Life in Cambridge is regimented; time and space are confined. The Lecturer's Room is "All studded round, as thick as chairs could stand, / With loyal students" (Prelude III.61-62), and the college world, though a "privileg'd world / Within a world" (III.553-54), is stunted: "... here, in dwarf proportions, were express'd / The limbs of the great world" (III.615-16). When Wordsworth takes his summer vacation, he finds an apt analogy for his enthrallment
in Cambridge—the brook,

which soon as he was box'd
Within our Garden, found himself at once,
As if by trick insidious and unkind,
Stripp'd of his voice, and left to dimple down
Without an effort and without a will,
A channel paved by the hand of man.

(IV. 40-45)

Just as Cambridge could have stunted Wordsworth and "stripp'd him of his voice," so too London could lay "the whole creative powers of man asleep" (VII. 654). We are reminded that London is a kind of Hell through allusions to *Paradise Lost*; as a cramped hellish place, it is filled demonically with "troops of wild Beasts, birds and beasts / Of every nature, from all Climes conven'd" (VII. 246-47), and with men "among less distinguishable shapes" (VII. 228) from all geographical areas; there are

all specimens of Man
Through all the colours which the sun bestows,
And every character of form and face,
The Swede, the Russian; from the genial South,
The Frenchman and the Spaniard; from remote America, the Hunter-Indian; Moors,
Malays, Lascars, the Tartar and Chinese,
And Negro Ladies in white muslin gowns.

(VII. 236-43)

Not only does the whole world of men seem cramped in London's hellish confines, but the human form too is contracted (Wordsworth mentions a travelling cripple "by the trunk cut short, / And stumping with his arms" [VII. 219-20]) and man can lose his sense of identity (the blind beggar with the note explaining who he is
The confinement and constriction, the chaos and noise made worse by the confinement, threaten and confuse the imagination; Wordsworth can come to terms with the confusion, but only because he has experienced the vast space of nature, which in its simplicity and power allows him to perceive order and relation (VII.707 ff.).

It is perhaps equally true to say that vast space for the Romantic writers can also be a necessary evil. In the passage from Descriptive Sketches quoted above, Wordsworth mentions two alternatives, the "spot of holy ground" and "the wide realm." The spot of holy ground is in Wordsworth often the more desirable alternative, but the wide realm must be conquered. Wordsworth says that man must live

Not in Utopia, subterraneous Fields,
Or some secreted Island, Heaven knows where,
But in the very world which is the world
Of all of us, the place in which, in the end,
We find our happiness, or not at all.

(Prelude X.724-28)

The "spot of holy ground" is a kind of paradise but it, like Utopia, is not always a possible alternative and it is sometimes a kind of escape. Thus, man has to come to terms with the wide world. This necessity, in Romantic writers, is often seen as a result of the Fall, and is often symbolized by vast space. I do not want to emphasize the theological meaning of the Fall, but do wish to stress the importance of the Fall as a metaphor
which recurs in Romantic poetry. The fall theme in Wordsworth's works is best illustrated in "Intimations of Immortality," but the theme permeates many of his works. The Prelude is after all about the restoration of the imagination, about the continual self-renewals through nature when the world again becomes a type of paradise, when a visionary gleam is restored. Vast space is both the penalty for the Fall (that is, one lacks the security of the protected, enclosed Eden, the "spot of holy ground") and the means or medium through which the Fall is overcome; wandering through vast space is a means of restoring the lost paradise.

But for Wordsworth, unlike some of his characters, there is no real fear of vast space. He opens The Prelude with these words:

The earth is all before me: with a heart
Joyous, nor scar'd at its own liberty,
I look about . . . .

(I.15-17)

On the literal level, of course, Wordsworth is simply glad to leave the "bondage" of the city, "a prison where he hath been long immured" (I.8) and to have the freedom of nature. But the allusion to Paradise Lost is instructive, for it underlines one of the means of renewal in The Prelude, that means being what Wordsworth sometimes calls the excursive faculty, demonstrated best in the attitude of the Wanderer in The Excursion. The Wanderer has the ability to immerse himself in process,
to be open-minded, to be willing to experience life in all its variety. He may, as Wordsworth said of himself, take a circuitous route, but will not be "less sure / Duly to reach the point marked out by Heaven" (1850 Prelude VI.752-53). As a wanderer, the medium through which he works is the circuitous road and vast space.

When vast space is presented negatively in Wordsworth's works, it is used either as a metaphor or is seen negatively by one of Wordsworth's characters. The sea as metaphor (not the real sea) is commonly used negatively. The progress (or process) of Wordsworth's life is compared to a voyage on the sea:

This History, my Friend, hath chiefly told
Of intellectual power, from stage to stage
Advancing, hand in hand with love and joy,
And of imagination teaching truth
Until that natural graciousness of mind
Gave way to over-pressure of the times
And their disastrous issues. What avail'd,
When Spells forbade the Voyager to land,
The fragrance which did ever and anon
Give notice of the Shore, from arbours breathed
Of blessed sentiment and fearless love?
What did such sweet remembrances avail,
Perfidious then, as seem'd, what serv'd they then?
My business was upon the barren sea,
My errand was to sail to other coasts.
(Prelude XI.42-56)

What was literally frighteningly true in The Ancient Mariner and in Don Juan is here subdued in a metaphor. But the sea represents a vast and barren wilderness; it is a type of metaphor for the fall from innocence to experience. The poem tells of Wordsworth's travels on this vast sea of experience and of his arrival at a
safe harbor, with perhaps "something of the grandeur which invests / The Mariner who sails the roaring sea / Through storm and darkness . . . " (Prelude XII. 153-54).

A memorable use of the sea occurs, not as a metaphor, but still sufficiently far removed from the "real" sea, in Wordsworth's dream of the Arab in Book Five of The Prelude. There the sea threatens to engulf the "maniac" who carries the symbols of imagination and abstract reason. The sea in this passage has been variously interpreted, but in a simplified way, it can still be identified with the fallen world, the outside world which lacks the divinity of the spot of holy ground. The "maniac" wants to save the imagination from this world (and Wordsworth is tempted to "go / Upon like errand" [V. 160-61]), but for Wordsworth, ultimately, the imagination triumphs and can only triumph in "the very world which is the world of all of us." At the end of The Prelude, Wordsworth can say, "Anon I rose / As if on wings, and saw beneath me stretch'd / Vast prospect of the world which I had been / And was" (XIII. 377-80). He feels he has triumphed over the sea of experience and passed the test that vastness imposes.

Perhaps the reason, finally, that Wordsworth has so little conscious fear of vast space is that he can believe what many of his characters cannot: that an active principle operates in the universe and that there
are

Not favour'd spots alone, but the whole earth
The beauty wore of promise, that which sets,
To take an image which was felt, no doubt,
Among the bowers of paradise itself . . . .

(Prelude X.702-5)

The suggestion of that "promise" can keep Wordsworth from despair.

Probably the most striking use in Wordsworth's works of fearful vastness occurs in "Guilt and Sorrow."
Salisbury Plain, the setting for the poem, becomes on the one hand a kind of pathetic fallacy (the plain seems particularly desolate to the guilty sailor) and is on the other hand Wordsworth's way of embleming the spiritual desolation of the sailor. The sailor must literally confront a wasteland wilderness caused by his own particular fall into evil. Wordsworth did think in actuality that Salisbury Plain was a dreary place, but he makes a point of saying in his preface to "Guilt and Sorrow":

In conclusion, to obviate some distraction in the minds of those who are well acquainted with Salisbury Plain, it may be proper to say that, of the features described as belonging to it, one or two are taken from other desolate parts of England.

Wordsworth has heightened the fearful qualities of Salisbury Plain in an attempt to show how the world appears once one has left the security of innocence. But the vastness of Salisbury Plain does not have to inspire fear. In The Prelude, just after Wordsworth has
expressed the conviction that poets have a particular
divine sense of perception into unseen things (XII.278 ff.),
he recounts an experience he had on Salisbury Plain.
The "visionary dreariness" of that wilderness where
"bare white roads / [Lengthened] in solitude their dreary
line" (XII.314-15) enabled the poet to have a visionary
experience: "I had a reverie and saw the past" (XII.320).
Although the martial and sacrificial scenes which he
envisions are not particularly pleasant, Wordsworth uses
this experience to show how the imagination can transcend
ordinary perception; in his vision, it transcends
additionally ordinary categories of time.

But the sailor does not have the saving grace of
imagination (he does have frenzied fits); vast space,
for him, is still a penalty he must suffer. A sailor,
he has only exchanged the vast sea for the wilderness of
Salisbury Plain which is "dark and void as ocean's
watery realm" (l. 138). Not only does he seem to be
repeating his experience in space, but he is locked in
time: "his cheek seemed worn with care / Both of the
time to come, and time long fled" (ll. 5-6). The
vastness of Salisbury Plain only indicates the journey
he has yet to make: "he must pace . . . / Where'er the
dreary roads their bare white lines extend" (ll. 17-18).
Finally, he will feel imaginative sympathy and confess
his sin. The vast space that Wordsworth creates in this
poem approaches most nearly a representation of the void in Wordsworth's works; it is "all wild, forlorn, / And vacant, a huge waste" (ll. 43-44). The sailor looks for points of orientation in the distance (the distant spire which disappears [ll. 21-23]); but

All, all was cheerless to the horizon's bound;  
The weary eye--which, wheresoe'er it strays,  
Marks nothing but the red sun's setting round.  
(ll. 109-11)

Or he sees the "cornfields stretched and stretching without bound" (l. 26), a scene devoid of people or habitation. Only when the sailor meets the female vagrant does Wordsworth relax his emphasis on the vast wilderness, partly, of course, because of the exigencies of telling the woman's story. Nonetheless, it does become morning on the "immeasurable plain" (compared to the ocean which "hath its hour of rest" [ll. 337]), the rain has transformed the scene ("the barrows glistered bright with drops of rain" [ll. 327]), and the sounds of life are heard--the cock crowing, the waggoner whistling. These are the results of their "mutual interest" and "natural sympathy" (ll. 195, 196). Although their troubles are not over, they have rejected the nihilism in their own souls and can walk out of Salisbury Plain into a "narrow valley" (l. 515). The real test, offered in reality and metaphorically by vast space, has been passed.

The alternate pull in Wordsworth's poetry is to
the spatially bounded place or a spot, defined in some special way. Several of his poems simply detail how a particular spot became defined. "Hart-Leap Well" is about Sir Walter's "darling spot" (l. 48) which became a "doleful place" (l. 114); the shepherd says "the spot is curst" (l. 124), but the place lives on to preach a lesson. Wordsworth's Inscriptions and Epitaphs similarly focusses on specific places, and Poems on the Naming of Places considers how particular places became defined or named. Many of his poems say explicitly where they were composed, "Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey" being the most famous of these. It is even more specific about the spot where it was composed, for Wordsworth says, "Here, under this dark sycamore" (l. 10). Similarly, the stories and conversations in The Excursion are strongly associated with particular places, including most notably the ruined cottage in Book I and the "Images" (III, "Argument") in the Solitary's valley of which the Wanderer says:

Among these rocks and stones, methinks, I see
More than the heedless impress that belongs
To lonely nature's casual work; they bear
A semblance strange of power intelligent,
And of design not wholly worn away.
(III, 80-84)

All this is to say that for Wordsworth the particular place is important; it may even have its own spirit, what Wordsworth sometimes calls the "spirit of the place." To imagine that a place has a spirit or even that
it is unique enough to be discriminated is essentially a mythical habit of mind. Mircea Eliade explains that

For religious man, space is not homogeneous; he experiences interruptions, breaks in it; some parts of space are qualitatively different from others. "Draw not higher," says the Lord to Moses; "put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground" (Exodus, 3, 5). There is, then, a sacred space, and hence a strong, significant space; there are other spaces that are not sacred and so are without structure or consistency, amorphous.

Even the "holy places" of man's private universe—like his birthplace and scenes of his first love, which have a special or unique quality, can be called mythical, for in such spots some revelation of a reality other than that of ordinary existence was received. There are a great number of special places in Wordsworth's poetry, many of which could be called sacred spaces because in them or through them is revealed some essential reality. The places defined in the "spots of time" passages are obvious examples, but there are many other types. The boy Wordsworth even imagined London as a kind of sacred place:

There was a time when whatsoever is feign'd
Of airy Palaces, and Gardens built
By Genii of Romance, or hath in grave
Authentic History been set forth of Rome,
Alcairo, Babylon, or Persepolis,
Or given upon report by Pilgrim-Friars
Of golden Cities ten months' journey deep
Among Tartarian wilds, fell short, far short,
Of that which I in simpleness believed
And thought of London; held me by a chain
Less strong of wonder, and obscure delight.

(Prelude VII, 81-91)
He then records his disappointment that a crippled boy did not return from London with "Some change, some beams of glory brought away / From that new region" (VII.103-4). London, as we learn in The Prelude, is not a Fairy-land, not a sacred space, but is, instead a mythic equivalent of Hell. Sicily, however, enjoys a kind of mythologizing in Wordsworth's mind which does not evaporate. Wordsworth imagines Coleridge as a "visitant" (Prelude X.1033) or a "Votary" (X.1038) in Sicily in a nook "From the first play-time of infant earth / Kept sacred to restorative delight" (X.1005-6). Miracles were wrought there in ancient times he believes, and Arethuse, or some similar spring, might still remain. In Sicily; as Wordsworth makes clear in the 1850 version, Coleridge might be restored, inspired, and "win from the invaded heavens / Thoughts without bound, magnificent designs" (XI.445-46). This is the kind of spot that Wordsworth is most interested in, for it is sacred to poetry and acts as a kind of catalyst which at its best makes of the poet a god or god-like being. It removes him from the flux of the ordinary world and puts him in tune with a timeless and spaceless world.

The separation between these places and the ordinary world is sometimes made explicit, particularly when Wordsworth uses what mythologists call the threshold symbol; as its name implies, the threshold symbol separates two spaces (or the sacred from the profane) and indicates
the distance between two modes of being. It is the

limit, the boundary, the frontier that distinguishes and opposes two worlds—and at the same time, the paradoxical place where those worlds communicate, where passage from the profane to the sacred world becomes possible. Wordsworth's description of his return to "that sweet Valley where [he] had been reared" (Prelude IV.11) illustrates this spatial concept. There seems to be a sharp dividing line between the outer world, represented by Cambridge and its environs, and his special Valley, for he must climb the Heights of Kendall, cross a dreary moor, and is finally conducted across the lake by an old Ferryman, "a Charon of the flood" (1850 Prelude IV.14). The allusion to Charon is a strange transmutation, since Charon would usually conduct one to the underworld and here he takes Wordsworth to his childhood paradise; nonetheless, the geographical features of the scene and the allusion all point to a distinct division between worlds.

Many of the sacred spots in his poetry are not so obviously bounded. This is true of the sacred spot which recurs most frequently in his poetry, the grove (sometimes called a bower); yet it is clear that it is bounded, protected, and secluded from the outside, profane world. It may be an area with "embowering hollies" or a "covert of . . . shades" or a "dome of leaves." It is occasionally even called cloistered or a cloistral place. The adjective emphasizes both its sacred nature and its
seclusion. Wordsworth was in the habit, apparently, of secluding himself in groves, so much so that he even had a "favourite Grove" (Prelude VII.50), known in the Wordsworth family as "Brother John's Grove," the naming of which is recorded in "When to the attractions of the busy world." While in Cambridge, too, he frequented groves privately; the one with the ash tree is mentioned in particular.

All of these groves have common elements. Because of their protected seclusion, they can

> interpose the covert of [their] shades,
> Even as sleep, betwixt the heart of man
> And the uneasy world, 'twixt man himself,
> Not seldom, and his own unquiet heart . . . .
> (Prelude XI.16-19)

In an earlier version of this passage, Wordsworth is even more explicit: their "ministry" is to "Restore the springs of his exhausted frame." The "Imagination, how impaired and restored" is the title of Book XI; the grove clearly plays a significant role in this restoration. The grove is a bower of art. In Wordsworth's "favourite Grove," his "genial feeling overflow'd" (Prelude VII.49) and the grove blown through by winds "Spread through [him] a commotion like its own, / Something that fits [him] for the Poet's task . . . ." (Prelude VII.52-53). Both the use of the phrase "genial feeling," a reference to his creative spirit which begets a divine bond between him and nature, and the use of the familiar "correspondent
breeze" emphasize the special inspirational powers of the grove. Similarly, Wordsworth imagines himself an "Elect Bard," "a youthful Druid taught in shady groves / Primeval mysteries," and actually has low-key visionary experiences in groves, one in the first book of The Prelude (I.74-94) where with his head on a "genial pillow of earth" his fancy calls up an imaginary cottage, and later in a Cambridge grove where stimulated by an extraordinary ash he had "tranquil visions" and saw "bright appearances" (Prelude VI.105, 106), which he compares to Spenser's. Because of the isolation it provides, the grove suggests the isolated quality of Wordsworth's moments of creativity, and because of its enclosed and protected environment, suggests that these moments, sacred to art, occur most readily in a place not profaned by ordinary existence.

Of all the sacred spaces in Wordsworth's works, the most striking one is the mountain. Although a mountain is not enclosed in the way a grove is, it is a defined space, enough so that it (or at least its peak) can be considered island-like. Although the mountain often suggests spaciousness for him (that is, from its peak, he can see a wide prospect), the most striking passages in Wordsworth's poetry suggest that the mountain, like the grove, provides primarily internal spaciousness or contact with the infinite. This quality is emphasized
especially when the mountain is surrounded by clouds and mists so that a sensual awareness of spaciousness is impossible. Thus, the mountain is often much more like the bounded grove than the vast open spaces.

The height of the mountain is especially important. The sky for Wordsworth is the heavenly region, the abode of truth, of God. Visitations and visions come from above:

But I believe
That Nature, oftentimes, when she would frame
A favor'd Being, from his earliest dawn
Of infancy doth open out the clouds,
As at the touch of lightning, seeking him
With gentlest visitation . . . .

(Prelude I.362-67) 85

Being high, the mountain is close to God; one of Wordsworth's letters to Dorothy also makes this point. 86 Furthermore, heights are always preferable to depths in his poetry. As described The Prelude, Wordsworth's life began in a mountainous region where the mountains and nature "fed / [His] lofty speculations" (II.462-63). He then descended to the populous Plain of Cambridge (II.195-96) which seemed "To have an eddy's force" (III.11), sucking him down as in a whirlpool. Later, he describes London too as a kind of "Vault of Earth" (VIII.711 ff.) or grotto or den filled with shifting spectres and shapes. The climax of The Prelude occurs when Wordsworth ascends Mount Snowden, when he again reaches the heights of the mountains. 87 And he ends the poem from these metaphoric heights:
Anon I rose
As if on wings, and saw beneath me stretch'd
Vast prospect of the world which I had been
And was; and hence this Song, which like a lark
I have protracted, in the unwearied Heavens
Singing . . . .

(XIII.377-82)

The association of heights with positive experiences and
depths with negative ones is quite natural. Both biblical
tradition and classical myth associate heights with the
realms of the positive supernatural powers and depths
with more negative spirits; and as Marjorie Nicolson has
explained, mountains, after being objects of terror and
gloom in the Renaissance, had become strongly associated
with God, with the sublime, and with the Infinite in the
eighteenth century. Only occasionally does Wordsworth
depart from these more or less traditional associations.

The sacredness of the mountains is emphasized
repeatedly. Eliade explains: "Every sacred space implies
a hierophany, an irruption of the sacred that results in
detaching a territory from the surrounding cosmic milieu
and making it qualitatively different." Eliade further
states, using the story of Jacob's ladder to illustrate
the point, that a sacred space is a kind of gate of
heaven, often regarded as a central point or axis mundi
through which communication with another world is made
possible. These definitions of the sacred space are
particularly relevant to Wordsworth's treatment of the
mountain. He, too, sees it as a kind of Jacob's ladder:
Yon hazy ridges to their eyes
Present a glorious scale,
Climbing suffused with sunny air,
To stop—no record hath told where!
And tempting Fancy to ascend,
And with immortal Spirits blend!
--Wings at my shoulders seem to play;
But, rooted here, I stand and gaze
On those bright steps that heavenward raise
Their practicable way.

("Composed Upon an Evening of Extraordinary Splendour and Beauty," ll. 43-52)

In an earlier version, Wordsworth even referred to "the dreaming Patriarch"; and his notes acknowledge his debt to Mr. Alstone's painting, "Jacob's Dream." But the mountain for Wordsworth is especially important because it is connected with poetic vision, more than religious vision, because it makes the poet a god-like being, inspired, in touch with eternal truths, and like the "Supreme Existence," superior "to the boundaries of space and time (1850 Prelude VI.135). He imagines Milton, "that holiest of Bards" ("At Vallombrosa," l. 26), would be either sequestered in the shady woods of Vallombrosa or "on some favored height, he would choose / To wander, and drink inspiration at will" (ll. 23-24). He describes the effects of being on a mountain top on himself in The Prelude. On both Simplon Pass and Mount Snowden, hierophanies occur, though the Alps episode provides only a hierophany in retrospect. In both cases, a reality is revealed which Wordsworth has difficulty in expressing in clear terms, as if the experiences were
ineffable. In the Alps episode, what he seems to be saying is that he discovered, in the process of writing about it, that there are moments in man's life when he experiences the conditions of Being, when the ordinary limitations of time and space do not exist. During these "visitings,"

when the light of sense
Goes out in flashes that have shewn to us
The invisible world, doth Greatness make abode.
There harbours whether we be young or old.
Our destiny, our nature, and our home
Is with infinitude, and only there . . . .
(Prelude VI.534-39)

Here Wordsworth envisions the ultimate in spaciousness--"infinitude" and it is not sensually apprehendable--the world is invisible. This kind of experience is radically different from the experience of spaciousness Wordsworth had in vast space. For here, the revelation is of a reality beyond nature. The Mount Snowden episode is similar. In one manuscript version, Wordsworth makes clear that there is a distinct break in space, that a threshold opens up:

and to my thoughts it gave
A shadowy image of a mighty Mind
That while it copes with visible shapes hears also
Through vents and openings in the ideal world
The astounding chorus of infinity . . . .

This realization occurred because of the "deep and gloomy breathing-place" Wordsworth saw when the mists parted; the place became a metaphor for the "vents and openings" into the ideal and infinite world. He concludes by
saying that minds "truly from the Deity" can "hold communion with the invisible world" (Prelude XIII.105-6). This, finally, is the highest function of the sacred spaces; they, in fact, alienate man from nature, from the visible world, and allow him to transcend the limitations of his time, space, nature, and his own human nature.

The virtue of these sacred spaces, however, can also be their vice. They are, indeed, "world-excluding" (Excur. III.347). In them, even if the visitant has visionary experiences, mystic insights, or revelations of reality, he is still divorced from nature and from human nature. They can enclose him in a private world in a perverse way. Although Wordsworth never describes this effect on himself, he does show, through several of his characters, the effect that living in a sacred space (or a parody of one) can have.

"The Thorn" is the clearest of Wordsworth's poems to detail the fixation with a spot. In the poem, both Martha Ray and, to a lesser extent, the narrator, are obsessed with the thorn and its surroundings—the hill of moss and the muddy pond. The narrator's intense interest is seen in his descriptions of the spot; he is careful to say that the thorn is less than five yards from the mountain path on the left and three yards beyond it to the left is the muddy pond. But Martha Ray's
twenty-year obsession and its cause make up the ostensible story. The spot, like the sacred spaces, is well-defined: it is "High on a mountain's highest ridge" (l. 23). It is her special spot: "I never heard of such as dare / Approach the spot when she is there" (ll. 98-99), and is the focus of her life; she goes to the spot "by day and night, / In rain, in tempest, and in snow" (ll. 78-79). It even has, at least to the superstitious mind, supernatural qualities:

For many a time and oft were heard
Cries coming from the mountain head;
Some plainly living voices were;
And others, I've heard many swear,
Were voices of the dead . . . .
(ll. 159-63)

Some say, if to the pond you go,
And fix on it a steady view,
The shadow of a babe you trace,
A baby and a baby's face,
And that it looks at you;
Whene'er you look on it, 'tis plain
The baby looks at you again.
(ll. 214-20)

Similarly, when the scientific justice-seekers tried to exhume Martha's baby's body, the hill of moss began to stir.

The place is like the more positive sacred spaces in that it is a unique and central spot which possesses qualities above and beyond normal spaces. It is also like them because it removes the visitant (or at least Martha Ray) from the normal flux of the everyday world. But Martha's condition is a negative state of being,
almost non-being. Instead of transcending the changing world through a higher vision, she is only removed from transience to live statically in her mad private world. She has become one of the living dead in both body and mind:

A cruel, cruel fire, they say,
Into her bones was sent;
It dried her body like a cinder,
And almost turn'd her brain to tinder.97

Her continual cry, "Oh misery! oh misery! / Oh woe is me! oh misery!" (ll. 65-66), indicates that her withdrawal is a sterile withdrawal into self and this spot is absolutely necessary for her, for it has accumulated within it all the symbols of her misery. For Wordsworth and his positive figures, the withdrawal to a sacred spot is different. Their withdrawal allows them to transcend self and to recognize some higher Reality; for them the particular spot is ultimately irrelevant for it acts only as a catalyst.

In other poems, too, the fixation with a spot is important. Both "The Ruined Cottage," revised and included as the last part of Book I of The Excursion, and "Incipient Madness," a fragment written about the same time as "The Ruined Cottage,"98 illustrate the effects of an obsession with a spot. The narrator in "Incipient Madness," who has a "sickly heart,"99 is attached to the ruined hut and particularly to a speck
of glass, which is "dearer to [his] soul / Than . . . the moon in heaven" (ll. 12-13), keeps returning to the hut to feed on the sight of the glass. Like Margaret of "The Ruined Cottage," he lives in a timeless state, trapped in a static life: the glow worm leaves, the blackbird disappears, the linnet vanishes; "[he] alone / Remained" (ll. 34–35). Whereas his attachment to a place may only be of two years' duration, Margaret's was longer—five years in "The Ruined Cottage," nine in The Excursion. She too may have been incipiently mad; for she, like Martha Ray, was locked in her past and was chained to a spot, once a "blessed home" (l. 494), which degenerated progressively while she "seemed not changed / In person or appearance" (ll. 649-50). Although she wandered among the fields asking about her husband, she made no attempt to leave the cottage or to alter its appearance; even her husband's clothes hung on the same nail and his staff stood behind the door as always. Her obsession with discovering whether her husband lived or had died is mirrored by her obsession with the cottage, especially its garden:

On this old Bench
For hours she sate, and evermore, her eye
Was busy in the distance, shaping things
Which made her heart beat quick. Seest thou
that path?
The greensward now has broken its grey line;
There to and fro she paced through many a day
Of the warm summer . . . .
. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
Yet still
She loved this wretched spot, nor would for worlds
Have parted hence, and still that length of road
And this rude bench one torturing hope endeared,
Fast rooted at her heart; and here, my friend,
In sickness she remained, and here she died,
Last human tenant of these ruined walls.
(11. 704-10, 736-42)

Margaret's attachment to place is understandable, but it is not inevitable or necessary. In one of the addenda to the poem, Wordsworth has the Wanderer suggest a cure. Although he begins by explaining how the viewer can learn from Margaret's sorrow, his subsequent advice to the poet-narrator applies equally well to Margaret. He says:

Or was it ever meant
That this majestic imagery, the clouds
The ocean and the firmament of heaven
Should lie a barren picture on the mind?
Never for ends of vanity and pain
And sickly wretchedness were we endued
Amid this world of feeling and of life
With apprehension, reason, will and thought,
Affections, organs, passions. Let us rise
From this oblivious sleep, these fretful dreams
Of feverish nothingness. Thus disciplined
All things shall live in us and we shall live
In all things that surround us. This I deem
Our tendency, and thus shall every day
Enlarge our sphere of pleasure and of power . . . .
(11. 68-82)

Although Margaret's cottage is a sacred space only to her, her devotion to her cottage illustrates the problem inherent in all sacred spaces: they can alienate man from nature, from the sensual world which surrounds him, sometimes without "enlarg[ing his] sphere of pleasure and of power" and only restricting him in a static state of
being at best, or non-being at worst.

Wordsworth is aware too of how seclusion in a spot separates man from his fellowmen. In "Lines Left upon a Seat in a Yew-tree," Wordsworth says of the youth:

The world, for so it thought,
Owed him no service; wherefore he at once
With indignation turned himself away,
And with the food of pride sustained his soul
In solitude,—Stranger! these gloomy boughs
Had charms for him; and here he loved to sit,
His only visitants a straggling sheep,
The stone-chat, or the glancing sand-piper;
And on these barren rocks, with fern and heath,
And juniper and thistle, sprinkled o'er,
Fixing his downcast eye, he many an hour
A morbid pleasure nourished, tracing here
An emblem of his own unfruitful life . . . .

(11. 20-32)

Although the solitary youth does have "visionary views" (l. 45) in his secluded grove, his pride is contemptible, for he was unaware that "true knowledge leads to love" (l. 60). This short poem is a thematic introduction to Wordsworth's full-drawn portrait of the Solitary in The Excursion. Not only does the Solitary live in a secluded, urn-shaped vale "with rocks encompassed" (II.334) and "in mountain fastnesses concealed" (II.156), but his daily life within that vale is also secluded—he resides either in a small retreat "Enclosed between an upright mass of rock" (II.414) or in his cottage of which he says, "This is my domain, my cell, / My hermitage, my cabin, what you will-- / I love it better than a snail his house" (II.650-52). He is indeed like
a snail and cannot now exist without a protective enclosure (or enclosures within enclosures). Although he occasionally has contact with "the vulgar ordinances of the world" (II.737), he is like the youth in the lines quoted above. The Wanderer says that the Solitary "forfeited / All joy in human nature" (II.296-97) and

fixed his home,
Or, rather say, sate down by very chance,
Among these rugged hills; where now he dwells,
And wastes the sad remainder of his hours,
Steeped in a self-indulging spleen, that wants not its own voluptuousness;--on this resolved,
With this content, that he will live and die Forgotten,—at safe distance from 'a world Not moving to his mind.'

(II.307-15)

But even the Solitary does live in a truly sacred spot. Wordsworth makes a point of mentioning the difficult passage to the Solitary's vale--the poet and the Wanderer make a steep ascent, reach a plain, and then climb down into the vale. The geography of the vale does indeed make it seem as if they were on a "quest" of "Some secret of the mountains, cavern, fall / Of water, or some lofty eminence" (II. 320-21). Reaching a sacred spot here seems to involve a variation of the rites of passage, presumably because the secret and mysterious spot should not be easily available to the profane world. That the spot is in actuality sacred (not merely the subjective paradise or hell of one of Wordsworth's characters) is emphasized further by
the poet's enraptured comments about it: "Far and near / We have an image of the pristine earth, / The planet in its nakedness" (II.359-61). In addition, it is in this spot that the Solitary had a vision of the holy city. The mist on the hillside parted suddenly (visions often come suddenly in Wordsworth's works) revealing "Glory beyond all glory" (II.832). Like the mystic experience, it is ineffable: "... I am conscious that no power of words / Can body forth, no hues of speech can paint / That gorgeous spectacle." But he does try to describe the wondrous city below him which was sinking "into a boundless depth" (II.837), filled with buildings made with various precious metals and stones. Not only did the Solitary envision infinite spaciousness ("boundless depth"), but spatial harmonies are distorted:

Clouds, mists, streams, watery rocks and emerald turf,
Clouds of all tincture, rocks and sapphire sky,
Confused, commingled, mutually inflamed,
Molten together, and composing thus,
Each lost in each...

(II.853-57)

This visionary experience, unlike those Wordsworth assigns to himself, has the to-be-feared effect. The Solitary relates his reaction: "'I have been dead,' I cried, / 'And now I live! Oh! wherefore do I live?' / And with that pang I prayed to be no more!—" (II.875-77). He has experienced a moment of absolute Being, one which transcends all earthly experience, one which he cannot
hope to repeat. After such a moment ordinary life, even for the happiest of men, could only be incomplete. His reaction may, in part, be Wordsworth's; as several critics have suggested, the Solitary could represent a side of Wordsworth's character which he tried to repress. If this is the case, it may explain why the sacred space is balanced in Wordsworth's autobiographical works with the wide open spaces, for in the latter he can still live a supra-ordinary existence without despairing of life, without giving up a sensual awareness of nature, without giving up love of mankind.

Wordsworth's description of Grasmere may, however, represent a compromise between the sacred spot and vast space. "Home at Grasmere," which falls between the two periods during which The Prelude was composed, is perhaps Wordsworth's most exultant poem. In it, Grasmere, described in the present, has both the qualities of the sacred space and spaciousness. It is a secluded vale, a "perfect . . . spot" (l. 22), protected by hills and "divided from the world / As if it were a cave" (ll. 620-21), yet it provides "unfettered liberty" (l. 37) "within the bound of [its] high concave" (l. 44). Not only is it the "calmest, fairest spot of earth," but it surpasses Eden:

The boon is absolute; surpassing grace
To me hath been vouchsafed; among the bowers
Of blissful Eden this was neither given,
Nor could be given, possession of the good
Which had been sighed for, ancient thought
fulfilled
And dear Imaginations realized
Up to their highest measure, yea and more.
(ll. 103-9)

Like the sacred spots, it is a "holy place" (l. 277) and
those who dwell in the vale are "hallowed" (l. 278). But
Wordsworth implicitly makes a crucial distinction between
it and the sacred spots in The Prelude; he says:

'Tis, but I cannot name it, 'tis the sense
Of majesty, and beauty, and repose,
A blended holiness of earth and sky,
Something that makes this individual Spot,
This small Abiding-place of many Men,
A termination, and a last retreat,
A Centre, come from wheresoe'er you will,
A Whole without dependence or defect,
Made for itself; and happy in itself,
Perfect Contentment, Unity entire.
(ll. 142-51)

Although it is a centre, like the sacred spots, it is a
"blended holiness of earth and sky" and a "Unity." It
does not, like the sacred space at its most powerful,
cancel out the earthly, the material, or the sensuous
beauty of this world. It is instead a transformation of
the earthly, is holy, perfect, unfallen. Instead of
having the separation implied in the sacred spot, it is
a perfect unity of earthly and heavenly. Wordsworth
makes this point again when he says:

Dreamlike the blending also of the whole
Harmonious landscape; all along the shore
The boundary lost, the line invisible
That parts the image from reality;
And the clear hills, as high as they ascend
Heavenward, so piercing deep the lake below.
(ll. 574-79)

Paradoxically, boundaries are literally and metaphorically non-existent. Furthermore, Grasmere itself is important. The sacred spaces in The Prelude often are ultimately unimportant in and of themselves, for they act largely as catalysts and are themselves transcended. Grasmere, unlike the grove or the mountain in The Prelude, is the reality, not the place which allows some higher reality to be revealed.

Although Grasmere seems to have the seclusion of the sacred spot, it does not have the personal isolating quality or the divorce from something like ordinary life. Wordsworth lives with his sister ("She whom now I have, who now / Divides with me this loved abode" [ll. 88-89]) in Grasmere, a "true Community, a genuine frame / Of many into one incorporate" (ll. 614-16). Whereas Wordsworth's sacred spots can isolate one in Being and divorce him from the process of life, from nature, and from fellow human beings, Grasmere allows him the perfection of Being without its isolation. To further emphasize this point, the poet also describes the valley as spacious; it has "spacious heights" (l. 431) and he can exult, "How vast the compass of this theatre" (l. 560) and describe at length the various sights this vastness affords. It is a contradiction in terms—a secluded,
bounded, protected space and at the same time as vast and various as the immense spaces. It is, given Wordsworth's contradictory feelings about space, the perfect resolution.
FOOTNOTES


2 Marshall Mc Luhan and Harley Parker, Through the Vanishing Point: Space in Poetry and Painting (1968; rpt. New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1969), pp. 12, 9. See also Edward T. Hall's The Hidden Dimension (1966; rpt. Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1969), passim and p. 75. Most psychologists and anthropologists believe that space perception is learned, usually unconsciously, and for this reason there is a diversity even among modern cultures, in the ways space is perceived. This diversity is expressed in the language of a culture (Hall notes, for example, that the Japanese word, "ma" or the "intervening interval" between objects, has no equivalent in Western languages) and in the culture's spatial preferences (sizes and shapes of gardens, houses, cities).

3 Mc Luhan, Through the Vanishing Point, p. 239. See also pp. 10, 22.

4 Prelude XI.174. All quotations from The Prelude are from the 1805 version unless otherwise noted. All passages from Wordsworth's works are from The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth, ed. Ernest de Sélincourt and Helen Darbishire (5 vols.; Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1940-49), hereafter referred to as PW. References to The Prelude are from The Prelude, ed. E. de Sélincourt, 2nd ed., rev. Helen Darbishire (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1959). Wordsworth is concerned that the sensual eye, as opposed to the inner imaginative "eye," will predominate, but his poetry also makes clear that his sensual awareness of space is primarily visual.


lines 338-47 of Descriptive Sketches to illustrate that Wordsworth challenged all the standards of the picturesque by describing the Alpine sunset, for the setting sun had not yet appeared in English landscape painting.

7 McLuhan, *Through the Vanishing Point*, p. 22.


10 See also Excur. III.161-93, where the Solitary, whose views in this case do not differ from Wordsworth’s, criticizes the herbalist and geologist who classify and scar nature.

11 See Schneider, *Education*, pp. 35 and 168, for the kinds of problems discussed. One exception is Wordsworth’s comment in "Ode to Duty": "thou dost preserve the stars from wrong" (l. 47). Schneider explains that the ideal of a preserving deity was influenced by Newton’s comment: "Lest the systems of the fixed Stars should, by their gravity, fall on each other mutually, he hath placed those Systems at immense distances one from another" (p. 170).

12 Cambridge scientific study is not the only source of his interest in astronomy. Early in his life, Wordsworth had read Thomson and Young, both of whom were interested in astronomy. Young’s "Ninth Night" is wholly devoted to a discussion of stars and planets.

13 Among the poems devoted to astronomical phenomena are "To the Planet Venus" (1838), "To the Planet Venus, An Evening Star," "To the Moon," "To the Moon (Rydal)," "The Crescent-Moon, the Star of Love," "How beautiful the Queen of Night," and "Once I could hail (howe’er serene the sky)," and "The Eclipse of the Sun."

14 My comment is qualified because Wordsworth asks a series of questions in the poem, each one a possible explanation for the sadness the star gazers feel after looking through the telescope.


16 Ibid., p. 97.
17 Moorman, Wordsworth, p. 97.

18 See, however, Wordsworth's Guide to the Lakes (ed. Ernest de Selincourt [London: Humphrey Milford, 1926], p. 23) where he uses a geometric metaphor in describing space: "Next, almost due west, look down into, and along the deep valley of Wastdale, with its little chapel and half a dozen neat dwellings scattered upon a plain of meadow and corn-ground intersected with stone walls apparently innumerable, like a large piece of lawless patchwork, or an array of mathematical figures, such as in the ancient schools of geometry might have been sportively and fantastically traced out upon the sand."

19 It should be admitted, however, that Wordsworth's love of geometry is not unqualified. He uses geometry negatively, as a metaphor, in the following passage: "But who shall parcel out / His intellect, by geometric rules, / Split, like a province, into round and square?" (Prelude II.208-10). Geometry here is a decidedly "rational" and analytical power, one which divides and creates false boundaries in contrast to the imagination which unifies and harmonizes.

20 Schneider, Education, p. 97, quotes Isaac Barrow who calls God a Geometrician.

21 See below for a discussion of "Guilt and Sorrow."

22 Riding horseback does not seem to stultify Wordsworth's awareness of his environment, partly, I suspect, because it is more open than riding within a vehicle and is freer by not being confined to artificial roads. Wordsworth recalls an earlier horseback ride:

Oh! ye Rocks and Streams,
And that still Spirit of the evening air!
Even in this joyous time I sometimes felt
Your presence, when with slacken'd step we breath'd
Along the sides of the steep hills, or when,
Lighted by gleams of moonlight from the sea,
We beat with thundering hoofs the level sand.
(Prelude II.138-44)

He can be aware tactually of the air surrounding him and aware of heights (the "steep hills") and surfaces (the "level sand").

23 This version occurs in MS 58; PW. V, 124, n.
De Sélincourt, PW, V, 426, comments that in the 1814 version of The Excursion Wordsworth gives the whole speech to the Wanderer. Because the Wanderer and the Poet have similar imaginative sensitivities, this variation is not important.

Many of the walks in The Prelude lead to a renewal in Wordsworth (see IV.121 ff., for example), but Wordsworth's consciousness of space or place is not always striking in them.

This phrase is from Heron's Journey in Scotland which Wordsworth quotes in his own notes to The Excursion, I.341; see PW, V, 412.

In the 1850 version of this passage (XIII.150-51), Wordsworth says specifically, "an invitation into space boundless" (my italics).

Obviously, a poet can create space anywhere—sitting in the darkest, smallest room, for example. The point I am making here is that Wordsworth seems to create it in the process of his walks. We should remember that Wordsworth often even "wrote" his poems while walking; see Prelude IV.101 ff.; V.586-87; XII.139-41.

Karl Kroeber, in The Artifice of Reality: Poetic Style in Wordsworth, Foscolo, Keats, and Leopardi (Madison, 1964), p. 32, notes: "It is important that Wordsworth was reared in barren countryside—barren, as we shall see, of more than vegetable life. What Wordsworth misses in the city is 'among least things / An undersense of greatness,' which is precisely the quality of a simple and unfertile landscape. In a place like the Lake Country there is never too much to distract the eye. There are only a few simple objects, such as a hill, a group of trees, a lake; hence the mind dwells upon them. In such landscapes one comes to appreciate the 'majesty' that dwells in the simplest lives and natural formations. To Wordsworth it is the crowdedness and restlessness of London which typifies the spirit of modern civilization, and crowdedness and restlessness deny to the soul the possibility of envisioning that 'ennobling Harmony' wherein dwells the only 'enduring life.'"

An important exception occurs in "Composed upon Westminster Bridge, September 3, 1802" in which Wordsworth says that the city is "Open unto the fields, and to the sky" (PW, III, 38).
The importance of the sky is seen throughout The Prelude, but the following passage from MS B is particularly illustrative:

Already I began
To follow with my eyes the sailing clouds
In conscious admiration; loved to watch
Their shifting colours and their changeful forms,
And with a curious patience of regard
Laboured the subtile process to detect
By which, like thoughts within the mind itself,
They rose as if from nothing, and dissolved
Insensibly; see with the lofty winds
These hurrying out of sight in troops, while that,
A lonely One upon the mountain top,
Resteth in sedentary quietness,
Faint answers yielding as my thoughts inquired
By what subjection he was fix'd, what law
Stay'd him, and why alone he linger'd there
Crowning that regal hill, or like a spirit
Whispering angelic tidings; and in turn
To records listening of primeval [days] hours
And the dread labours of the earth, ers form
From the conflicting [shocks] powers of flood
and fire
Escaped, stood fixed in permanence serene.
Nor was I unaccustom'd with a heart
As pleas'd to stand beneath th'impending cope . . .

(De Selincourt, Prelude, p. 53, n.)

Certainly, rural dwellers have cottages, but for
Wordsworth the cottage or any interior space is
irrelevant; the point is that rural dwellers have open
fields and Wordsworthian groves surrounding them.

Wordsworth makes a similar point in VIII.594-610.

James Benziger, Images of Eternity: Studies in the
Poetry of Religious Vision from Wordsworth to T. S. Eliot

This poem is well explicated by Paul de Man in
his "Symbolic Landscape in Wordsworth and Yeats," in
In Defense of Reading, ed. Reuben A. Brower and Richard

See also Prelude V.384-88.

Wordsworth's "mythical" apprehension of space is
discussed in the third section of this chapter.
De Sélincourt, PW, V, 415-16, cites Dyer's Gronger Hill as the possible source for the idea that distance softens harsh and stern elements of nature.


Kroeber, Artifice, p. 91, states that "much topographical poetry is indefinite as to where the describing poet stands." This is true of the passage I am discussing, but is generally not true of Wordsworth's poetry. See Tintern Abbey, for instance, where Wordsworth says, "Here, under this dark sycamore" (1. 10).

Wordsworth uses the word "perspective" in "Ode" (1814), l. 5; see PW, III, 143-48.

McLuhan, Through the Vanishing Point, pp. 14, 74-75.

Wordsworth mentions another possible effect of perspective in the following passage:

As the black storm upon the mountain top
Sets off the sunbeam in the valley, so
That huge fermenting mass of human-kind
Serves as a solemn back-ground, or relief,
To single forms and objects, whence they draw,
For feeling and contemplative regard,
More than inherent liveliness and power.

(1850 Prelude VII.619-25)

Although it is not strikingly different from the 1805 version, I quote the 1850 version because it has the key words dealing with pictorial perspective.

Several possible locations have been suggested. See De Sélincourt, Prelude, pp. 534-35.

In this connection, it is interesting that the artist Braque criticized perspective as only an eye-fooling bad trick which makes it impossible for the artist to convey the full experience of space; see Hall, The Hidden Dimension, p. 60. Wordsworth manages to overcome this limitation, if it is one, by transcending mere visual space.

Noyes, Landscape, p. 211.

See Prelude VIII.105 ff.
See also the lines about the blind beggar (Prelude VII.598 ff.).

McLuhan, Through the Vanishing Point, p. 6.

Hall, The Hidden Dimension, p. 43.

Bachelard, The Poetics of Space, p. 43.

Silence also accompanies another experience which makes Wordsworth particularly aware of boundless heavens and transcendent powers. This experience is described in "Composed upon an Evening of Extraordinary Splendour and Beauty":

Time was when field and watery cove
With modulated echoes rang,
While choirs of fervent Angels sang
Their vespers in the grove;
Or, crowning, star-like, each some sovereign height,
Warbled, for heaven above and earth below,
Strains suitable to both.--Such holy rite,
Methinks, if audibly repeated now
From hill or valley, could not move
Sublimer transport, purer love,
Than doth this silent spectacle--the gleam--
The shadow--and the peace supreme!

II
No sound is uttered,—but a deep
And solemn harmony pervades
The hollow vale from steep to steep,
And penetrates the glades.
Far-distant images draw nigh,
Called forth by wondrous potency
Of beamy radiance, that imbues
Whate'er it strikes with gem-like hues!

--From worlds not quickened by the sun
A portion of the gift is won;
An intermingling of Heaven's pomp is spread
On grounds which British shepherds tread!

(PW, IV, 359, ll. 9-27, 37-40)

It is, of course, the magnificent sunset which is essential in Wordsworth's reaction, but he explicitly mentions the silence which adds to the moving quality of the scene.

The experience on Mount Snowden is also prefaced
by the absence of both clear light and sound, though sound—"the roar of waters" (Prelude XIII.58) and the light of the moon are important in the end-result of that experience.

55 Most of the information here is derived from Hall, The Hidden Dimension, p. 41 ff.

56 James Joyce provides an interesting contrast here, for he often defines space through smell. The passage on peasants' dwellings is a striking example of how space can be defined by smell (A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man [1916; rpt. New York: The Viking Press, 1956], p. 18).

57 Russell Noyes, Landscape, p. 201, seems to confirm my judgment; he writes: "The 'forms and images' that filled his mind were visible pictures, but they were charged with emotion and had substance. They became for the poet configurations both in the mind and in the external world. This simultaneous identity allowed him to shift easily from inward vision to outward scene and back again; to apply in the linguistic context the words 'sense' and 'form' with equal accuracy to mind and Nature; and to set up paradoxes of meaning that add a rich complexity to his descriptions. He can be at once mysterious and matter-of-fact, or naturalistic."

58 I quote from the 1849 version of Descriptive Sketches; the substance of this passage is not different from the 1793 version.


60 McLuhan, Through the Vanishing Point, p. 153.

61 Wordsworth compares his childhood to that of an American Indian. He says his life was "as if [he] had been born / On Indian Plains, and from [his] Mother's hut / Had run abroad in wantonness, to sport, / A naked Savage, in the thunder shower" (Prelude I.301-4).

62 Notably, Wordsworth describes dreamers, who tell "lawless tales," that is, give men a sense of freedom, as creating a "Space like a Heaven fill'd up with Northern lights" (Prelude V.556).

63 The major exception occurs in Book I of The Prelude in the boat-stealing episode. After Wordsworth stole the boat, the cliff "Rose up between [him] and the
stars, and still / With measur'd motion, like a living thing / Strode after [him]" (Prelude I.410-13).

Geoffrey Durrant, in William Wordsworth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), p. 119, explains: "This is an entirely natural event. The highest peak is hidden by the nearer hill, until it is revealed as the boat is rowed from the shore. When this happens, the farther hill seems by an optical illusion to be growing steadily higher. To the boy's guilty mind, the peak seems to be rearing its head; the mountain itself pursues him. Wordsworth shows the boy 'projecting' his own guilt into his surroundings, and by a poetic act natural to childhood, giving a human or super-human life to his surroundings."

64 The reference is actually to Bartholomew Fair, the emblem of London.

65 Ernest de Sélincourt notes that the comparison of London to Alcairo and Babylon (VII.85) is reminiscent of Paradise Lost I.717-19, and that Wordsworth's description of the crowds as "less distinguishable shapes" (VII.228) is reminiscent of Paradise Lost II.667-68 (The Prelude, pp. 562, 563).

66 The poetic style here and elsewhere in Book VII seems to imitate the cramping of space in its abruptness and lists of sights.

67 Although Edward E. Bostetter, in The Romantic Ventriloquists (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1963), p. 24, seems to be more interested in the social causes of suffering in Wordsworth's characters or man's inhumanity to man, he also suggests that Wordsworth does not always blame society for suffering, but sees it as a condition of fallen man. Bostetter treats the second spot of time (when Wordsworth watches for the horses that are to take him home for the Christmas holidays, during which time his father dies), as an example of Wordsworth's puritanical sense of guilt. Bostetter says that Wordsworth thinks of God as punishing him because he has been too happy; therefore, he must suffer. Bostetter also says: "In the later poems, suffering is seen as a necessary condition of life which becomes proof of immortality, an ultimate reprieve and reward; it is God's test of us" (p. 54).

68 My assertion should be qualified by Wordsworth's reference to the pleasure he felt in looking over "three long leagues / Of shining water" (Prelude I.605-6) which provided a memory to "impregnate and to elevate
the mind" (Prelude I.624).

69 Preface to "Guilt and Sorrow," PW, I, 95.

70 Bostetter, in The Romantic Ventriloquists, makes the points that "the moments when [Wordsworth] recognized in himself a unique poetic power are most frequently associated with bleak and lonely landscapes" (p. 27), and that "the abrupt juxtaposition of brutal sacrifice and benign instruction, of destructive and constructive power [in his vision on Salisbury Plain], reveals, more or less consciously, how unmoral Wordsworth's fundamental poetic experience was, how much he relished the display of power for its own sake" (p. 25).

71 The woman's story is conveyed in similar spatial terms. Her fall into experience led her away from the farm "sheltered like a little nest" (PW, I, 337, n.) to "roaming the illimitable waters round" (l. 364).

72 It should be admitted that Wordsworth's emphasis on place is inherited in part from the topographical poetry of the eighteenth century.

73 See Prelude XI.163, and "At Furness Abbey" (PW, III, 63, l. 11). It should be mentioned that although most of the places which seem imbued with a special spirit are natural spots, there is one notable exception--Cambridge. Regardless of what Wordsworth thinks of Cambridge in the present, he cannot forget its past greatness. He says that he

could not print

Ground where the grass had yielded to the steps Of generations of illustrious Men, Unmov'd; I could not always lightly pass Through the same Gateways; sleep where they had slept, Wake where they wak'd, range that enclosure old That garden of great intellects undisturb'd. (Prelude III.261-67)

And he remembers particularly drinking in Milton's room, which on reflection he sees as a desecration to that consecrated spot.

88

75 Ibid., p. 24.
76 Ibid., p. 25.
77 De Sélincourt, Prelude, p. 584.
78 The passages occur respectively in "A Whirl-Blast from behind the hill," l. 17; Prelude XI.16; MS 18a in De Sélincourt, Prelude, p. 610.
79 The comparison to a cloister is made in the 1850 Prelude VIII.462. The fir grove in "When, to the attractions of the busy world," is called a "cloistral place" (l. 11).
80 De Sélincourt, Prelude, p. 562.
81 MS 18a in De Sélincourt, Prelude, p. 610.
83 MS 18a in De Sélincourt, Prelude, p. 75.
84 Herbert Lindenberger, On Wordsworth's Prelude (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), p. 89, says of Snowden that it is "essentially an island in the mist." And in Wordsworth's Guide to the Lakes, p. 31, he says that the hills "rise up like islands from the plain."
85 In the V-version of The Prelude, Wordsworth uses the word "Spirits" rather than "Nature" in l. 363.
86 Wordsworth's letter to Dorothy also makes this point about the Alps: "Among the more awful scenes of the Alps, I had not thought of man, or a single created being; my whole soul was turned to him who produced the terrible majesty before me" (quoted in Basil Willey, "When Men and Mountains Meet, ES, 43 [1962], 378-83.
87 Lindenberger, On Wordsworth's Prelude, p. 89, says, however, that "despite the obvious symbolic value that Wordsworth felt in elevation, and specifically in the physical act of ascent, one notes that his visionary experience on mountains was more centrally concerned with depths rather than heights . . . ."
88 The major exceptions occur with Wordsworth's use
of depths rather than heights. Occasionally depths have a positive value as shown in his use of the cavern or chasm metaphor for the hiding place of the imagination (1850 Prelude VI.594; Prelude III.246; XIII.174 and 64-65) and in his use of "under" words like "Under-Powers" and "under-presence" which "express his profound consciousness of that mysterious life which lies deep down below our ordinary experience and [from] whence we draw our power . . ." (De Séllincourt, Prelude, p. 622). For the use of the cavern and abyss metaphors, see also Newton P. Stallnecht, Strange Seas of Thought (Durham: Duke University Press, 1945), p. 126 ff.; Lindenberger, On Wordsworth's Prelude, p. 85 ff.; and David Perkins, The Quest for Permanence (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1959), p. 23 ff.


90 Ibid., pp. 26 and 36-37.

91 PW, IV, 12, n. and 397. The reference is to the American painter Washington Alston.

92 MS A in De Séllincourt, Prelude, p. 483, n.

93 Wordsworth actually uses this phrase negatively to describe the groves of the Epicurean philosophers.

94 Lindenberger, On Wordsworth's Prelude, p. 212, makes the point, however, that all of Wordsworth's solitaries "in one way or another are projections of his own self, his hopes, fears, and depths of despair . . . ."

95 Geoffrey H. Hartman, in Wordsworth's Poetry 1787-1814 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964), calls this negative attachment to place the "spot syndrome." The discussion which follows has been influenced by Hartman's perceptive and provocative interpretation.

96 In one version, her obsession has lasted twenty-two years; see PW, II, 244.

97 This variant occurs in a note in PW, II, 244.

98 PW, V, 377.

99 De Séllincourt includes the MS version which contains this phrase in PW, I, 315, n.

100 It is impossible to tell how long he has been obsessed. He says that the linnet sang two years and
vanished, so the obsession has been of at least two years' duration.

101 All quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from "The Ruined Cottage," in PN, V, 379-404.

102 Wordsworth made three different attempts at a conclusion for the poem; the last one is the one to which I refer (PN, V, 400 ff.). It was later incorporated into the fourth book of The Excursion.

103 Quoted from a variant included in the notes to PN, V, 72.

104 The Solitary's reaction is, however, perfectly compatible with his personality. His life has been characterized by suffering and despair, even by death wishes.

105 This point is again emphasized when Wordsworth describes the city where "neighborhood serves rather to divide / Than to unite" (11. 600-601).
CHAPTER II

THE IMPRISONED EAGLE: CAPTIVITY AND

THE INFINITE IN THE POETRY OF BYRON

Influences on the Development of

Byron's Space-Consciousness

Bernard Blackstone has characterised Byron as a temporal thinker in contrast to Wordsworth, Keats, and Shelley, who he believes think more in terms of space. On the face of it, this generalization seems accurate. Certainly one of the major themes in Byron's poems concerns the ravages of time on the mind, on love, and on civilizations. Byron's interest in history, formed as a boy when he read histories of almost all the major civilizations and epochs, is amply shown in Childe Harold's Pilgrimage and in allusions throughout his works; his interest in Biblical history, particularly Old Testament lore, is evident in Cain and Heaven and Earth. But Cain should remind us of Byron's great interest in space; the second act, after all, details Cain's journey through myriads of stars. Byron's interest in and use of space—cosmic, natural, and internal,
recurs, though sometimes in subtle ways, throughout his poetry. Spaciousness, infinity, bounded space, imprisonment—these become for Byron, as for Wordsworth, important spatial metaphors which illuminate his themes. And just as Wordsworth's characters are in part defined by their relationship to space, so too are Byron's. In fact, Byron's space-consciousness is highly developed and provides a means of understanding him and his poetry.

Because Byron can so often be identified with his characters, it is particularly important to examine the biographical influences which lead to the kinds of space-consciousness one finds in his poetry. Like Wordsworth, Byron came under the early influence of nature. His boyish delight in natural scenery, in its wildness, freedom, and expansiveness, is recorded in early poems like, among others, "When I Roved a Young Highlander," "I Would I Were a Careless Child," "Fragment--Written Shortly After the Marriage of Miss Chaworth," "The Adieu," and "Lachin y Gair," and obliquely in his romance The Island, in which Torquil's past, spent in the highlands, mirrors Byron's own. The sublime elements in nature appealed to Byron, particularly bleak and barren hills, rude crags, dusky caves, so much so that he was bored by flat land: "Level roads don't suit me, as thou knowest; it must be up hill or down, and then I am
more au fait."² This conditioning to natural wildness occurred while he was quite young, possibly as Edward Marjarum speculates, because he wanted escape and refuge from conventional social intercourse which was difficult for him, being shy and lame.³ Whatever the cause, Byron's early experiences, like Wordsworth's, conditioned his later responses. Byron explains, for example, his love for mountains in this way:

Long have I roamed through lands which are not mine,
Adored the Alp, and loved the Apennine,
Revered Parnassus, and beheld the steep
Jove's Ida and Olympus crown the deep:
But 'twas not all long-ages' lore, nor all
Their nature held me in their thrilling thrall:
The infant rapture still survived the boy,
And Lock-na-gar with Ida looked o'er Troy.
Mixed Celtic memories with the Phrygian mount,
And Highland linns with Castalie's clear fount.
Forgive me, Homer's universal shade!
Forgive me, Phoebus! that my fancy strayed;
The North and Nature taught me to adore
Your scenes sublime, from those beloved before.

(The Island II.xii.284-97)

Given Byron's background, it is not surprising that mountains became an important setting and symbol in his works; in Manfred, occasioned in part he claims by seeing the Staubach and the Jungfrau,⁵ the sublime and elemental setting is an appropriate retreat for Manfred's towering and titanic spirit, and the icy coldness and indifferent destruction on the mountains parallels his own isolation and self-destruction. In Heaven and Earth, Mount Ararat's "secret crest" (I.1.149), the "beacon of the world"
(I.iii.30), the "spot / Nearest the stars" (I.iii.31-32), suggests the sublimity of upper air where angels live and is the proper meeting place for the mortal daughters of Cain and the heavenly seraphs. 6 And given Byron's personal need for and love of wild and spacious nature, it is not surprising that he dreams of escaping to South America to "possess [himself] of the pinnacle of the Andes, or a spacious plain of unbounded extent in an eligible earthquake situation." 7 The experience of childhood freedom and the awareness of nature's sublimity could not be erased.

Byron's space-consciousness, like Wordsworth's, was developed by an actual closeness to nature. His two favorite sports, practiced as a boy and continued throughout his life, were horseback riding and swimming. Both of these activities put him in intimate contact with his surroundings, a quality which he apparently desired. When planning a trip to the Highlands in his college years, for example, he explains that he and his friend will "proceed in a tandem (a species of open carriage) through the western passes to Inverary, where [they] shall purchase shelties, to enable [them] to view places inaccessible to vehicular conveyances." 8 But he was no mere viewer of inaccessible places; verbs like "stray," "roam," "rove," which recur in his early poetry, indicate an early intimacy with natural spaciousness. Similarly, swimming must have
given him a special awareness of the sea—a respect and a love for it. The sea appears repeatedly in his poetry and seems to have affected him even more strongly than mountains.\(^9\) It appears frequently as a symbol for infinite, often terrifying, vastness with similarities both to outer space\(^\text{10}\) and to an endless, sterile desert.\(^\text{11}\) It becomes "basically, the symbol of the all-containing, the matrix of time and space in which all things subsist and submit to change."\(^\text{12}\) It is a symbol for the creative, as well as the destructive powers in the cosmos, and as such serves as a medium of natural regeneration and metaphoric rebirth. Byron could, of course, have arrived at these symbolic values for the sea without his love for swimming—Coleridge did, but this evolution of meaning seems quite natural to an avid swimmer.\(^\text{13}\)

Other personal circumstances may have also determined the kinds of space-consciousness which we find in Byron's poetry, as well as the values he attributes to certain spaces. Written in 1816, Byron's "Epistle to Augusta" sets up an important contrast. In it he says, "There yet are two things in my destiny,—/A world to roam through, and a home with thee" (ll. 7-8).\(^\text{14}\) The last line indicates two contradictory pulls, expressed spatially in Byron's works: vast arenas of action and calm repose in the "haven of [his] happiness" (l. 10). On the purely biographical level, it is easy to understand
why the idea of home would be important to him; his own home life had not been a "haven of happiness"; he was forced to sell Newstead Abbey, which he regarded as his "only tie to England" and which had been the only home he ever loved; and he spent his adult life moving from one temporary "home" to the next, each a sort of substitute Newstead Abbey with spacious quarters (something he insisted on) and an entourage of servants and pets. But no place quite replaced Newstead in his imagination. Its chivalric past, emphasized in "On Leaving Newstead Abbey," inspired him with courage; its religious past, emphasized in "Elegy on Newstead Abbey," stimulated his imaginative and superstitious nature. And finally, Newstead came to be for him consecrated ground. Had Don Juan been continued, Norman Abbey, Byron's re-creation of his boyhood home, might have become the setting for a sophisticated revision of the Haïdée-Don Juan affair, with Aurora Raby replacing Haïdée. Given how Byron felt about Newstead, it would have been an appropriate substitute for Haïdée's island paradise.

Byron's own sense of placelessness (or displacement) is reflected in his characters who are often without homes or countries. The list includes Childe Harold, self-exile; Don Juan; the mutineers of Byron's last romance, The Island, who were "Men without country, who too long estranged, / Had found no native home, or found it
changed . . . " (I.ii.29-30); and especially Torquil, who is compared to Ishmael (II.viii.182) and who "deemed the deep his home" (II.viii.170). The characters have in their different ways the same need for a home and a quiet and private repose as Byron did, but of them only Torquil gains an adopted "home with thee" (his Neuha). Significantly, it is an island paradise, closed off to the world, similar to the home Don Juan attains temporarily with Haidee. Byron's dream, like Shelley's, was to purchase some "island in the South Sea...retire for the remainder of his life" [sic] and again like Shelley, he views Venice as "the greenest island of [his] imagination." The island retreat becomes in the process of his thinking a spatial construct embodying ideas of home, love, innocence, and in the case of Venice, a pseudo-island, a kind of sacred space and catalyst for poetic inspiration. But for the most part in Byron's works, there is no Newstead Abbey, no island home, no paradisal or sacred space. Wordsworth's dictum that "we find our happiness or not at all" "in the very world which is the world / Of all of us," not in "some secreted Island" (Prelude X.725-8) is the kind of conclusion Byron arrives at, though his formulation of the idea is more pessimistic. He sees his destiny, and often that of his characters, as being exiled, travelling in the world, and generally not finding happiness in it.
Although in the "Epistle to Augusta," Byron regards it as his particular "doom" to roam the wide world and to have no rest (ll. 13-16), he also says "The world is all before me" (l. 81). The sense of that line is that he welcomes the challenge that space offers. Like Shelley, Byron was obsessively on the move; early in his life, he wanted to escape from the "tight little island" of England to what he thought of as the freedom of the Mediterranean world; and he associated travel with the wild freedom of nature, with vast extents of mountains and oceans. Wanderlust is an integral part of Byron's--and the Romantic--personality. In his youth he planned trips to the Scottish Highlands and spent his adult life on the move. In addition, as Byron told Thomas Moore, agitation of any kind always gave "a rebound" to his spirits, an attitude he attributes to Napoleon, undoubtedly thinking of himself.

But Quiet to quick bosoms is a Hell,  
And there hath been thy bane; there is a fire  
And motion of the Soul which will not dwell  
In its own narrow being, but aspire  
Beyond the fitting medium of desire;  
And, but once kindled, quenchless evermore,  
Preys upon high adventure, nor can tire  
Of aught but rest; a fever at the core,  
Fatal to him who bears, to all who ever bore.  
(CH III.xlii)

Just as there is in Byron and in his characters an intense desire for rest and the calm of home, there is equally a passion for "high adventure" and a desire to break out of
the bonds of one's narrow life to reach out to the boundless world outside. This kind of paradoxical response is typically Romantic, but of the Romantic poets it is Byron who is least able to reconcile these contradictory pulls.

While the circumstances of Byron's personal life are important determining factors in the development of his space-consciousness, the effects of religion are also significant. Almost everyone who writes about Byron attempts to come to terms with Byron's religious views. I am not concerned so much with his particular allegiances—to Calvinism, pantheism, skepticism, Deism, Socinianism, Catholicism, Manicheism, or Zoroastrianism—as I am with the religious origins of his attitudes toward and depictions of space. If religious prepossessions had, as Marjarum maintains, "a determining influence upon his scientific, historic, and philosophical interests," we could certainly expect that, at least indirectly, his space-consciousness would be affected.

Although Hoxie Neal Fairchild has warned that the influence of Calvinism on Byron's thought has been exaggerated, I suspect that Byron's early Calvinist indoctrination was, in fact, the most important, though perhaps subtle influence on how Byron regarded and depicted space. Fairchild might even agree, since he says:

Perhaps Calvinism was less important in shaping
his character than in providing materials which could be used for expressing his deeper feelings in a simplified form.

The explicit Calvinist doctrines which find their way into Byron's works and affect his space-consciousness are these: the view of God as absolutely omnipotent and omniscient, the idea that "Creation depends absolutely and continuously on God, who fosters and guides it by this secret inspiration," for which He demands man's grateful worship and absolute obedience to His authority, and particularly the view that God is in no way to be pantheistically identified with His works, for a vast gulf exists between man and His creator. A corollary to these views of God is that man is impotent, ignorant, and separate from the purity of God's world. Calvinism views man as fallen and incurably corrupt; therefore, God must act as an agent of wrath and justice. Calvinism, then, gives its believers a strong sense of sin, fatality, insignificance, and gloom. The more positive doctrines of Calvinism--God's benevolence, Christ's atonement, man's immortality and divine spirit--are relatively unimportant in Byron's poetry.

Byron's view of man as cursed with "this uneradicable taint of sin" (CH IV.cxxvi), undoubtedly influenced by the Calvinism he tried to reject, accounts in part for the travel-pilgrimage motif in Byron's works. Byron himself felt that he had the mark of Cain, the eternal
wanderer, and was called the Pilgrim by Edward Trelawny and the "Pilgrim of Eternity" by Shelley. And many of Byron's characters, at one point or another, are compared with Cain. On Childe Harold's faded brow was written "curst Cain's unresting doom" (CH I.lxxxiii) and he had "that settled, ceaseless gloom / The fabled Hebrew wanderer bore" (CH I."To Inez," 1. 5); the Giaour says of himself: "But look--'tis written on my brow! / There read of Cain the curse and crime" (ll. 1057-58); and Selim was reared "like the nephew of a Cain" (The Bride of Abydos II.xii.686). Although Byron was interested in many of Cain's qualities, as his drama Cain shows, Cain as wanderer-traveller is of special interest to him.

Travelling at its best is depicted in Act II of Cain. There Cain does gain knowledge and expanded awareness—the positive effect of journeys through vast space, earthly or heavenly; but he also gains the unfortunate knowledge that he is nothing in the face of vast space, with its myriads of worlds, and eternal time, which has seen creations and recreations. Cain's own feelings of littleness, a direct result of his journey, lead him to crime and its punishment—incessant travelling. This is emphasized by Eve's curse, "[May] his agonies / Drive him forth o'er the wilderness, like us / From Eden," (III.422-24), by the Angel's prophesy, "Now art thou / Cursed from the earth . . . / A fugitive shalt thou / Be from this
day, and a vagabond on earth" (III.471-72, 475-76), and by Adah's reply to the Angel:

This punishment is more than he can bear.
Behold, thou driv'st him from the face of earth,
And from the face of God shall he be hid.
A fugitive and vagabond on earth,
"Twill come to pass that whoso findeth him
Shall slay him.

(III.477-82)
The play ends with Adah and Cain going "eastward from Eden" (III.552) to wander in the wilderness. Vast space, especially a wilderness to be wandered through unceasingly, is the penalty for Cain's sin. Cain repeated the sin of his parents and for Byron, man is doomed to repeat that sin. Wandering through the wilderness was Cain's actual penalty; thus, Byron and his characters repeat his wanderings. The vast wilderness of earthly space is both literal and historic, as well as metaphoric and eternal.33

Byron's view of God, inherited too from his Calvinistic background, has ramifications for his space-consciousness. Although Byron expressed pantheistic sentiments, notably in the third and fourth cantos of Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, more often he imagines God as widely, if not infinitely separated from His creation and creatures.34 The plot of Heaven and Earth is built on this assumption which is expressed approvingly by the Elect and Establishment figure Noah: "Has not God made a barrier between Earth / And Heaven, and limited each, kind to kind?" (I.iii.475-76). Barriers are characteristic
of God in Byron's poetic world. Steffan notes that

Byron added the gate, the walls, and the battlements around Eden, which were not biblical, but Miltonic and traditional. These were not ornaments, for they too belonged to the conception of a restrictive deity and became one more grievance, a constant reminder of the prohibition against man's liberty and an obstacle to his aspiration for knowledge and immortality.35

Fiery-sword-wielding cherubim even patrol the boundaries of Eden to exclude men from that pure region. Similarly, Byron depicts man as separated from God and from His realm, outer space. Although Cain is not excluded from the spiritual, heavenly realm, his space trip, is, of course, a great privilege granted him by the other superpower, Lucifer. The ordinary man in the ordinary world is excluded. Clouds or veils or space itself are common metaphors to depict the separation; most striking of these is the passage from Don Juan:

'T was twilight, and the sunless day went down
Over the waste of waters; like a veil,
Which, if withdrawn, would but disclose the
frown
Of one whose hate is masked but to assail.
(II.xlix)36

The result of Byron's Calvinism, influenced too by his interest in Manicheism, is a kind of dualism which pervades his poetry. Man, to Byron, is "half dust—half deity" (Manfred I.i.11.40). He is aware of his spiritual nature and of the spiritual realm, but is imprisoned in a material body in an inferior world. Byron was totally incapable of settling for this earth as Wordsworth did or
finally of mythologizing it. For him, there was a spiritual realm, usually outer space; earth, a vast fallen wilderness with only occasional illusory Edens, barred to most men; and sometimes Hell, variously located on our earth, as in *Heaven and Earth* or *Manfred*, or in the spiritual realm, as in *Cain*. It is primarily Byron's Calvinistic concepts of God and man which led to this cosmological scheme.

Edward Bostetter has said of Byron:

Byron was haunted by two views of the universe irreconcilable both with each other and with the sentimental deism and Christianity of his day. One was the Calvinistic view and the other the scientific. The two were closely associated in his mind; one would usually recall the other. They were, in fact, frequently confused: the anthropomorphic frame of Calvinism would become the metaphorical construction enclosing the scientific view, as in *Cain*.

The scientific view of the universe plays a major role in the development and expression of Byron's space-consciousness. Although the effects of his knowledge of science do not appear significantly in any of his early works, Byron was certainly reading early in his life about science and scientists as well as reading poets like Pope and Thomson, whose works were suffused with current scientific theory and attitudes. In his biography of Byron, Thomas Moore cites a reading list from Byron's "memorandum-book" which includes a formidable number of all kinds of works which Byron had read by 1807. Among
these books are histories, poetry, biographies, geographies, and philosophical and theological works. Notable are the Life of Newton, the philosophies of "Paley, Locke, Bacon, Hume, Berkeley, Drummond, Beattie, and Bolingbroke," and the poetry entry, "All the British Classics...with most of the living poets, Scott, Southey, &c." And by the time he wrote Cain in 1821, he had read "certain rationalists and scientists like Bayle, Warburton, Voltaire, and Cuvier" and adopted freely "scientific" attitudes and conceptions from a wide variety of sources. In Cain, for example, Byron's early Calvinism is blended "with Lucretian atomism, and Fontenelle's plurality of worlds; with the deism of the Essay on Man and the cosmology of Night Thoughts; with the Pre-Adamites of Vathek and with Buffon's giants and 'organic degeneration'; with the spontaneous generation of Erasmus Darwin; and finally with the catastrophism of Cuvier." Other works betray the same kind of eclectic knowledge and use of scientific sources. But I am not concerned so much with particular influences on particular works as I am concerned with how Byron's scientific knowledge and interests might affect his space-consciousness.

The science which most captured Byron's imagination was astronomy—the science of space. By 1808, Byron said "of philosophy, astronomy, and metaphysics [I have read] more than I can comprehend." To the scientist, Byron's
"comprehension," or at least his expression, may be an issue. The admixture in Manfred of astronomy and astrology or Manfred's salute to the sun as "chief star! / Centre of many stars!" (III.11.16-17) or the descriptions of "walking" in space in Cain indicate that Byron felt no compulsion to be absolutely scientific in his poetic expression. Nonetheless, he read works about astronomy early in his life, his interest "was unabated," and it even took an empirical turn when he "viewed the Moon and Stars through Herschell's [sic] telescope, and saw that they were worlds," and when he and Teresa Guiccioli and friends watched in 1820 an eclipse of the sun "armed with optical instruments and with smoked glass." Teresa claimed that Byron had a great love for astronomical studies, "considering them a puissant means of ameliorating humanity morally and intellectually--of humiliating their pride--of consoling afflictions."

This interest in and love of astronomical studies enriched Byron's poetry. Some of Byron's most lyrical poetry either directly or indirectly concerns outer space; his characters are more fully delineated by their attitudes toward space; his themes are sometimes illuminated through the use of space; and in many small ways, in allusions and metaphors relating to space, Byron's poetry testifies to his attraction.
The following speech from *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* indicates something of the power which stars, "the poetry of Heaven," had on Byron's own imagination:

Ye Stars! which are the poetry of Heaven!
If in your bright leaves we would read the fate
Of men and empires,—'tis to be forgiven,
That in our aspirations to be great,
Our destinies o'erleap their mortal state,
And claim a kindred with you; for ye are
A Beauty and a Mystery, and create
In us such love and reverence from afar,
That Fortune,—Fame,—Power,—Life, have named
themselves a Star.

(III.1xxxviii)

Manfred's exultant address and farewell to the sun,
"Glorious orb," (III.11.9 ff.) is similar. But Cain, of all Byron's works, conveys most lyrically and grandly the power which the immensity of space had on Cain's (and Byron's) imagination:

Oh thou beautiful
And unimaginable ether and
Ye multiplying masses of increased
And still increasing lights! What are ye? What
Is this blue wilderness of interminable
Air where ye roll along, as I have seen
The leaves along the limpid streams of Eden?
Is your course measured for ye? Or do ye
Sweep on in your unbounded revelry
Through an aerial universe of endless
Expansion, at which my soul aches to think,
Intoxicated with eternity?

(II.1.98-109)

Byron too was "intoxicated with eternity." The idea of "endless expansion," of an infinite universe, recurs throughout his poetry. Although it is Lucifer who replies "yea" to Cain's question, "And what I have seen, / Yon blue immensity, is boundless?" (II.11.389-90), the idea
is repeated often by more reliable spokesmen: Anah refers
to Asasiel's home in "space infinite and hoary" (Heaven
and Earth (I.1.41); Manfred alludes to the spirits who
live in "the unbounded universe" (I.1.29); the narrator
in The Giaour uses the idea of infinite boundless space
in a metaphor (1. 273); and several times, Byron has Cain
remark on the "innumerable lights" in space. $^{54}$ These
references are important, especially by way of contrast
with the most important "cosmic" poet to influence Byron—
Milton. Milton's cosmos, by and large, was a vast but a
"closed" world with its "thousand thousand stars"
(Paradise Lost VII.383) or its "numbered stars"
(VIII.19), $^{55}$ whereas Byron's universe is infinite with
infinite plenitude. $^{56}$ The infinite universe, which
eighteenth-century had dramatized, encouraged the
Romantic yearning for the unknown and the unlimited and
became in Byron's poetry a subject for awed exclamation.

Like the Alps, which "expand the spirit"
(CH III.lxii), outer space for Byron encouraged the
expansion of the imagination and made possible the
transcendence of the finite, time-bound, space-bound,
matter self: "Who thinks of self, when gazing on the
sky?" (II.xvi.393) asks the narrator of The Island, after
depicting the time-less, space-less existence of Torquil
and Neuha (II.xv-xvi). This self-transcendence is
suggested in several of Byron's poems and, in one way
or another, it is usually associated with outer space. And when one transcends self and space, he becomes like those spiritual, infinite existences who dwell, in Byron's world, in outer space: like God, who even Lucifer admits, dwells "here and o'er all space" (Cain II.11.368), even though Cain, still bound by finite, earthly conceptions, insists that God must have some "allotted dwelling" (II.11.369); like Byron's angels who "walk" all space; and finally, like Cain who temporarily transcends earthly space (and time) in his brief journey, even though after it, he is made even more aware that he is "half dust, half deity," "unfit," as he tells Abel, "for mortal converse" (III.184). Always concerned with dust, man's mortal state, Byron seizes on outer space as the perfect realm, the unbounded world of unbounded existence. In "When Coldness Wraps this Suffering Clay," Byron defines this star-like existence:

Eternal--boundless,--undecayed,  
A thought unseen, but seeing all,
All, all in earth, or skies displayed,  
Shall it survey, shall it recall;  
Each fainter trace that Memory holds  
So darkly of departed years,
In one broad glance the Soul beholds,  
And all, that was, at once appears.

(PW, III, 396)

As Cain (and Byron) wish, the soul sees all; there are no boundaries. The soul has totum simul--it sees all in a moment, in "one broad glance."

57 This conception of existence in outer space is not, of course, scientific,
but it is the scientific vision of an unlimited universe which allowed Byron to make these connections.58

Teresa Guiccioli's explanation of the two effects of astronomical studies—to humiliate pride and to console afflictions—are amply seen in Byron's characters. Many of them admire the firmaments59 and some are consoled; Byron says of himself in "One Struggle More, and I am Free," "On many a lone and lovely night / It soothed to gaze upon the sky" (ll. 25-26); and Japhet, in Heaven and Earth, admits that although the stars cannot aid him, it soothes him to look upon the "eternal beauty of undying things" (I.11.8); a similar sympathetic attachment to the stars is seen in Cain. The apparent immortality of the stars, their untainted beauty, and their detachment from mortal anguish and frustration, comfort the human spirit.

At the same time, however, the heavens, especially when viewed as infinite, inspire fear and frustration in Byron and his characters. Edward Bostetter explains how Byron arrived at this pessimistic view:

Byron has often been accused of shallowness of imagination and vision, but in one respect he was more imaginative than any of his contemporaries, except possibly Blake. He perceived more clearly than any of them the implications of the universe science was constructing; or at least he was unable to insulate or protect himself as his contemporaries were. He could not keep his imagination from brooding upon the problem. He realized that an infinite universe of innumerable worlds meant the end of traditional concepts, became mean-
ingless and in turn made human life meaning-
less and insignificant in any terms avail-
able to the human mind, and deprived human
activity, either of the individual or of the
race, of ultimate purpose or end except
oblivion. 60

Although Byron is not consistently negative, this view
is evident in his letters and works. Three letters are
revealing. To Annabella Milbanke, in 1814, he wrote, "Why
I came here, I know not. Where I shall go, it is useless
to inquire. In the midst of myriads of the living and
dead worlds—stars—systems—infinity—why should I be
anxious about an atom?" 61 This idea had been suggested a
year earlier in a letter to William Gifford when Byron
had said: "It was the comparative insignificance of our-
selves and our world when placed in competition with the
mighty whole of which it is an atom, that first led me
to imagine that our pretensions to eternity might be over-
rated." 62 And later, to Murray he wrote, " . . . what
Nothings we are! before the least of these Stars!" 63 Just
as the Alps evoked an ambiguous reaction,

All that expands the spirit, yet appals,
Gather around these summits, as to show
How Earth may pierce to Heaven, yet leave
vain man below.
(CH III. lxii),

so too, the heavens could appall as well as inspire Byron
and his characters by making them aware of their own
vanity and nothingness and the littleness of their world
in comparison with infinite worlds. 64 This is, of course,
a radically different response from Byron's positive
response and particularly from Wordsworth's response: "The infinite as Wordsworth writes of it suggested to him the softening of harsh internal distinctions so that nothing is completely isolated from anything else or from the whole." But for Byron, infinity can alienate and imprison man in his atom-like being.

Both the positive and negative reactions are evident in Cain, but with special emphasis on the latter. While the journey in space stimulates Cain's yearning for the infinite, it aggravates his frustration. Cain's response in Act II to the wonders which Lucifer has shown him is "Alas! I seem / Nothing," to which Lucifer responds, "And this should be the human sum / Of knowledge, to know mortal nature's nothingness" (II.ii.420-22). After his journey, Cain explains to Adah:

I had beheld the immemorial works
Of endless beings, skirred extinguished worlds,
And gazing on eternity methought
I had borrowed more by a few drops of ages
From its immensity, but now I feel
My littleness again. Well said the spirit
That I was nothing.

(III.63-69)

Byron's explanation of the effect of the cosmic journey on Cain is still the best; in a letter to Murray he analyzes Cain's response:

Cain is a proud man; if Lucifer promised him Kingdoms, etc., it would elate him: the object of the Demon is to depress him still further in his own estimation than he was before, by showing him infinite things and his own abasement, till he falls into the
frame of mind that leads to the Catastrophe, from mere internal irritation, not premeditation, or envy of Abel (which would have made him contemptible), but from the rage and fury against the inadequacy of his state to his conceptions, and which discharges itself rather against Life, and the Author of Life, than the mere living.66

Similarly, Cain's impression of earth has changed after seeing

The dead,
Th'immortal, the unbounded, the omnipotent,
The overpow'ring mysteries of space,
Th'innumerable worlds that were and are,
A whirlwind of such overwhelming things,
Sun, moons, and earths, upon their loud-voiced spheres
Singing in thunder round me . . . .

(III.177-83)

Earth had been lost in the vast immensity of space; it had become a "small blue circle, swinging in far ether / With an inferior circlet purpler still" (II.i.29-30), then had grown "small and smaller" and appeared "to join th'innumerable stars" (II.i.41). Cain concludes that earth is only "the dim and remote companion [of myriads of starry worlds] in / Infinity of life" (II.i.362-63).67

He had even been reminded by Lucifer that there might be "worlds greater than [his] own, inhabited / By greater things, and they themselves far more / In number than the dust of [his] dull earth" (II.i.44-46). Byron refers to these ideas in other works as well: Manfred speaks of the "peopled infinite" (II.i.89); in Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, Byron calls the Milky Way, "an abyss / Where
sparkle distant worlds" (IV.c11); and in *Heaven and Earth*, Aholibamah talks of "Some wandering star, which shoots through the abyss, / Whose tenants dying, while their world is falling" (I.i.87-88). Critics have noted that Byron was using ideas popularized by Fontenelle's *Conversations on the Plurality of Worlds*, as well as those in Pope, Young, and Voltaire's *Micromégas*. What is important in *Cain*, however, is the way Byron has integrated the space journey in the drama. It is not just another cosmic voyage. Rather, it provides a psychologically valid motive for Cain's murder of Abel, and the voyage serves to focus on one of Byron's recurrent themes: man's infinite yearnings as opposed to his finite material existence. Byron's own study of astronomy made him even more aware of this fact and space serves both as the reality and the metaphor for his theme.

Although astronomy is particularly important in understanding Byron's space-consciousness, the science of geology, which also interested him, is relevant indirectly. Geology of course has more implications for conceptions of time than space, as the nineteenth-century geologist Georges Cuvier noted:

*Genius and science have burst the limits of space, and a few observations, explained by just reasoning, have unveiled the mechanism of the universe. Would it not also be glorious for man to burst the limits of time, and, by a few observations, to ascertain the history of this world, and the series of*
events which preceded the birth of the human race?"\(^1\)

But in bursting the limits of time, Cuvier and his fellow geologists ascertained not merely the "history of this world," but disclosed a new and for the most part unsuspected world, one which no longer existed but the fossilized fauna of which could be "revived" and classified.\(^2\)

How geology, and Cuvier's theories in particular, could inspire the poet are well illustrated in the following passage from Balzac's *La Peau de Chagrin*:

> Have you ever been cast forth into the immensity of space and time while reading the geological works of Cuvier? Carried by his genius, have you soared over the limitless abyss of the past, as if supported by the hand of an enchanter? Discovering from period to period, from bed to bed, in the quarries of Montmartre or the schists of the Urals, animals whose fossilized remains belong to antediluvian civilizations, the mind is terrified to perceive the billions of years, the millions of people that the feeble human memory, that the indestructible divine tradition, has forgotten, and from which the heaped up cinders which is the surface of our globe, forming there a foothold on the earth, gives us bread and flowers; is not Cuvier the greatest poet of our century?\(^3\)

Byron was no less inspired; although he never sings Cuvier's praises, he admits the influence and refers to Cuvier in several works; and the imprint of geological theorizing appears in many of his works.

Byron's interest in geology must have been developed when he was at Cambridge. As early as 1805 he refers in "Ossian's Address to the Sun in 'Carthon'" to geological
processes: "oaks of the mountains fall, the rocks decay, / Weigh'd down with years the hills dissolve away" (ll. 11-12). In 1806, Byron was most anxious for the companionship of Professor Hailstone, Professor of Geology at Cambridge, of whom John Pigot records that Byron had always spoken "in high terms of praise." Certainly by 1813 Byron's interest in geology was engaged "if we may trust his reference to the 'megalonyx' (Letters, II, 363) or to Buffon (Letters, II, 368)." This was also the year of the English edition of Cuvier's Discours Preliminaire, mistitled in English, Essay on the Theory of the Earth. Some time within the next seven years, Byron became acquainted with Cuvier's ideas.

Cuvier's geological system was based on modified neptunism rather than vulcanism, the school to which Buffon belonged. The former stressed sedimentary formations, whereas the latter stressed igneous forces of nature—volcanoes, ice, heat, and pressure. Cuvier believed that the forces which had changed the earth before the existence of living men were vast in extent and were sudden and violent "revolutions." He was especially interested in "primitive, primordial" mountains, in the fossilized shells there, and in the shattered strata "broken, lifted up, and overturned in a thousand ways" in the "sharp peaks and rugged
indentations which mark their summits, and strike the eye at a great distance, [which] are so many proofs of the violent manner in which they have been elevated."®1 Cuvier also believed that none of the large species of quadrupeds, whose fossilized remains he had seen, were similar to any known living species;®2 the corollary to this theory was that man appeared relatively recently in earth's history.®3 What attracted Byron to Cuvier is evident in the explanatory Preface to Cain:

Note.—The reader will perceive that the author has partly adopted in this poem the notion of Cuvier, that the world had been destroyed several times before the creation of man. This speculation, derived from the different strata and the bones of enormous and unknown animals found in them, is not contrary to the Mosaic account, but rather confirms it; as no human bones have yet been discovered in those strata, although those of many known animals are found near the remains of the unknown. The assertion of Lucifer, that the pre-Adamite world was also peopled by rational beings much more intelligent than man and proportionably powerful to the mammoth, etc., etc., is, of course, a poetical fiction to help him to make out his case.®4

The pessimistic notions of destruction leading to progressive degeneration appealed to Byron. He repeats the idea in Don Juan:

But let it go:—it will one day be found With other relics of "a former World."
When this World shall be former, underground, Thrown topsy-turvy, twisted, crisped, and curled, Baked, fried, or burnt, turned inside-out, or drowned, Like all the worlds before, which have been
hurled
First out of, and then back again to chaos—
The superstratum which will overlay us.

So Cuvier says:—and then shall come again
Unto the new creation, rising out
From our old crash, some mystic, ancient strain
Of things destroyed and left in airy doubt;
Like to the notions we now entertain
Of Titans, giants, fellows of about
Some hundred feet in height, not to say miles,
And mammoths, and your winged crocodiles.

Even worlds miscarry, when too oft they pup,
And every new creation hath decreased
In size, from overworking the material—
Men are but maggots of some huge Earth's burial.

(IX.xxxvi—xxxi x)

The regressive theory of history, which he thought he
found in Cuvier, becomes yoked in Don Juan with the
religious idea of repeated Falls; after each Fall, a new
world, inferior to the former, is created.

There are several indirect ways in which geology
in general and Cuvier in particular could have influenced
Byron's space-consciousness, or, at least, reinforced
his interests in and awareness of space. Geologists,
for one thing, are especially interested in primitive
land forms—mountains, glaciers, caverns, and in the
substratum. Without a knowledge of geology, Byron could
have been interested in these kinds of spaces, but he
mentions geological formations often enough to indicate
that these spaces intrigued him in a scientific way as
well as poetically or mythically. In Manfred, for
example, the Fourth Spirit, the spirit of the under-earth
describes her dwelling; she lives

Where the slumbering Earthquake
    Lies pillowed on fire,
And the lakes of bitumen
    Rise boilingly higher;
Where the roots of the Andes
    Strike deep in the earth,
As their summits to heaven
    Shoot soaringly forth . . . .

(I.1.88-95)

Similarly, the Second Spirit, the spirit of the glacier, describes geological activity on the mountain—avalanches and glacial movements (I.1.60-75) Manfred later describes a mountain's "falling" (I.11.93-100), although he gives no geological explanation, except its "old age," for its fall. Stalactites ("marble icicles" [DJ IV.xxxiii]) occur in the cave of Haidée's nightmare and the formation of Neuha's underwater cave is specifically described with various geological speculations, plutonian and neptunian:

The arch upreared by Nature's architect,
The architrave some Earthquake might erect;
The buttress from some mountain's bosom hurled,
When the Poles crashed, and water was the world;
Or hardened from some earth-absorbing fire,
While yet the globe reeked from its funeral pyre . . . .
(The Island IV.vii.147-52)

By its concern with heights and depths, then, geology served to amplify Byron's interest in wild and rugged nature and adds another dimension to his awareness of space.

Byron's obsession with destruction, local (volcanoes or earthquakes) and cosmic, was also amplified by geologi-
Both Buffon, in his theory of periodic glaciation (which influenced Byron's "Darkness") and Cuvier, in his theory of catastrophism, emphasized natural changes and destruction. Of course, for Byron, natural changes, particularly in Cain and Heaven and Earth, become predestined ones, caused by supernatural powers; that is, from Lucifer's point of view, the deterioration and demolition of worlds is evidence of God's arbitrary brutality, and from Japhet's, of his inexplicable nature, to say the least. The idea of destruction, partially derived from his study of geology, is important in understanding Byron's space-consciousness, because through it, indirectly, he comes to the idea of void and/or chaos—important spatial concepts. In "Darkness," the sun is extinguished and the stars "wander darkling in the eternal space, / Rayless, and pathless" (ll. 3-4). This chaos in outer space leads to the destruction of earth itself. Byron describes it as a void and as chaos:

The World was void,
The populous and the powerful was a lump,
Seasonless, herbless, treeless, manless, lifeless—
A lump of death—a chaos of hard clay.
(ll. 69-72)

In "Darkness," no explanation for the destruction is given; it is as if the Newtonian clock-world had run down. In Heaven and Earth, set immediately before the biblical flood, the religious explanation is clear, amplified by
Cuvier's emphasis on a series of floods, as agents of destruction. In that poem, playing with his title, Byron describes the "mingling" (I.iii.795) of the waters of heaven and earth which "unite / For the annihilation of all life" (I.iii.770-71). All will be destroyed "silent and uncreated, save the sky" (I.iii.182):

```plaintext
All shall be void . . . .
And sea and sky
Look vast and lifeless in the eternal eye.
Upon the foam
Who shall erect a home?
```

(I.iii.94, 106-9)

A boundless sea and boundless sky are equivalents to a void precisely because these kinds of vast space allow no means of discrimination; no objects in space (like a "home") can be distinguished. In this respect, a void or empty space is no more preferable than chaos, where discrimination is also impossible. The idea of void, a particularly modern concept, appealed to and reinforced Byron's pessimistic world view; the modern science of geology, then, contributed to his interest in and knowledge of destruction, chaos, and nothingness.

**Byron's Apprehension and Creation of Space**

It has often been remarked that Byron was a man of contradictions. Early in his life, he wrote "damn description, it is always disgusting." Much later, he referred
to descriptive poetry as "the lowest department of the art," said it "never esteemed a high order," and compared it unfavorably to "ethical" poetry: "the highest of all poetry is ethical poetry . . . . It requires more mind, more wisdom, more power, than all the 'forests' that ever were 'walked for their description.'"95 Yet he wrote descriptive poetry early in his career, in the four cantos of Childe Harold's Pilgrimage which span his middle career, and in one of his last works, The Island, which uses natural description in an allegorical way. I am interested in this particular contradiction because description is the most usual way to convey space and to evoke a sense of spaciousness or constriction.

A writer does not necessarily have to use full-bodied, sensuous description to convey a sense of space. He can use abstract adverbs or verbs which indicate spatial relationships--"up," "down," "over," "adjacent," or "sink," "wander," "extend." Byron often uses space words of this type, sometimes in conjunction with concrete description. The following description of Zitza, for example, both because of Byron's reliance on directional adverbs and because of mere nominal statement (until the last three lines), is quite different from the more adorned, more emotional descriptions that Wordsworth presents:

Monastic Zitza! from thy shady brow,
Thou small, but favoured spot of holy ground!
Where'er we gaze--around--above--below,--
What rainbow tints, what magic charms are found!
Rock, river, forest, mountain, all abound,
And bluest skies that harmonise the whole:
Beneath, the distant Torrent's rushing sound
Tells where the volumed Cataract doth roll
Between those hanging rocks, that shock yet please the soul.
(CH II.xlviii)

Similarly, Byron's description of Spain relies heavily on verbs and seems to be much more a statement of fact, almost mathematical, than a more subtle evocation of space:

More bleak to view the hills at length recede,
And, less luxuriant, smoother vales extend:
Immense horizon-bounded plains succeed!
Far as the eye discerns, withouten end,
Spain's realms appear . . . .
(CH I.xxxi)

Nonetheless, these similar methods do present a spatial picture to the mental eye of the reader, although it is somewhat more like a diagram than a living landscape.

Byron can also evoke a sense of space indirectly. The sense of imprisonment, for example, in The Prisoner of Chillon is not conveyed so much by a description of the prison. Rather, it is "felt" throughout the poem and conveyed through other means: the prisoner's dramatic monologue, which reveals the state to which the prison has reduced him, evokes a sense of space much more vividly than any mere description could; the fact that almost everything in the poem happens in that one setting, the prison, and the kind of repetitive insistence on the setting also evokes a strong sense of the prison's space.
Similarly, we feel a strong sense of space in a poem like *Manfred*; in it the height of the Alps and Manfred's castle in them is pervasive. And again, although there is concrete description, the setting is felt in a way that transcends concrete description.

It might also be mentioned that some of the kinds of poetry Byron writes do not always lend themselves to concrete, sensuous description. His drama, for example, does not lend itself well to description since dialogue, debate, character development, and action will usually take precedence over the detailing of a setting. Even in the second act of *Cain*, where the setting is felt most strongly, Byron spends more time developing argument and philosophical and theological speculations than he does in description. Satire, especially if its purpose is to reveal mankind's foibles, as in *Don Juan*, is not well-suited to developing the kind of description of natural details which can evoke a sense of space. In *Don Juan*, Byron does, however, parody the descriptive techniques of the picturesque tradition. In Canto X, he parodies the picturesque tour in detailing Juan's travels from Russia to England, and he uses the catalogue manner effectively, fully aware of how he could have treated his scenery. And throughout the poem, he satirizes Juan's rapture at the sublime sights. The climax occurs on Shooter's Hill, "the high hill, which looks with pride or scorn / Toward
the great city"(X.lxxx). This is the "prospect" Byron describes:

A mighty mass of brick, and smoke, and shipping,
Dirty and dusky, but as wide as eye
Could reach, with here and there a sail just skipping
In sight, then lost amidst the forestry
Of masts: a wilderness of steeples peeping
On tiptoe through their sea-coal canopy;
A huge, dun Cupola, like a foolscap crown
On a fool's head—and there is London Town!

But Juan is deluded:

But Juan saw not this; each wreath of smoke
Appeared to him but as the magic vapour
Of some alchymic furnace, from whence broke
The wealth of worlds (a wealth of tax and paper);
The gloomy clouds, which o'er it as a yoke
Are bowed, and put the Sun out like a taper,
Were nothing but the natural atmosphere,
Extremely wholesome, though but rarely clear.

And "wrapped in contemplation" (XI.ix), he is assaulted by the robber whom he perfunctorily kills. Description in this section of Don Juan, and characteristically in the satires, has multiple purposes but almost never is it used to evoke a sense of space. Man, his reactions, attitudes, vices, is the focus of interest, not nature or what is external to man.

Nonetheless, "damn[ed] description" does play an important role in Byron's evocation of space. Like Wordsworth, Byron depends primatily on visual means and like Wordsworth, he was influenced by the topographical tradition, which "was dedicated to the proposition that
the outer world existed to end in a picture. In fact, the idea of presenting pictures is often important to him. He referred to Childe Harold's Pilgrimage as a "voyage pittoresque" and much later, he laments in Don Juan,

Would that I were a painter! to be grouping
All that a poet drags into detail!
Oh that my words were colours! but their tints
May serve perhaps as outlines or slight hints.

Although his feelings about the accuracy of painting are not unqualified, still he tries to depict his settings in visual, pictorial terms. This is particularly true of his early poetry, in which prospects are described, and of Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, which moves from scene to scene. Although the meditations inspired by the scenes are more important thematically than the scenes themselves, Byron, in every canto of that poem, describes settings visually. Many examples could be cited, but these two illustrate the technique.

Lo! Cintra's glorious Eden intervenes
In variegated maze of mount and glen.
Ah, me! what hand can pencil guide, or pen,
To follow half on which the eye dilates
Through views more dazzling unto mortal ken
Than those whereof such things the Bard relates,
Who do the awe-struck world unlocked Elysium's gates.

The horrid crags, by tippling convent crowned,
The cork-trees hoar that clothe the shaggy steep,
The mountain-moss by scorching skies im-browned,
Here Byron attempts to give his readers a sense of the "maze of mount and glen," of the heights—the crags, the trees and moss on the steep, and of the depths of the glen and of the torrents that connect these areas. Although the somewhat monotonous catalogue of the separate details perhaps belies his conclusion ("Mixed in one mighty scene"), nonetheless, he tries to convey through visual detail the spaciousness of the place. Although it relies on directional terms such as "left," "right," and "beneath," the following description is much more imaginative:

Dusky and huge, enlarging on the sight,
Nature's volcanic Amphitheatre,
Chimaera's Alps extend from left to right;
Beneath, a living valley seems to stir;
Flocks play, trees wave, streams flow, the mountain-fir
Nodding above; behold black Acheron!
Once consecrated to the sepulchre,
Pluto! if this be Hell I look upon,
Close shamed Elysium's gates, my shade shall seek for none.
(II.11)

A word like "Amphitheatre," which automatically evokes a sense of space, combined with concrete details from various spatial levels, shows how Byron uses visual
description to achieve spatial effects.

In the preceding passage, Byron described "a living valley" stirring with motion. By describing a setting in motion or a viewer in motion relative to the setting, he can sometimes convey a greater sense of spaciousness. He uses this technique in Canto One of Childe Harold's Pilgrimage to indicate the separation between Childe Harold and his country: "And fast the white rocks faded from his view, / And soon were lost in circumambient foam . . . / And fleeting shores receded from his sight" (I.xii, xiii). And later, to indicate the speed and almost neurotic travelling of Childe Harold, as the catalogue manner often does, Byron describes space in motion: "And Laos wide and fierce came roaring by / . . . Childe Harold saw, like meteors in the sky, / The glittering minarets of Tepalen" (II.lv).105 But the most striking use of motion perspective occurs in Cain and through it the vastness of space is dramatically emphasized:

CAIN. Yon small blue circle, swinging in far ether,
With an inferior circlet purpler still,
Which looks like that which lit our earthly night?
Is this our Paradise? Where are its walls
And they who guard them?
LUCIFER. Point me out the site Of Paradise.
CAIN How should I? As we move
Like sunbeams onward, it grows small and smaller,
And it waxes little and then less,
Gathers a halo round it like the light
Which shone the roundest of the stars when I Beheld them from the skirts of Paradise,
Methinks they both, as we recede from them,  
Appear to join th' innumerable stars  
Which are around us and as we move on  
Increase their myriads.  

(II.1.29-43)

Later Cain comments:

But the lights fade from me fast,  
And some till now grew larger as we approached  
And wore the look of worlds.  

(II.1.167-69)

And still later, he says, "How the lights recede" (II.1.173). The repetition of this phenomenon gives the impression of increasing distance and increasing disorientation in an almost dimensionless space. If the viewer or the object viewed had been static, the effect would not have been so notable. But motion makes space more overwhelming and distances seem even greater.

Two other aspects of Byron's visual depiction of space should be noted. First, unlike Wordsworth, Byron rarely employs focusing or centering in any visual way. He does, of course, "focus" on scenes, but it is the whole scene or an indiscriminate catalogue of details which usually receives his emphasis, and not an isolated object in that scene. A rare exception, only remotely like the tarn or the shepherds in Wordsworth's poetry, occurs in "Stanzas to Augusta," in which Byron says:

In the Desert a fountain is springing,  
In the wide waste there still is a tree,  
And a bird in the solitude singing,  
Which speaks to my spirit of Thee.  

(11. 45-48)
The loved one here, through the metaphors, is a kind of focal point and the isolated, singular objects are analogous to the special place his sister has in his heart. But here the focussing occurs only through the metaphors; Augusta, who provides a center for his life, is distanced through them. In Wordsworth's poetry, the reality is focussed on; the visual description is more nearly iconographic and the reality, through its spatial significance in the description, is emphasized. Furthermore, even the kind of focussing in "Stanzas to Augusta" is unusual in Byron's works and the lack may indicate a profound difference between Wordsworth's and Byron's attitudes. In Byron's works, the world is often in a state of incipient chaos, at least to the subjective viewer. To a viewer like Childe Harold or Don Juan all is unstable; to find a unity in a scene would be temporary at best and probably illusory. Byron's vision is perhaps more comprehensive (or at least more contradictory) than Wordsworth's, and to see a unity or an order, which focussing allows, would ultimately be a falsification of his perception of reality.

The importance of objective reality to Byron also explains another difference between Byron's and Wordsworth's visual depiction of space--their use of distance. In Wordsworth's poetry distance created harmonies, obscured discordant details, allowed his imagination to function. Although in Childe Harold's Pilgrimage,
distance may have similar functions for the observer, in
other works, Byron seems to think differently.\(^{106}\) In
Don Juan, for example, he writes:

I perch upon an humbler promontory,
   Amidst Life's infinite variety;
With no great care for what is nicknamed Glory,
   But speculating as I cast mine eye
On what may suit or may not suit my story,
   And never straining hard to versify,
I rattle on exactly as I'd talk
With anybody in a ride or walk.
(XV.xix)

Bostetter notes that the viewpoint here is Luciferian; "he
can hover above the world or perch on the promontory or
wander 'a mere spectator' like Goethe's Mephistopheles
through palace and hovel, free and detached, and put down
what he sees and thinks."\(^{107}\) Rather than allowing the
imagination to create harmonies, distance allows reason to
operate, gives one objectivity and a comprehensive view;
one is uninvolved and thereby not impressionable. This
idea occurs again in "Granta—A Medley" in which Byron
wishes he could be like LeSage's demon so that he could
penetrate the roofs and see clearly from his height the
follies and vices of ordinary mankind. He is not consist-
tent however. For in "The Dream" he says of the "fearful
gift" of melancholy:

What is it but the telescope of truth?
Which strips the distance of its fantasies,
And brings life near in utter nakedness,
Making the cold reality too real!
(11. 180-83)

Distance can create fantasy, not objectivity; it can pre-
vent one from seeing cold reality. A similar distinction is made by Lucifer in Cain; he prefers to see things from afar and questions Cain, "What is that / Which being nearest to thine eyes is still / More beautiful than beauteous things remote?" (II.i.252-54). To Cain's answer that Adah is, Lucifer gives the response of "cold reality": ''Tis fair, as frail mortality . . ." (II.i.269). Lucifer's reply may beg the question (and Byron may side with Cain); nonetheless, both distance which gives objectivity and proximity which yields a realistic (albeit subjective) apprehension of the object are preferable to the kind of distancing which can distort or idealize. Of course, Byron does use distance in his descriptions, particularly in those works influenced by the topographical tradition, but he almost never attributes to distance the same kind of positive qualities that Wordsworth does.

Perhaps the most striking kind of spatial awareness in Byron's works occurs not through visual means but through sound. Although the occurrence is relatively infrequent, Byron has a special power of evoking space or creating aural spaces through descriptions of both violent sound and silence. In the eighth canto of Don Juan, for example, the hell that is war is emphasized by noise imagery and the setting is even conveyed aurally. The noise of war machines is described: "the volleying roar, and loud / Long booming of each peal on peal, o'er-
came / The ear far more than thunder" (VIII.vi). The whole scene "one vast fire, air, earth, and stream embraced, / . . . rocked as 'twere beneath the mighty noises" (VIII.vii). The totality of space is described in terms of sounds and their vibration. And Byron adds:

And one enormous shout of "allah!" rose
In the same moment, loud as even the roar
Of War's most mortal engines, to their foes
Hurling defiance: city, stream, and shore
Resounded "Allah!" and the clouds which close
With thickening canopy the conflict o'er,
Vibrate to the Eternal name. Hark! through
All sounds it pierceth—"Allah! Allah Hu!"
(VIII.viii)

Again, city, stream, shore, and sky are defined in terms of sound to give "the true portrait of one battlefield" (VIII.xii; my italics).

Byron also uses natural violent sounds to give "portraits." His awareness of natural sound is recorded in early poems, among them, "Stanzas Composed During a Thunderstorm," "I Would I Were a Careless Child," "When I Roved a Young Highlander," and "Lachin Y Galr"; but in these early poems a sense of space is not really conveyed through the descriptions of noise. The storm scene in Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, however, gives a vivid impression of space by the description of thunder and its echoes:

Far along,
From peak to peak, the rattling crags among
Leaps the live thunder! Not from one lone cloud,
But every mountain now hath found a tongue,
And Jura answers, through her misty shroud,
Back to the joyous Alps, who call to her aloud!

(III.xcii)

Byron continues using both light and flashing lightning and sound to give a sense of spaciousness, of heights, and "mining depths" (III.xciv)—all encompassed and defined in terms of the storm and all affecting because of this natural violence:

Sky—Mountain—River—Winds—Lake—Lightnings! ye!
With night, and clouds, and thunder—and a Soul
To make these felt and feeling; well may be
Things that have made me watchful . . . .

(III.xcvi)

While the rough and wild side of nature seem more often to appeal to Byron, he occasionally uses silence to give an impression of space. The third canto of Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, written when Byron was absorbing Wordsworth's pantheism under the influence of Shelley, uses Wordsworth's method of evoking a sense of space through silence. Several stanzas before the storm scene, Byron depicts a calm night:

All Heaven and Earth are still—though not in sleep
But breathless, as we grow when feeling most;
And silent, as we stand in thoughts too deep;—
All Heaven and Earth are still: From the high host
Of stars, to the lulled lake and mountain-coast,
All is concentrated in a life intense,
Where not a beam, nor air, nor leaf is lost,
But hath a part of Being, and a sense
Of that which is of all Creator and Defence.

(III.lxxxix)

After presenting this wide expanse, felt because of its
stillness and not because of its visual qualities, Byron adds, "Then stirs the feeling infinite, so felt / In solitude where we are least alone" (III.xc). The silence of the scene has made him aware of "Eternal harmony." The purity of the scene and the absence of aural sensation in it has made him aware of the vast and boundless world outside himself, of which he feels a part. His own internal expensiveness is occasioned by this silent environment.

Although silence has a positive value for Byron, it can also be quite frightening. One of the ways in which he gives us a sense of the prison in The Prisoner of Chillon is to present it as an aural space. At the beginning of the poem, the prisoner is deprived of visual sensations and as the poem progresses, he is also deprived of aural ones. In the beginning, the prisoner had tried to talk with his brothers, but their "voices took a dreary tone / An echo of the dungeon stone, / A grating sound" (III.63-65). After the second brother dies, the narrator says, "I listen'd, but I could not hear" and then thinks he hears a sound (ll. 205, 209), but all has become silent. Finally, the almost total deprivation of sense experience drives the prisoner temporarily, if not permanently, insane; just as the brothers' voices had become an echo of the dungeon stone, so his entire being becomes stone-like: "Among the stones I stood a stone" (l. 256).
He adds:

There were no stars—no earth—no time—
No check—no change—no good—no crime—
But silence, and a stirless breath
Which neither was of life nor death;
A sea of stagnant idleness,
Blind, boundless, mute, and motionless!

Silence here is the condition and defining quality of a boundless stagnant void, which corresponds to the void in the narrator. What occurs is a kind of ironic repetition of one of the climactic moments in Childe Harold's Pilgrimage. In Canto Three, the speaker had "become /
Portion of that around me" (lxxii); the "mountains, waves, and skies" were part of him just as he was part of them (lxxxv). In the mad scene, the prisoner becomes like his prison, silent and lifeless.

Byron's depiction of space should also be considered in light of the following distinction made by Keats. In a letter to George and Georgiana Keats, he said, "You speak of Lord Byron and me—there is this great difference between us. He describes what he sees—I describe what I imagine. Mine is the hardest task. You see the immense difference." Keats's evaluation of Byron is certainly accurate in a general way. Byron himself placed great importance on seeing a scene before describing it and prided himself on his realistic descriptions. For example, the preface to the first and second cantos of Childe Harold's Pilgrimage asserts:
The following poem was written, for the most part, amidst the scenes which it attempts to describe. It was begun in Albania; and the parts relative to Spain and Portugal were composed from the author's observations in those countries. Thus much it may be necessary to state for the correctness of the descriptions.

(PW, III, 3)

He apparently said that he "could never attempt to describe the . . . scenery of a country that [he] had not visited" and Countess Guiccioli wrote that "Lord Byron did not admit the possibility of describing a site that had not been seen . . . ." These statements seem to imply that created (or visionary) space has no place in Byron's poetry. But the contradictions in his work again become evident, for Byron does not undervalue the imagination as much as Keats believed. In "The Dream," Byron said:

The mind can make
Substance, and people planets of its own
With beings brighter than have been, and give
A breath to forms which can outlive all flesh.

(ll. 19-22)\(^{114}\)

Lucifer's advice to Cain was to "Think and endure and form an inner world / In your own bosom, where the outward fails" (II.\textit{11.463-64}). These comments, as well as others,\(^{115}\) indicate that Byron did place a value on the creations of the mind; they may not be founded on a deeper reality, but they do express a reality which can sometimes be believed in.\(^{116}\) Byron did certainly suspend disbelief long enough to create at least one poem which operates
largely in the realm of created space—it is Cain. In Cain, we approach most nearly the created and imagined worlds of Keats's Endymion and the two Hyperions and of Shelley's Prometheus Unbound. In Cain, Byron does not describe "what he sees," but rather expands imaginatively both time and space in a cosmic journey which includes vast regions of space and remote eras of history. The created realms of Cain, too, are quite different from the very real Lake region of most of Wordsworth's poems. Although Wordsworth certainly believed more completely in the powers of the imagination than Byron did, it is Byron's Cain which puts the spatial imagination more fully to work.

**Symbolic Space in Byron's Poetry**

One of the most pervasive and important spatial symbols in Byron's works is that of constriction. From the first canto of Childe Harold's Pilgrimage to the last of Don Juan, images and metaphors of constriction recur, and two works, The Lament of Tasso and The Prisoner of Chillon, as well as Cantos V and VI of Don Juan, focus entirely on literal imprisonment. Byron's use of this metaphor and symbol is consistent with his personal make-up and illuminates his philosophical views. As a man, he was sensitive to constriction; he liked large residences
and was almost compulsively on the move, sometimes because, as he told Lady Blessington quoting Macbeth, he felt "cabined, cribbed, confined." In philosophical terms, constriction, enchainment, imprisonment—all come to represent Byron's pessimistic view of the human condition, the fatality of life, man's mortal and ignorant state. In Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, for example, he repeats the phrase from Macbeth to express his scepticism about man's rational powers; although he says he will not resign his "right of thought, [his] last and only place / Of refuge," he recognizes that

> from our birth the Faculty divine
> Is chained and tortured—cabined, cribbed,
> confined,
> And bred in darkness, lest the Truth should shine
> Too brightly on the unprepared mind,
> The beam pours in—for Time and Skill will couch the blind.
> (CH IV.cxxvii)

Here the allusion to Macbeth, emphasizing mental confinement, is specifically linked with the prison metaphor, "chained and tortured," but Byron does not speculate about the cause of man's enthrallment or consider who the imprisoner might be. Earlier in the poem, he expresses similar sentiments. First he describes man's ability to people stars and forget human frailties, but he adds:

> Could he have kept his spirit to that flight
> He had been happy, but this clay will sink
> Its spark immortal, envying it the light
> To which it mounts, as if to break the link
That keeps us from yon heaven which woos us to its brink.  
(CH III.xiv)

Here, too, Byron is indefinite about causes, but just as sure that man is bound to earth, to his mortality, his "clay," by a chain or "link." Man may have, as Manfred says of himself, a "Promethean spark" (I.i.154), but he also bears the chains of Prometheus. As Childe Harold does, he may find that "life's enchanted cup but sparkles near the brim" (III.viii), and sated, hopeless, bear the chains which are partly of his own making:

His had been quaffed too quickly, and he found The dregs were wormwood; but he filled again, And from a purer fount, on holier ground, And deemed its spring perpetual--but in vain! Still round him clung invisibly a chain Which galled for ever, fettering though unseen, And heavy though it clanked not; worn with pain, Which pined although it spoke not, and grew keen, Entering with every step he took through many a scene.  
(CH III.ix)120

Or, like Manfred, though "cooped in clay" (I.i.157) he may pit his powers against an ambiguous universe; or like Cain, who cannot "compass" death (I.286) and who even in Eden would have had "narrow" joys (I.227), rebel against the named cause of his imprisonment, Jehovah, God of wrath. Regardless of the cause, Byron feels that man, by definition, lives in a "waste and icy clime" (DJ VII.ii), "chill, and chain'd to cold earth" (DJ VII.1).122

The constriction metaphor in Byron's works is
reinforced, strangely, by another recurrent image— that of birds. Often, Byron sees man as a kind of prisoned bird. In Don Juan, for example, Don Juan calls himself a "prisoned eagle" (V.cxxvi) when confronted with Gulbeyaz's imperious commands; and later, when he is wasting away at Catherine's court, Byron describes his eye as "drooping, like an eagle's with clip't pinion" (X.xliv). The emphasis in both of these passages is on the bird's freedom, not particularly on any metaphysical significance that a bird's freedom of flight may have. But the fact that the bird mentioned is an eagle is important, for the eagle is highest in the hierarchy of birds. Man's attitudes and aspirations are like those of grand eagles who in Childe Harold's Pilgrimage are "spirits of the spot [Parnassus]" (IV,lxxiv) and soar "unutterably high."124

The bird image is, however, used significantly in two instances. In Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, Byron says:

But in Man's dwellings he became a thing
Restless and worn, and stern and wearisome,
Drooped as a wild-born falcon with clipt wing,
To whom the boundless air alone were home;
Then came his fit again, which to o'ercome,
As eagerly the barred-up bird will beat
His breast and beak against his wiry dome
Till the blood tinge his plumage—so the heat
Of his impeded Soul would through his bosom eat.
(CH III.xv)

Byron, in a Wordsworthian mood, seems to suggest that natural spaciousness, the "boundless air," is man's proper home and even that this region and the freedom it implies
are attainable. The dichotomy seems to be a simple one between the restrictions of the civilized social world ("man's dwellings") and the positive values of open nature. Byron seems to be repeating what he had had Selim say in *The Bride of Abydos*: "when cities cage us in a social home" (II.xxx.919), corruption occurs; man becomes distorted. But man's reaction to his enthrallment, like that of the falcon, a bird of prey, is violent, spontaneous ("a fit")—all of which undercuts the Wordsworthian myth of nature elucidated two stanzas earlier:

Where rose the mountains, there to him were friends;  
Where rolled the ocean, thereon was his home;  
Where a blue sky, and glowing clime, extends,  
He had the passion and the power to roam;  
The desert, forest, cavern, breaker's foam,  
Were unto him companionship; they spake  
A mutual language, clearer than the tome  
Of his land's tongue, which he would oft forsake  
For Nature's pages glassed by sunbeams on the lake.  
(CH III.xiii)

If man is a friend to mountains, the "friendship" occurs because man's violence is like theirs (Byron reminds us time and again of earthquakes, landslides, avalanches). If man is a companion to nature, if they speak a mutual language, that language is not the harmonious chorus of a unified Wordsworthian whole. For Byron to impose a Wordsworthian solution at this point and to suggest, as he does at the end of stanza xv, that man has to take a defiant stance and he too, like Harold, can wander forth
into the companionship of a benevolent nature—a "blue sky, and glowing clime," is essentially false to his more usual realistic stance. The next stanza further undercuts the optimism:

Self-exiled Harold wanders forth again,  
With nought of Hope left—but with less of gloom;  
The very knowledge that he lived in vain,  
That all was over on this side the tomb,  
Had made Despair a smilingness assume,  
Which, though 'twere wild,—as on the plundered wreck  
When mariners would madly meet their doom  
With draughts intemperate on the sinking deck,—  
Did yet inspire a cheer, which he forbore to check.  
(CH III.xvi)

Man, or Harold universalized, really is caged. Defiance may be necessary to the ego for self-preservation; nonetheless, man is still enclosed "within the vortex" (CH III.xi) and rolls "on with the giddy circle, chasing Time" (CH III.xi). Life is defined by an enclosed circle, not by the falcon's boundless air, and man is continually reminded of his mortality, of the tomb, the final enclosure. Life is, as Azrael says, essentially a "chaos-founded prison" (Heaven and Earth I.iii.813).

In Manfred, another important use of the bird image recurs, again to emphasize that man is an "imprisoned eagle." Alone on the cliffs of the Jungfrau, contemplating suicide, Manfred soliloquizes:

There is a power upon me which withholds,  
And makes it my fatality to live,—  
If it be life to wear within myself  
This barrenness of Spirit, and to be  
My own Soul's sepulchre, for I have ceased
To justify my deeds unto myself—
The last infirmity of evil. Aye,
Thou winged and cloud-cleaving minister,

[An Eagle passes.

Whose happy flight is highest into heaven,
Well may'st thou swoop so near me—I should be
Thy prey, and gorge thine eaglets; thou art gone
Where the eye cannot follow thee; but thine
Yet pierces downward, onward, or above,
With a pervading vision.—Beautiful!
How beautiful is all this visible world!
How glorious in its action and itself!
But we, who name ourselves its sovereigns, we
Half dust, half deity, alike unfit
To sink or soar, with our mixed essence make
A conflict of its elements, and breathe
The breath of degradation and of pride,
Contending with low wants and lofty will,
Till our Mortality predominates,
And men are—what they name not to themselves
And trust not to each other.

(I.ii.23-47)

Manfred begins by accepting the responsibility for his self-imprisonment; the evil within him has enclosed his soul in a "sepulchre." But as the passage progresses, his comments suggest that all men share his destiny to some extent; they too are mixtures of divine spirit and mortal dust, bound finally by their mortality and by the evil it implies. The free eagle is an important contrast to man. In Heaven and Earth, Byron suggests that birds are the earthly counterparts of angels:

God roused

Before the human orison the earlier
Made and far sweeter voices of the birds,
Which in the open firmament of heaven
Have wings like angels, and like them salute
Heaven first each day before the Adamites . . . .

(I.iii.290-94)

Although the eagle is not a song bird, he possesses
symbolically the same characteristics. He too dwells in the "open firmament of heaven." This phrasing does not merely suggest the freedom of the open sky; rather, it points symbolically to an absolute spiritual freedom, one divorced from the dust of man. For the eagle is "cloud-cleaving"; the clouds, those symbolic barriers which separate the profane, the earthly, from the spiritual realm, do not inhibit him. And furthermore, he is all-seeing. In contrast to Manfred's eye, which cannot follow him, the eagle's eye "pierces" with a kind of divine insight "downward, onward, or above, / With a pervading vision." But man, though he may be a "bird of prey" (II.i.36), as Manfred says of himself, is a "fool of time and terror" (II.ii.164), bound by a "detested yoke" (I.67), with a "vital weight upon [his] struggling heart" (I.68).

Thus far, I have discussed only recurring metaphors and images which elucidate Byron's attitude toward enclosed space and suggest his philosophical views. His attitude is more fully developed in Cantos V and VI of Don Juan, in The Lament of Tasso, and in The Prisoner of Chillon; in all three poems, the action occurs in an enclosed space. Although the theme of captivity is treated least seriously in Don Juan and although the concerns of Cantos V and VI are social and ethical rather than cosmic or metaphysical as in The Lament of Tasso and
The Prisoner of Chillon, nonetheless, those cantos deserve serious consideration. For in spite of the external farce and frolic of the harem activities, Byron has serious underlying intentions. We should not be misled by the common critical assumption that these cantos, especially VI, provide only an interlude of comic relief wedged between the Haidee idyll with its tragic ending and the war cantos with their horror.

The setting for most of Cantos V and VI is the Sultan's palace. As Bernard Blackstone has noted, Don Juan's sphere of activity has been reduced from the "pleasant spaces of Seville" and the "circuit of a Greek island" to the "still narrower bounds of a Turkish harem." Before the entrance to the harem, however, the themes it symbolically represents are established. At the beginning of Canto V, Juan and Johnson, his stoic companion, are on exhibition at the slave market. The market, like the harem later, becomes a symbol for the whole world. At the market is "a crowd of shivering slaves of every nation, / And age, and sex" (V.vii). Later, again to universalize Juan's plight, various nationalities are mentioned ("this motley crew / Of Georgians, Russians, Nubians, and what not" [V.viii] and the Greeks, "servile Dogs" [V.xiv]); the point, finally, is that most men are prisoners in one way or another.
Love's the first net which spreads its deadly mesh; 
Ambition, Avarice, Vengeance, Glory, glue 
The glittering lime-twigs of our latter days, 
Where still we flutter on for pence or praise.  
(V.xxii)

Like birds ensnared by lime-smeared twigs, "most men are slaves, none more so than the great, / To their own whims and passions" (V.xxv). Even if man is imprisoned by external human masters, those masters are just as captive as those they oppress. In a later canto, Byron says of England:

Would she be proud, or boast herself the free 
Who is but first of slaves? The nations are 
In prison--but the gaoler; what is her? 
No less a victim to the bolt and bar.  
Is the poor privilege to turn the key 
Upon the captive, Freedom? He's as far 
From the enjoyment of the earth and air 
Who watches o'er the chain, as they who wear.  
(X.lxviii)

The harem is a microcosm of England, just as England is a microcosm of the world.  

The harem setting is deceptive. It is not a dank narrow dungeon like those of Bonnivard and Tasso, but a spacious and luxurious palace. Furthermore, the captives are not in solitary confinement, a significant difference as we shall see later. Nonetheless, they are still captives in a disguised kind of prison, described sometimes as a subtle kind of hell and sometimes as a Bower of Bliss. The passage from outside the garden to the private chambers of Gulbeyaz occupies over fifty stanzas of description (with the usual percentages of
digression). It begins with Juan, Johnson, and Baba the guard going through a small iron door, through a "low thicket / Flanked by large groves which towered on either hand" (V.xli) and almost losing their way among the dark, winding gardens. Once inside the palace, we see them walking through "a Piranesi-like catenation of rooms within rooms, corridors opening off corridors, secret passages, staircases spiralling upward into darkness," Particularly striking among this hellish maze is the giant door guarded by two dwarfs:

The giant door was broad, and bright, and high, Of gilded bronze, and carved in curious guise; Warriors thereon were battling furiously; Here stalks the victor, there the vanquished lies; There captives led in triumph droop the eye, And in perspective many a squadron flies . . . . (V.lxxxvi)

Like a gate into Hell, it predicts the fate of all who enter there; like Gulbeyaz herself, they are "captives led in triumph." The "mis-shapen pigmies" (V.lxxxviii), the two "ugly imps" (V.lxxxvii) with "wondrous hideousness" (V.lxxxviii) and serpent eyes (V.xc) which poison whomever they look at, suggest as well the hellish nature of the place. And in their size and in the fact that they are deaf and dumb, the essential nature of enslavement is reflected. Like Baba the eunuch, they seem inhuman and exist only as captives to the whims of their masters.
Balanced against these descriptions, however, are passages which emphasize the beauty (sometimes gaudiness) of the palace. The first description of the palace's exterior is characteristic: it "looks [like] a screen / New painted, or a pretty opera-scene" (V.xlvi). The palace is a tribute to artificiality and symbolizes man's assertion of total control—over nature, over his fellowman. Of the frequent examples, Gulbeyaz's boudoir is notable:

Meantime Gulbeyaz when her Kind was gone,
Retired into her boudoir, a sweet place
For love or breakfast; private, pleasing, lone,
And rich with all contrivances which grace
Those gay recesses:—many a precious stone
Sparkled along its roof, and many a vase
Of porcelain held in the fettered flowers,
Those captive soothers of a captive's hours.

Mother of pearl, and porphyry, and marble
Vied with each other on this costly spot;
And singing birds without were heard to warble;
And the stained glass which lighted this fair grot
Varied each ray:—but all descriptions garble
The true effect, and so we had better not
Be too minute; an outline is the best,—
A lively reader's fancy does the rest.

(VI.xcvi-xcvii)

Her surroundings are lavish but artificial. The "singing birds without" contrast with the "fettered flowers" within, with the natural stone contrived to grace her prison and with the stained glass which alters the natural sunlight. One is reminded of the earlier descriptions of the Sultan as the Sun, of the eunuch as his ray, of Gulbeyaz as Sister to the Moon, and her
servants as the Milky Way (V.cxliv-cxlv). In this prison, just as natural human desires are perverted, transformed, or held captive, so too are the natural world and its elements.

Byron also defines this prison by its stasis and lifelessness. When Baba entered the palace with his purchases, the room was silent, except for the dripping of a marble fountain, which controls the natural flow of water; those who watched "ne'er stirred in any wise" (V.liv); there was a "lifeless splendour of the whole" (V.lvi). Similarly, the girls in the seraglio are sometimes compared to statues. One girl

as marble, statue-like and still,  
Lay in a breathless, hushed, and stony sleep;  
White, cold, and pure, as looks a frozen rill,  
Or the snow minaret on an Alpine steep,  
Or Lot's wife done in salt,—or what you will;—  
My similes are gathered in a heap,  
So pick and choose--perhaps you'll be content  
With a carved lady on a monument.  
(VI.lxviii)

And Dudù looked "just cut / From marble, like Pygmalion's statue waking" (VI.xliii).135 This artificial environment can potentially rob man of his natural energy and instinctive impulses. It can make him like a lifeless art object, an artificial being who exists as a possession to decorate that environment.

But the attitude that Byron finally takes toward this prison is not totally pessimistic. Although the threat of drowning in a sack (a kind of ultimate
enclosure) hangs over the residents' heads, and although everyone is imprisoned in one way or another (even the Sultan's sons are literally kept in prison and the Sultan himself had once been in prison), Byron seems to believe that some people escape the destructive effects of imprisonment. The Sultan and Gulbeyaz, of course, are victims of their own will to power. But the girls of the seraglio represent a reason for hope. Although they are like exotic hot-house flowers, "with cost, and care, and warmth induced to shoot" (VI.lxv) and like caged birds (VI.xxvi), they still have an unsubdued natural energy. Byron describes their march, a "she-parade" of girls in "ranks" (VI.xxx), controlled externally by the ironically titled Mother of the Maids:

As I said, this goodly row
Of ladies of all countries at the will
Of one good man, with stately march and slow,
Like water-lilies floating down a rill—
Or rather lake—for rills do not run slowly,—
Paced on most maiden-like and melancholy.

But when they reached their own apartments, there,
Like birds, or boys, or bedlamites broke loose,
Waves at spring-tide, or women anywhere
When freed from bonds (which are of no great use
After all), or like Irish at a fair,
Their guards being gone, and as it were a truce
Established between them and bondage, they
Began to sing, dance, chatter, smile, and play.
(VI.xxxiii-xxxiv)

Under the influence of the chaperone, of "guards, and bolts, and walls" (VI.xxxii), they are controlled like
lilies which can only float as lake water governs. But still their inner nature manifests itself. Instead of floating lilies, they are compared to the waves themselves; instead of being caged birds, they are birds broken loose. Unlike Gulbeyez, they can establish a truce with their bondage.

Byron has qualified optimism for several reasons. Obviously, the imprisonment he has developed in these cantos has little metaphysical significance. It is not cosmic injustice, but only local injustice which has rendered the palace residents prisoners. In these cantos there are no Romantic heros yearning for the infinite, yet imprisoned in their clay; here are only ordinary people who want the freedom to express themselves naturally. Byron can view the girls positively because their physical imprisonment does not imprison them in themselves. Lolah, Katinka, and Dudù have a "sort / Of sentimental friendship" (VI.xl); and the description of Dudù is telling: "she was wholly / Unconscious . . . . She never thought about herself at all. / And therefore was she kind and gentle as / The Age of Gold" (VI.liv-1v). If Dudù is representative of the girls, the reason that they are less affected by their imprisonment is obvious. Haidee-like, they are neither slaves to human masters nor, as Johnson said, slaves to Love, Ambition, Avarice, Vengeance, or Glory. It is undoubtedly sentimental of Byron to revert
to the myth of the golden age, to the myth of spontaneous, natural, unaffected goodness, to the myth of innocence, but Byron's optimism is often characterized by just such a sentimental, unrealistic reversion.

No such optimism enters into The Prisoner of Chillon. Except for the introductory sonnet praising the "eternal Spirit of the chainless Mind" (l. 1), a sonnet which is totally at odds with the monologue which follows, the poem details how, progressively, "a long communion tends / To make us what we are" (ll. 390-91); external space becomes internal space. But more than that--Byron uses the prisoner's condition and the prison for philosophic ends. The prison becomes a symbol for earthly life, the "wider prison" (l. 323), a meaningless universe, in which man is only an atom, a friend at best to spiders and rats. Bonnivard is no rebellious Prometheus; in this poem, Byron depicts the failure or limitations of the divine spark and the gradual decay of a man and his retreat into solipsism, a private prison in the confines of the mind. That Byron used the prison in this symbolic way is not particularly unusual, for as Victor Brombert notes:

Oneiric moods, the descent into a private hell, immurement within the confines of the mind, the oppression of madness, the experience of Time and Nothingness, have habitually found their expression through the basic prison metaphor. The relationship between images of cells and labyrinths, and
Perhaps the most striking aspect of *The Prisoner of Chillon* is that, although Bonnivard is a political prisoner, almost no political concerns enter the poem. Byron does, of course, admit in his "Advertisement" that when the poem was composed he "was not sufficiently aware of the history of Bonnivard, or [he] should have endeavoured to dignify the subject by an attempt to celebrate his courage and virtues" (*PW*, IV, 9). Certainly Byron was interested in revolutionary ideals and in local oppression, as his life and works show. But in this poem, what clearly interested him and stimulated his imagination after his visit with Shelley to the prison of Chillon (on June 26, 1816) was imprisonment as a cosmic principle, not the biography of the historical Bonivard. By ignoring the particular circumstances of Bonivard's imprisonment and release, and by depriving the reader of any historical basis by which to judge the prisoner, Byron can universalize Bonivard as a type of mankind and his condition as the human condition.

The physical characteristics of the prison are important. In the Sonnet it is called a "vault" (l. 6), a word which accumulates meaning as the poem progresses. Although the prison of Chillon has in actuality a vaulted ceiling, two other meanings evolve: the vault as an
underground chamber and as a burial chamber. Although the real prison is actually quite spacious and although the prison floor was probably always above water level, throughout the poem we are made aware that it is a living grave, set in the depths. Solitude and imprisonment are characteristically worse in the lower regions. Exclusion atop an ivory tower allows one the benefit of looking out; monasteries are often built on the heights, aspiring to closeness with God. But if the depths are identified with either the unconscious or Hell, then the particular nature of Bonnivard's confinement becomes clear; his encounter with the depths of his own being is a frightening experience, one which eventually deprives him of any meaningful life and renders him spiritually dead. The dimness of light ("dull imprisoned ray" [l. 30]), the inanimate stones to which the prisoner compares himself, and the silence of the prison further emphasize these qualities.

Perhaps what is most important about this imprisonment is that it is solitary. Even though Bonnivard begins his indeterminate sentence together with his two brothers, even then, he is almost in solitary confinement:

They chained us each to a column stone,
And we were three—yet, each alone;
We could not move a single pace,
We could not see each other's face,
But with that pale and livid light
That made us strangers in our sight;
And thus together—yet apart . . . .
(11. 48-54)
And even though they do talk and attempt to comfort each other, their voices take on the sound of the stone walls and "never sounded like [their] own" (l. 68). But at least having one another for mutual comfort prevented the withdrawal into the self; Bonnivard emphasizes how he attempted to uphold and cheer the rest and how the youngest brother felt natural sympathy "with tears for nought but others' ills" (l. 88). But it is after both brothers die, when Bonnivard is totally alone, that his real test comes. His awareness of his solitude is emphasized in Byron's italics:

I only stirred in this black spot,
I only lived, I only drew
The accursed breath of dungeon-dew;
The last, the sole, the dearest link
Between me and the eternal brink,
Which bound me to my failing race,
Was broken in this fatal place.
(ll. 212-18)

Bonnivard becomes wild with fear, is frantic, and retreating into his subjectivity, becomes mad. He becomes at this point his own prison. His description of his madness is telling:

What next befell me then and there
I know not well--I never knew--
First came the loss of light, and air,
And then of darkness too;
I had no thought, no feeling--none--
Among the stones I stood a stone,
And was, scarce conscious what I wist,
As shrubless crags within the mist;
For all was blank, and bleak, and grey;
It was not night--it was not day;
It was not even the dungeon-light,
So hateful to my heavy sight,
But vacancy absorbing space,
And fixedness—without a place;
There were no stars—no earth—no time—
No check—no change—no good—no crime—
But silence, and a stirless breath
Which neither was of life nor death;
A sea of stagnant idleness,
Blind, boundless, mute, and motionless!

(11. 231-50)

Throughout the poem, he has been unaware of time: "It might be months, or years, or days— / I kept no count, I took no note—" (ll. 366-67).\(^{144}\) Linear time, at least after the deaths of his brothers (which served to punctuate time or isolate particular moments), has simply ceased to exist for the prisoner. His days are apparently so much the same that he has worn a roughly circular track in his prison floor after he was at "liberty to stride" (l. 306). In the above passage, his spatial existence is emphasized. With the loss of feeling, which had been kept tenuously alive when he had his brothers to comfort, comes his reduction to an inanimate state—like stone or crags, without sensual awareness. He is totally disoriented—"without a place" in a vast void. From this point on in the poem, it is irrelevant that he is still literally confined, for he never fully recovers from his lack of place. Everything to which he might relate is for all practical purposes infinitely distant from him because he is so withdrawn in his internal prison. He has lost a sense of space, but what has happened is the exact opposite of the more usual Romantic transcendence
of space. When Wordsworth transcends space, he does so by including all space within himself, as well as by participating in all space as part of a might whole. Childe Harold does this temporarily when he says, "Are not the mountains, waves, and skies, a part / Of me and of my soul, as I of them?" (III.lxxxv). But the prisoner has excluded all space and is incapable of breaking the bounds of self.

Even when his sense return, he relates everything that occurs around him to himself; he lacks the sympathetic imagination that would allow him to break out of the self. Although he says that the bird had brought him back to think and feel, his judgment may not be accurate, for as the narrator of a dramatic monologue, he may unconsciously reveal more than he knows. He says that the bird had "come to love [him]" (l. 275), not that he loves the bird. Later, he claims that the whole earth would be a wider prison to him because he had buried all "who loved [him] in a human shape" (l. 321) and because he would have no partner in [his] misery" (l. 375). Even his statement, "Sweet bird! I could not wish for thine [captivity]!" is only superficially sympathetic, for he is incapable of thinking of the bird's existence in any terms but his own. Everything is related solipsistically to his own existence. Later, he looks outside to nature with what he calls the "quiet of a loving eye" (l. 331), but this seems to be
yet another case of the irony in the speaker's evaluation of himself; he is not loving nor does the view give him quiet. He cites first of all only simple sensations—"I saw," "I heard," not a loving relation. Even the pleasant isle he sees is related to his own state; it is "scarce broader than [his] dungeon floor" (l. 345) and, as Gleckner suggests, parodies his "universe of three graves" by its three tall trees. Furthermore, the outside world actually troubles him; he is oppressed, not restored by it. After seeing the eagle, his own symbolic opposite, he retreats even further, wishing that he "had not left [his] recent chains" (l. 358); now he actually needs the "darkness of his dim abode" (l. 360) and his "new-dug grave" (l. 361) because in the light of day, he more nearly understands his alienation and isolation.

The final lines of the poem underscore the state to which the prisoner has been reduced:

I learned to love despair.
And thus when they appeared at last,
And all my bonds aside were cast,
These heavy walls to me had grown
A hermitage—and all my own!
And half I felt as they were come
To tear me from a second home;
With spiders I had friendship made,
And watched them in their sullen trade,
Had seen the mice by moonlight play,
And why should I feel less than they?
We were all inmates of one place,
And I, the monarch of each race,
Had power to kill—yet, strange to tell!
In quiet we had learned to dwell;
My very chains and I grew friends,
So much a long communion tends
To make us what we are:—even I
Regained my freedom with a sigh.

(11, 374-92)

Throughout the poem there are echoes from *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, a fact E. H. Coleridge has noted in his edition. The idea that the prisoner has made friends with the animal world bears a superficial resemblance to the theme of that poem. But the prisoner has not made friends with the birds, the free-flying dwellers of space, but only with dwellers in a significantly small portion of space. He seems to lose his humanity by his supposed relation with these creatures, not gain it as the Mariner does by his identification. Furthermore, there is something inherently repulsive about being friends with spiders and mice—a repulsion the reader does not feel when the Mariner describes the beautiful water snakes (who traverse, incidently, large areas of space and are thus analogous to Byron's birds). The prisoner has not, through his friendship, left his subjective world to participate in the larger world of nature; he has simply incorporated the spiders and mice into his world. They are part of his subjective "home." They too are "inmates." The idea of his friendship with these creatures can be finally dismissed when the prisoner also calls the chains his "friends." The idea of love suggested in the beginning of the poem in the relation between the brothers has been reduced to this.
The Prisoner of Chillon is perhaps Byron's most pessimistic poem. The defiant stance of Cain and Manfred, although it implies a separation of man and the cosmos, at least presents men who rebel against the wider prison of the world. And in Cain particularly, the value of human sympathy is present in the love of Adah and Cain. Love may only be a temporary and illusory screen masking the reality that each man is imprisoned in himself in an infinite world which nonetheless imprisons him; still love expands the prison. But to the alienated prisoner of Chillon, "it was at length the same . . . / Fettered or fetterless to be" (ll. 372-73), for he has no one to love, cannot identify with nature, and can make no imaginative leap out of himself. He becomes his own prison.

The Lament of Tasso, written less than a year after The Prisoner of Chillon, suggests means for escape from imprisonment. Although the poem is a lament and although Tasso, unlike Bonnivard, is still imprisoned with no immediate hope for release, the poem is more optimistic. Even though the historical Tasso particularly interested Byron, he can still be considered as Man. The mere recurrence of the idea of imprisonment, literal or figurative, in Byron's poetry works toward this interpretation. Furthermore, there is a sense in the poem that Tasso's, like Man's imprisonment results from
a kind of cosmic principle, at times cosmic injustice. Although Tasso mentions earthly imprisoners whom he tries not to hate, he clearly sees his imprisonment in a larger context: it is "penance" (l. 31) and "through his sufferance [he] might be forgiven" (l. 30). But there is no evidence in the poem that he has personally done anything for which he must be forgiven. Simply being a man makes him guilty: all life, by implication, is penance, pilgrimage, or prison. In the eighth stanza, which details his fear of insanity, Tasso seems to recognize, at least semi-consciously, the cosmic injustice of his life. He imagines what he thinks of as a temptation (l. 202) by a "strange demon" who would drive him mad. The idea of temptation is ironic in this context (one does not sin by going mad) and is ironic in the larger context of the poem. The world of this poem, like that in The Prisoner of Chillon, is not a world where right and wrong are distinguishable, where virtue is rewarded and sin punished. But Tasso, the ironic speaker of a dramatic monologue, hangs on to these distinctions, while recognizing implicitly the arbitrariness of his punishment. He suggests that "heaven forgets [him]" (l. 200) and asks "Why in this furnace is my spirit proved, / Like steel in tempering fire?" (ll. 204-5). And perhaps even his earlier characterization of his present life can be read as a
definition of the meaninglessness of all life; life is a "vast Lazar-house of many woes,"

Where cries reply to curses, shrieks to blows,
And each is tortured in his separate hell--
For we are crowded in our solitudes--
Many, but each divided by the wall,
Which echoes Madness in her babbling moods;
While all can hear, none heed his neighbor's call.
(ll. 84-91)

But if Tasso is Man in a cosmic prison, Tasso is also superior to most men, for he can, in isolated moments at least, forget the torture of his separate hell. He struggles against potential madness, or imprisonment in the self, and has learned several ways to transcend the constriction of human life.

Two related ways of transcendence demand a special personality and talents—so much so that it is easy to detect Byron's self-projection in this poem. Early in the poem, Tasso mentions "the innate force / Of his own spirit" (ll. 45-46). Although he sometimes thinks of himself as a "broken reed" (l. 41), it is in part his strong will that prevents him from retreating into an internal prison. He vows toward the end of his monologue that he will "make / A future temple of [his] present cell" (ll. 219-20), that his prison "shall be a consecrated spot" (l. 239). It is first his defiance, his rebellion against his imprisonment that prevents him from withdrawing into a self-made prison, for defiance assumes that the object or person being defied exists outside the
subjective self; defiance implies a relationship, albeit negative. But defiance can also be destructive, so that defiance must also have constructive ends. Tasso will defy by transforming through the powers of mind his present condition. He enacts Lucifer's advice to Cain: "Think and endure and form an inner world / In your own bosom, where the outward fails" (II.11.463-64). Instead of allowing external constriction to become internal constriction as Bonnivard does, Tasso pledges to transform and transcend external reality. That he has already done this is evident in his description of the creation of Gerusalemme Liberata. He says:

For I have battled with mine agony,
And made me wings wherewith to overfly
The narrow circus of my dungeon wall,
And freed the Holy Sepulchre from thrall;
And revelled among men and things divine,
And poured my spirit over Palestine . . . .
(11. 21-26)

Through the powers of mind and imagination, Tasso, like a bird, was able to overcome spatial constriction; and he was, as he says later, wooed from himself (l. 39). The energy of Tasso's transcendent imagination is centrifugal; the inertia of Bonnivard's failing will is centripetal.

The prison is thus a paradoxical place. Even Tasso seems to suggest the paradox when he calls the prison a potential temple and a consecrated spot and when he admits he had loved solitude in his youth (l. 174). Solitude can be holy; it can be creative. Even when
Tasso calls his prison a "cave" (l. 17), in a thoroughly negative context, we are reminded of caves and caverns sacred to the imagination— not only in Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* and in Coleridge's *Kubla Khan*, but in Byron's own works. In *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Byron suggests that "thought seeks refuge in lone caves, yet rife / With airy images" (III.v). Immediately following this definition, Byron adds:

'Tis to create, and in creating live
A being more intense that we endow
With form our fancy, gaining as we give
The life we image, even as I do now—
What am I? Nothing; but not so art thou,
Soul of my thought! with whom I traverse earth,
Invisible but gazing . . .

(III.vi)

Later in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, he describes Rousseau's inspiration as being like that which came "As from the Pythian's mystic cave of yore" (III.lxxx1). For the most part, certainly, Tasso's prison is absolutely negative; it has too many similarities to Bonnivard's— it is like a bier (l. 184), may be his grave (l. 18); and he feels reduced to an animal in a lair (l. 18). Furthermore, as a cosmic symbol, it must be negative; that is, metaphysically, the prison represents the wider prison of the world. Nonetheless, it is paradoxically similar to the lone cave of the imagination. It is thus a tribute to Tasso's imagination that he can, at least temporarily, transform
the prison of the world and escape to "traverse earth," bird-like, spiritualized ("invisible"), freed from the bonds of space and matter.

Byron suggests in this poem yet another way to escape from the prison of the world and to overcome the bounds of the self. This means is less exclusive than the view that the imagination transforms reality. This means was implicit in The Prisoner of Chillon and is developed with varying degrees of seriousness in later poems. It is love. In a vast Lazar-house of woes, in an arbitrary and unjust universe, man needs love, whether it is an illusory escape or not. Love is, additionally, one of the few escapes available to him. Love, too, is described in this poem in spatial metaphors. Tasso imagines his and Leonora's love as boundless: it is "fathomless, and hath no shore" (l. 64). True love, like the imagination, is centrifugal. The sixth stanza further develops the effects of love: it animates the natural world and allows man to relate to his environment in such a way that the world becomes a Paradise; and most important, man leaves his "separate hell." When Tasso found Leonora, he remembers,

And then I lost my being, all to be
Absorbed in thine;--the world was past away;--
Thou didst annihilate the earth to me!
(11. 171-73)

Through ideal love, the world is transformed into a
Paradise and the boundaries of space are transcended. Love has then essentially the same powers as the imagination; both allow for an escape out of the self and out of a limiting, imprisoning world to an immaterial, infinite world. But Byron does not suggest that either means is ultimately real or permanent; in *The Lament of Tasso*, the prison and Tasso’s fears of his failure of mind loom in the background. Lucifer, to Byron, is no doubt right; the outward world does fail. And too, man may fail in transcending the vast Lazar-house. Bonnivard’s state may be proleptic, not only of Tasso’s fate, but of all men’s as well.
FOOTNOTES


4 All quotations from Byron's works, except Cain and Don Juan, are from The Poetical Works of Lord Byron, ed. E. H. Coleridge (London, 1898-1904), hereafter referred to as PW.

5 Byron claims "it was the Stauback and the Jungfrau, and something else," not the influence of Faust which inspired Manfred; see PW, IV, 82.

6 E. H. Coleridge notes in PW, V, 294, that Byron's knowledge of Mount Ararat probably derived from Joseph Pitton de Tournefort's A Voyage in the Levant (1741), III, 205, 706. Coleridge quotes: "It is a most frightful sight; David might well say such sort of places show the grandeur of the Lord . . . . To form any idea of this place you must imagine one of the highest mountains in the world opening its bosom, only to show the most horrible spectacle that can be thought of." See also Childe Harold's Pilgrimage III.xci:

Not vainly did the early Persian make
His altar the high places, and the peak
Of earth-o'ergazing mountains, and thus take
A fit and unwalled temple, there to seek
The Spirit, in whose honour shrines are weak
Upreared of human hands. Come, and compare
Columns and idol-dwellings--Goth or Greek--
With Nature's realms of worship, earth and air--
Nor fix on fond abodes to circumscribe thy prayer!

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7 Marchand, Byron, II, 810, quoting from Lord Byron's Correspondence, ed. John Murray (New York, 1922), II, 121-22.

8 LJ, I, 143.


10 See Cain, II.ii.178 ff. All references to Cain are from Lord Byron's Cain: Twelve Essays and a Text with Variants and Annotations by Truman Guy Steffan (Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1968).

11 See Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, III.ii-iii, and Heaven and Earth, I.iii.698.


13 For qualifications dealing with the influence of nature on Byron, see Ernest J. Lovell, Jr., Byron: The Record of a Quest (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1949), esp. pp. 29-48, 67-86.

14 I am purposely neglecting the implications of "with thee" in this quotation.

15 Marchand, Byron, I, 266, who quotes from LJ, I, 310-11.

16 Marchand, Byron, I, 102; II, 730.

17 Robert P. Gleckner, Byron and the Ruins of Paradise (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1967), pp. 334-35, comments on the "voice of loss" (of country) which sounds "through the mockery, revelry, and gaucherie" of the following passage in Don Juan:

And when I use the phrase of "Auld Lang Syne!"
'T is not addressed to you—the more's the pity
For me, for I would rather take my wine
With you, than aught (save Scott) in your proud city:
But somehow it may seem a schoolboy's whine,
And yet I seek not to be grand nor witty.
But I am half a Scot by birth, and bred
A whole one, and my heart flies to my head,—
As "Auld Lang Syne" brings Scotland, one and all, Scoph plaids, Scotch snoods, the blue hills, and clear streams, The Dee—the Don—Balgounie's brig's black wall— All my boy feelings, all my gentler dreams Of what I then dreamt, clothed in their own pall,— Like Banquo's offspring—floating past me seems My childhood, in this childishness of mine— I care not—'tis a glimpse of "Auld Lang Syne." (X.xvii-xviii)

18 Lovell, The Record of a Quest, p. 43, quotes J. Hamilton Browne, "Voyage from Leghorn to Cephalonia with Lord Byron," Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, XXXV (1834), 64.

19 Marchand, Byron, II, 671, quoted from LJ, IV, 7-8.

20 Ibid., I, 277. One of Byron's major criticisms of the Lake poets was of their insularity and narrowness. See especially Don Juan I.v.

21 Perhaps his first trip abroad had as much of the typical eighteenth-century grand tour as of Romantic wanderlust, Byron's motives were to study foreign culture, mature his judgment, and become a citizen of the world. See Marchand, Byron, I, 161, 266.

22 Marchand, Byron, II, 609.

23 Edward E. Bostetter, The Romantic Ventriloquists (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1963), p. 269. quotes the following passage from one of Byron's letters to Annabella, which explains a similar impulse for travelling: "The great object of life is sensation—to feel that we exist, even though in pain. It is this 'craving void' which drives us to gaming—to battle—to travel, to intemperate, but keenly felt pursuits of every description, whose principal attraction is the agitation inseparable from their accomplishment (LJ, III, 400)."

24 Marjarum, Byron as Skeptic and Believer, p. ix.


26 In 1813 Byron wrote William Gifford that he had been "disgusted with a Calvinist Scotch school" where he had been "cudgelled to church for the first ten years of [his] life" (LJ, II, 221-22).
27 Fairchild, Religious Trends, III, 396.


29 Gleckner, Byron and the Ruins of Paradise, pp. 122-23, sees this "taint" from a less religious viewpoint; he says: "To Byron, however, the fall of man is neither orthodox nor Miltonic, as we have seen. It has little or nothing to do with God, but has, rather, to do with man's composition. Not only is he "half dust, half deity," he is also a tortured compound of mind and heart, reason and love, worldly and otherworldly ambition, imagination and the senses, cruelty and compassion—a creature upon whom the world makes impossible demands for bare survival and who is denied the possibility of the enduring love which will raise him above himself; a creature in whom the heat of passion and the coldness of intellect are both creative and destructive; a creature whose imagination pictures to him an Edenic past that is irretrievable and a dream of a future that is unattainable; a creature constantly and inevitably caught and destroyed in his own selfless plans for freedom and a place in the sun; a creature both slave and enslaver, a product of his own will (or lack of it), a victim of both action and inaction; a creature alone, alienated from all save his persistent dreams of a better world, dreams that are shattered with equal persistence by a world intolerant or indifferent to dreams; a creature who is a poet at heart but whose poetry captures no minds, conquers no nations, gains no riches, wins no freedom, and is trampled beneath the boots of the onrushing hordes of the worldly."

30 Marchand, Byron, III, 1088, 1237, and Shelley's Adonais, xxx.

31 Byron's characters are also compared with a variety of historical or mythical wanderers—Ishmael, the Prodigal Son, the Wandering Jew, Ulysses. Cain is, of course, the prototype for all accursed wanderers.

32 Manfred is also compared to Cain (I.i.249), but he is not a wanderer.

33 Even in "When Coldness wraps this Suffering Clay," Byron envisions the immortal soul as a kind of eternal wanderer among the realms of space.

34 It should be noted that Deism also implies a gulf between God and the world. Deistic sentiments are also
expressed in Byron's poems, the most obvious being "The Prayer of Nature," and he often thought of himself as a Deist; he said in 1807, "I have lived a Deist, what I shall die I know not" (LJ, II, 19).

35 Steffan, Lord Byron's Cain, p. 88.

36 All quotations from Don Juan are from Don Juan, edited with an introduction and notes by Leslie A. Marchand (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1958).

37 Byron's Pantheism was rather short-lived.


39 The extent to which Hell or underworld places existed for Byron as a reality is debatable. The poems which depict these places are all "metaphysical," by Byron's categorization. Space in them is created or poetically conceived. Marjarum, Byron as Skeptic and Believer, p. 36, maintains that Byron explicitly denied the existence of Hell.

40 Bostetter, The Romantic Ventriloquists, p. 256.

41 Marjarum, Byron as Skeptic and Believer, p. 26, paraphrases Manfred Eimer's conclusion: "But Eimer finds no evidence of the profound effect of scientific interests upon Byron's poetry until 1814." Eimer's book, Byron und der Kosmos (Heidelberg, 1912), is an important but untranslated book dealing with Byron's interest in and knowledge of science. It has chapters on Byron's acquaintance with theories of astronomy, cosmology, and paleontology. Recent critics generally believe that Eimer has overemphasized Byron's knowledge of science and forced him into a weltanschauung and consistency of thought which is oversimplified. See Marjarum, Byron as Skeptic and Believer, pp. x-xi, 26, and Lovell, Byron: The Record of a Quest, p. 39, n.

42 Thomas Moore, Letters and Journals of Lord Byron with Notices of His Life (Paris, 1830), 34-35. This list of works also includes Byron's famous comment: "I have also read . . . above four thousand novels."

43 Steffan, Lord Byron's Cain, p. 68.

44 M. K. Joseph, Byron the Poet, p. 121.
Manfred's star, mentioned in I.1.42 ff., is a powerful influence on his own destiny. The idea that stars control destinies is also suggested in Childe Harold's Pilgrimage III.lxxxviii.

The unscientific nature of the second act of Cain bothered few nineteenth-century critics. However, Henry Wilkinson's criticisms, summarized by Steffan, Lord Byron's Cain, p. 415, are interesting: "Wilkinson thought that Byron presented it as an actual experience, and so, with abundant display of scientific knowledge, he argued that the journey and everything the travellers saw and talked about were impossibilities. He quibbled about the manner of Cain's transportation, with much ado about the first four words of Act II ("I tread on air"). Did Cain tread or fly with wings or was he borne by Lucifer? Byron violated all 'the rules of astronomy' as well as those of physics, chemistry, and physiology. Cain could not have breathed, much less talked, in the rarefied atmosphere of remote space. Nor could he have known about the luminous belts of Saturn because there were no telescopes in Eden. Taking a hint from the remark that Cain and Lucifer were travelling like sunbeams, Wilkinson made some mathematical calculations about the speed and distance of the flight and concluded that they were going too fast to see anything at all. Moreover they could have seen nothing after they reached Hades because of the darkness there. He surmised that since they spent an hour talking in Hades, they had only one hour to go there and return and that even if they went at the speed of light they could not have flown out of the solar system in thirty minutes. He protested, therefore, that the stars could not have receded and vanished."

48Marjarum, Byron as Skeptic and Believer, p. 58.
49Lovell, Byron: The Record of a Quest, pp. 194-95, quotes LJ, V, 458.
50Marchand, Byron, II, 873, quotes from Teresa Guiccioli's unpublished "La Vie de Lord Byron en Italie."
51Ibid., II, 872-73, quoted from Teresa's "Vie."
52The allusions in Byron's early poetry anticipate what will become a major scientific interest later. Many of the early love poems use various heavenly bodies as metaphors for female beauty. "To M--," for example, uses
these comparisons throughout; her eyes are like stars; she would outshine the constellation, "Berenice's hair," and cause all the other stars to fade. This kind of comparison is typical in his poetry. The metaphors are traditional, of course, but given the recurrence and the development of some of the metaphors (when his sincerity is not in question), we can assume that Byron had not a failure of imagination in using them, but a real attraction for things celestial. The allusions continue throughout the poetry, in for example, the late poem The Island where Neuha is "Dusky like night, but night with all her stars" (II.vii.129) and in the harem stanzas of Don Juan where, to indicate the distortions of this life, the Sultan is compared to the Sun, the wives to the Milky Way, and the slave who gives warnings to a comet.

53 See Steffan, Lord Byron's Cain, especially pp. 435 and 438, for Victorian disputes over this point. Edward Dowden praised Byron's descriptions in Act II while Roden Noel said there was "no soul-overwhelming grandeur at all in those queer regions of space . . . , while the verse halts terribly."

54 Steffan, Lord Byron's Cain, p. 93, says: "The journey in Act II contributed another reservoir of hefty words referring to large quantities and to vast extents of time and space: myriads, innumerable, unnumbered (these are three favorites), boundless, immemorial, enormous, inordinate, immeasurable, immensity, interminable, multitude, magnitude, overpowering, overwhelming."

55 Steffan, Lord Byron's Cain, p. 276, cites both these passages from Paradise Lost, but for purposes different from mine.

56 One unimportant exception should be noted. In The Vision of Judgment, lvii, Byron refers to "the verge of space" which seems to imply a bounded universe. The spatial concepts in this poem are particularly unscientific, probably because Byron's purposes are satiric.


58 Several early poems, in a quite traditional way, suggest that outer space is Heaven. After man's death, his soul will wing its flight from its mortal enclosure to the vast regions of outer space, God's realm. See, for example, "On the Death of a Young Lady" (1802),
"The Tear" (1806; l. 41), and "If that High World" (1815). On his death bed, Byron apparently said, "Eternity and space are before me" (Marchand, Byron, III, 121). The idea becomes poetically transmuted in the poetry of Byron's middle and late years. It is probably not, for example, traditional Christianity which caused Byron to suggest that the lovers in Heaven and Earth might be transported to the moon to live in a kind of cosmic paradise. Nor do Christian concepts alone account for his attitude toward space in Cain.

59 Manfred in II.ii.70-71; Lioni in Marino Faliero IV.i.68-70; Sardanapalus in II.251-68; Japhet in Heaven and Earth I.ii.4-8.


61 Fairchild, Religious Trends, III, 410, who quotes from LJ, III, 404, and comments, "This is the Newtonian universe with which Lucifer bewilders Cain. Despite all the Boyle lectures and Bridgewater treatises, physico-theology was going over to the enemy."

62 Steffan, Lord Byron's Cain, p. 278, quotes from LJ, II, 222.

63 Ibid., from LJ, VI, 18.

64 There is a striking similarity between Byron's reaction to infinity and Pascal's, at least as the latter's reaction is described and analyzed by Georges Poulet in The Metamorphoses of the Circle, translated from the French by Carley Dawson and Elliott Coleman in collaboration with the author (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1966). In translation, the diction is even similar with words like "atom" and "point" used frequently. Some of Pascal's statements, which I quote from Poulet, include:

"In vain we inflate our conceptions beyond all imaginable spaces, we beget but atoms in comparison with the reality of things" (p. 36).
"What is man in the infinite?" (p. 39).
"Engulfed in the infinite immenses of spaces of which I know nothing, and which know me not..." (p. 39).
"I see these terrifying spaces of the universe which enclose me" (p. 39).
"Through space the universe encompasses me and engulfs me like a point" (p. 39).
Poulet's analysis of Pascal's reaction is helpful in explaining Byron's. Poulet says: "For if, on the one hand, leaving its mental island, thought sees growing above and around it the dimensions of an infinitely opening world, on the other hand, the thinking being, far from leaving the place where he is, sees himself shrinking on the spot as fast as the sphere of his contemplation enlarges. . . . On one hand . . . , the gaze of the contemplator sees the circular limits of the universe unroll; but on the other hand, too, as fast as these limits unroll, all that they overtake and contain tends to contract and to mingle with the point of view of the spectator. Two opposing movements are accomplished at the same moment: one, centrifugal, by which the periphery of the universe sinks further and further away from the being who looks and who thinks, and the other, centripetal, by which all of circumscribed space tends to close upon the spectator, to identify itself with the place he occupies, to reduce itself, with him, to the dimensions of a simple point. . . . The more the thinking being inflates his conceptions and tries to pass beyond them, the further he sees receding above him, a universe whose final limit is nowhere; while conversely to this infinite flight, there occurs an infinite reimplication, by which everything which is seen, thought, even imagined, in the interior of this total universe, surges back, is reabsorbed, closes itself on the place where one is, on the point which one occupies. Infinitely, over and above all perception and all thought, there is a natural order whose circumference is nowhere. And at an infinite distance this side of the circumference, there is a mark, a point, a central atom, which is nothing in itself, and merges with the spectator" (pp. 36-37).


Byron used this idea again in the facetious *The Vision of Judgment* when he referred to the vast reaches of space and "our speck of earth" (xxvii).

The following passages from Fontenelle's *Entretien sur la Pluralité des Mondes* presents the same contradictory reactions to space that are found in Byron's works: "Tout cet espace immense qui comprend
notre soleil et nos planètes ne sera qu'une petite parcelle de l'univers? Autant d'espaces pareils que d'étoiles fixes? Cela me confond, me trouble, m'épouvante!— Et moi, répondis-je, cela me met à mon aise" (quoted in M. K. Joseph, Byron the Poet, p. 116).

69 Joseph, Byron the Poet, p. 119.

70 William Coleman has titled his critical study, Georges Cuvier Zoologist: A Study in the History of Evolutionary Theory (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1964). Cuvier's most extensive research was in biology; it is his geological work, Essay on the Theory of the Earth which most interested Byron.


72 Coleman, Georges Cuvier Zoologist, pp. 109, 130, draws these conclusions.

73 Ibid., pp. 109-10.

74 The "Translation from Horace" (1807) also refers to the "flames of an expiring world" (l. 13) and "crashing chaos" (l. 14), but Marjarum, Byron as Skeptic and Believer, p. 51, says that these lines indicate "little of permanent importance."

75 John Pigot's letter is reprinted in a footnote in LJ, I, 108-10.

76 Marjarum, Byron as Skeptic and Believer, p. 51.


78 Cuvier admitted that gradual changes occurred too through the action of rain, snow, and ice, but these changes, he thought, did not explain mountains and valleys.

79 Cuvier, Essay, p. 18.

80 Ibid., p. 11.

81 Ibid., p. 19.

82 This statement could have suggested to Byron the Pre-Adamite being Cain sees in Hades.
Here is Cuvier's conclusion: "I am of opinion, then, with M. Deluc and M. Dolomier,—That, if there is any circumstance thoroughly established in geology, it is, that the crust of our globe has been subjected to a great and sudden revolution, the epoch of which cannot be dated much farther back than five or six thousand years ago; that this revolution had buried all the countries which were before inhabited by men and by the other animals that are now best known . . . Yet farther,—That the countries which are now inhabited, and which were laid dry by this last revolution, had been formerly inhabited at a more remote era, if not by man, at least by land animals; that, consequently, at least one previous revolution had submerged them under the waters; and that, judging from the different orders of animals of which we discover the remains in a fossil state, they had probably experienced two or three irruptions of the sea" (Essay, pp. 166-67).

84 Steffan, Lord Byron's Cain, p. 157.

85 Byron also refers to Cuvier in Don Juan X.iii.

86 A. W. Piper, The Active Universe: Pantheism and the concept of Imagination in the English Romantic poets (London: The Athlone Press, 1962), pp. 186-87, explains that Cuvier and most of his popularizers believed that "the history of the physical world was a story of progress."

87 Steffan, Lord Byron's Cain, pp. 28-29, also notes that in Byron's depiction of Hades in Act II of Cain, he "combined the old myths about giants and the Homeric concept of the Stygian shadows with an imaginary extension of Cuvier's geological theory to portray a process of endless deterioration and demolition."

88 Steffan, Lord Byron's Cain, pp. 277-78, gives some literary sources for Byron's interest in cosmic destruction; they include Donne's Anatomie of the World, Milton's "Naturam non pati senium," Pope's Essay on Man (I.89-90), Shelley's Hellas (I. 197 ff.), and Young's Night Thoughts (IX.228).

89 In "Translation from Horace," written before his real interest in geology, Byron also imagines Jove destroying the world.

90 Coleman, Georges Cuvier Zoologist, p. 178, explains that although Cuvier made a deliberate attempt not to mix science and religion, "throughout the Discourse are
poorly concealed attempts to show the simultaneity of the most recent catastrophe and the Noachin Deluge."

The mingling of heavenly and subterranean waters also plays a part in Thomas Burnet's cosmology, which Byron could have known. John Livingstone Lowes, The Road to Xanadu (1927; rpt. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1964), p. 358, explains: "Now Burnet's daring cosmogony is built about the central waters and the central fires. Beneath the hollow shell of the earth lay, from the beginning, the waters of the great abyss. At the deluge the fountains of the deep were broken up, and the shattered frame of the earth sank beneath the rush of the ascending floods. Subterranean rivers still pursue their way through the dark pipes of the earth, and beneath us still are gathered up, in subterranean lakes and seas, the cataracts of the abyss."

The ocean in the shipwreck section of Don Juan also has qualities of a void and is equally frightening.


LJ, I, 234; letter to Francis Hodgson, August 6, 1809.


This, in fact, was one of the early criticisms of Cain. Thomas Talfourd, for example, compared Byron's descriptive power to Milton's: "He has made no attempt to imitate Milton's plastic power;--that power by which our great poet has made his Heaven and Hell, and the very regions of space, sublime realities, palpable to the imagination...all the scenery over which he [Lucifer] presides is dim, vague, and seen only in faint outline" (quoted in Steffan, Lord Byron's Cain, pp. 352-53).

Byron, of course, here extends the boundaries of the picturesque by describing an urban prospect.


Lovell, Byron: The Record of a Quest, p. 94, quotes from Thomas Medwin's Journal of the Conversations of Lord Byron (New York, 1824), p. 112. Lovell's chapter,
"Byron and the Picturesque Tradition," pp. 87-116, is essential in a study of this topic. Byron's awareness of the picturesque is also indicated in a letter to Elizabeth Pigot (August 11, 1807) where he says he is thinking of a volume of poetry on Erse traditions to be called "'The Highland Harp,' or some title equally picturesque" (LI, I, 144).

See also Don Juan, XIV.-xl: V.iii: V,xcvii.

Lovell, Byron: The Record of a Quest, pp. 95-108.

"To Emma" and "Childish Recollections" have prospects which evoke the pleasures of memory. "On a Distant View of the Village and School of Harrow on the Hill" owes to the topographical tradition. These poems, like Byron's later works, however, pay much less attention to the scene than to the meditations which are occasioned by it.

Line 240, erased in the MS, reads "views too sweet and vast" (my italics).

Harmony is an important quality to practitioners of picturesque poetry. See also Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, II.xlviii, where Byron says the "bluest skies... harmonise the whole."

Byron uses the image of the meteor again in Don Juan, XI.lxvii, to indicate chaotic rushing, although this use of the metaphor does not have implications for his space-consciousness.

The following comment, which sounds Wordsworthian, should be added as a qualification. In a letter in 1817, Byron said, "As a whole, ancient and modern, it beats Greece, Constantinople, every thing--at least that I have ever seen. But I can't describe, because my first impressions are always strong and confused, and my Memory selects and reduces them to order, like distance in the landscape, and blends them better, although they may be less distinct" (Quoted in Marchand, Byron, II, 691).


Note also that in part it is "sun, moons, and earths, upon their loud-voiced spheres / Singing in thunder round" which overwhelmed Cain and made him think he was "unfit for mortal converse" (III.182-84).

I tend to agree with Lovell, Byron: The Record of
a Quest, p. 32, in reference to this passage: "He longed for quiet and retirement, to be sure, but absolute solitude he could not bear, and he who was so much actor needed an audience, a fashionable one. Although he had recorded in Childe Harold (III, 90) his experience of 'the feeling infinite' that all Nature is One and alive, a feeling which comes with solitude, 'where we are least alone,' this mood could not last forever, and he also exclaimed 'alas! here I am... never more alone than when alone.' His fits of despondency, too, came upon him most often, as long as he remained in England, when he was secluded at Newstead. Above all men he needed people and a sympathetic society to move in."

110 See also The Island and the Ave Maria stanzas of Don Juan.

111 Letter of September 18, 1819.


114 See George M. Ridenour, "Byron in 1816: Four Poems from Diodati," in From Sensibility to Romanticism, p. 464, who quotes a similar passage from Rousseau's Confessions.


116 Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, IV.cxxii, indicates, however, that the imaginative act can lead to disillusionment and despair:

Of its own beauty is the mind diseased,
And fevers into false creation:—where,
Where are the forms the sculptor's soul hath seized?

In him alone. Can Nature show so fair?
Where are the charms and virtues which we dare
Conceive in boyhood and pursue as men,
The unreached Paradise of our despair,
Which o'er-informs the pencil and the pen,
And overpowers the page where it would bloom again?

We might also note that beings from "created" worlds populate Cain, Heaven and Earth, and Manfred.


Macbeth II.iv.24.

Robert Gleckner, Byron and the Ruins of Paradise, whose elucidation of Byron's pessimism has been particularly valuable to this study, says of these lines: "Instead of condemning Harold with faint sympathy, in Canto III the narrator begins to see the essential condition of mankind exemplified in him" (p. 238).

It is Lucifer, however, who defines Eden in this way.

Jerome J. McGann, Fiery Dust: Byron's Poetic Development (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), p. 262, says that "running through all of Heaven and Earth is the image of the 'All beauteous world' that is this earth. Japhet is particularly eloquent on the subject (I, iii, 1 ff.), but Anah and the Seraphim defectors also attest to it." McGann also quotes Byron's comment to Medwin that in the sequel he had "once thought of conveying the lovers to the moon, or one of the planets, but it is not easy for the imagination to make any unknown world more beautiful than this..." (Ernest J. Lovell, Jr., ed., Medwin's Conversations of Lord Byron [Princeton, 1966], p. 157). Byron's awareness of the beauties of this world, however, does not really contradict his statement in Don Juan. In the first place, in Heaven and Earth, the characters lament the destruction of the pre-Noachin world; given this context, of course the world must be described as beauteous in order to emphasize the cruelty of God in destroying it. And secondly, the world can be literally beautiful and still metaphysically a cold wasteland and prison.

Ronald Gregg Coleman, "Cosmic Symbolism in Byron's Dramas" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Vanderbilt University, 1965), p. 113, mentions the eagle but only in connection with Manfred.

See also Don Juan X.Ixxviii.
125 Note also the circle image in The Giaour, 11. 422-38, which is used to express imprisonment in the self because of a guilty conscience:

The Mind, that broods o'er guilty woes,
    Is like the Scorpion girt by fire,
In circle narrowing as it glows,
The flames around their captive close,
    Till inly searched by thousand throes,
And maddening in her ire,
One sad and sole relief she knows--
The sting she nourished for her foes.
Whose venom never yet was vain,
Gives but one pang, and cures all pain.
And darts into her desperate brain:
So do the dark in soul expire,
Or live like Scorpion girt by fire:
So writhes the mind Remorse hath riven,
Unfit for earth, undoomed for heaven,
Darkness above, despair beneath,
Around it flame, within it death!

(PW, III, 106-7)

126 It should be noted that some of the qualities of the Sultan's life and palace are presented in embryonic form in Childe Harold's Pilgrimage II.lvi ff., when Byron describes Ali Pasha's court.


128 The idea that England enslaves occurs also in the Preface to Cantos VI, VII, and VIII, when Byron mentions Castlereagh, whose "whole existence was consumed in endeavoring to enslave" (p. 198).

129 Throughout this chapter when referring to Byron's character, I have adopted Byron's incorrect spelling of the historical Bonivard's name.


131 Later the oda is called a "labyrinth of love" (VI.xxviii).


133 They are Lamia or Christabel types.
It is notable that in V.iii Byron claims he won't describe the scene because too often in artificial descriptions Nature is "tortured twenty thousand ways."

See the use of this metaphor later to convey hypocrisy in XIII.cx and social correctness in XIV.lvi.

The Sultan's ignorance is, incidentally, a result of his imprisonment in himself and his self-created world:

He saw with his own eyes the moon was round,
Was also certain that the earth was square,
Because he had journeyed fifty miles, and found
No sign that it was circular anywhere;
His empire also was without a bound . . . .

(DJ V.cl)

See also VI.lxxi for the description of their spontaneous movement when rushing to Dudù's bed; they "came crowding like the waves of Ocean / One on the other."


James R. Thompson, "Byron's Plays and Don Juan: Genre and Myth," Bucknell Review, XV, iii (1967), 23, notes that "by 1816 Byron was forced into a desperate confrontation with what seemed to him an increasingly meaningless universe." He adds that different poems, from "Prometheus" to the plays to Don Juan, indicate the varying responses Byron had to this meaningless universe.

Victor Brombert, "Petrus Borel, Prison Horrors, and the Gothic Tradition," Novel, II (1969), 151-52. He also adds: "For it is not enough to explain the prevalence of claustration images in nineteenth-century literature by referring to the political realities (the Ancien Régime, the Revolution, the Restoration), to social problems (penology, the question of capital punishment), or to the influence of Piranesi, the Gothic novel and the Marquis de Sade. All these factors are no doubt relevant, but they also correspond to fundamental Romantic concerns and obsessions, and have been given a specific valorization. The dialectical tensions between the finite and infinity, between fatality and revolt, between oppression and the dream of freedom, between victimization and vengeance—antitheses so meaningful to the Romantic writers—are repeatedly given a symbolic


142 See the illustration in the E. H. Coleridge edition, PW, IV, Plate #2.

143 Coleridge's notes in PW, IV, 18-19.

144 See also 11. 44-45.

145 Gleckner, Byron and the Ruins of Paradise, p. 198.

146 E. H. Coleridge, PW, IV, 22, 27, notes two parallels: he compares "I could not die" (l. 228) to "And yet I could not die" (The Rime of the Ancient Mariner, IV.262), and "The fish swam by the castle wall / And they seemed joyous each and all" (ll. 351-52) to "O happy living things! no tongue / Their beauty might declare" (RAM IV.282-83). See also Marshall, The Structure of Byron's Major Poems, p. 92, and Gleckner, Byron and the Ruins of Paradise, p. 196, n. 22. Marshall sets up a major difference: since the prisoner thinks he "has committed no crime, [he] cannot base his belief in an ultimately beneficent universe upon emotional acceptance of his own guilt. Hence he inhabits a world in which there appears to be no distinction between good and evil."

147 Marshall, The Structure of Byron's Major Poems, p. 95, says of this passage that the prisoner thinks he is triumphant because he has learned to love despair and because he "has passed beyond the dependence on physical surroundings; in reality he has compressed physical surroundings to the dimensions of self." I am dubious about the idea that the prisoner feels triumphant, but agree with the last statement.
In stanza IV, 81, he also complains that he is forgotten, but it is not clear who (Who?) has forgotten him.

See also Childe Harold's Pilgrimage IV.v where Byron describes the powers of the transcendent imagination as counteracting "mortal bondage" and replenishing the void of earthly existence:

The Beings of the Mind are not of clay:
   Essentially immortal, they create
   And multiply in us a brighter ray
   And more beloved existence: that which Fate
   Prohibits to dull life in this our state
   Of mortal bondage, by these Spirits supplied,
   First exiles, then replaces what we hate;
   Watering the heart whose early flowers have died,
   And with a fresher growth replenishing the void.

Caves and caverns occur frequently in Byron's works—both in negative and positive contexts. There are the secret cavern in Heaven and Earth which, as a kind of axis mundi in reverse, "opens from the internal world, / To let the inner spirits of the earth / Forth when they walk its surface" (II.42-44); the womb-like cave where Haidee restores Juan and the proleptic caves of her nightmares, symbolic of death; and the most significant and positive example, the submarine cave in The Island. It too is a kind of axis mundi in a "central realm of earth" (IV.vi.119), a womb for the "boy" Torquil and an escape from the endless activity of the outside world. Although it is not a cave of the imagination, it is sacred—a "cathedral" (IV.vi.133) and "a chapel of the seas" (IV.vii.160). It embodies what is often Byron's alternative to the saving power of the imagination—love: "All within that cave / Was love" (IV.ix.221-22).

Gleckner, Byron and the Ruins of Paradise, p. 265, believes that Byron thinks that "only the poet can sustain himself in such a world."

Note also that he called his poem his "Friend" (l. 34).

The ideal of love may be qualified, however, by Tasso's admission that it was love that led to his imprisonment; he says, "The very love which locked me to my chain / Hath lightened half its weight" (ll. 144-45). I find it difficult to believe that this irony has any philosophical significance because of Byron's repeated reliance in poem after poem on the myth of idyllic love.
See Gleckner, *Byron and the Ruins of Paradise*, p. 286, n. 22, for an opposite view.
CHAPTER III

COLONIZED INFINITY: CREATED SPACE

IN THE POETRY OF SHELLEY

Influences on the Development of
Shelley's Space-Consciousness

In his essay entitled "The Philosophy of Shelley's Poetry," William Butler Yeats comments on the development of Shelley's symbolism:

One finds in his poetry, besides innumerable images that have not the definiteness of symbols, many images that are certainly symbols, and as the years went by he began to use these with a more and more deliberate symbolic purpose. I imagine that when he wrote his earlier poems he allowed the subconscious life to lay its hands so firmly upon the rudder of his imagination that he was little conscious of the abstract meaning of the images that rose in what seemed the idleness of his mind.

Although Yeats is concerned primarily with the way profound but ambiguous symbols float to the mind's surface as a result of a "mystical state of the soul," it is perhaps valid to view images in Shelley's early poetry as "natural" and unconscious (but not necessarily mystical). As such, these images can be seen as products of Shelley's personal experience and intellectual awareness in his formative
years. While the images accrued meaning, as Yeats suggests, and became deliberate, full-bodied symbols as Shelley's poetic gifts developed, the embryonic symbol derives from Shelley's youthful concerns and experiences in early life. Many of these symbols are profoundly concerned with space. In the early poetry, these images or symbols have spatial implications; by the time of Shelley's greatest poetry, they are important spatial symbols, providing a key to understanding many of his themes.

Shelley's early life and personal experiences help to explain why certain images came to be important spatial symbols. Radical, rebellious, revolutionary—these words describe the young poet who was expelled from Oxford for preaching atheism, who went to Dublin to rouse the Irish in the cause of Catholic emancipation and the betterment of their state, who rejected (in principle if not in practice) the state of matrimony as a "degradation" and a form of "despotism," and who believed in and perhaps practiced free love. All of his radical notions—his hatred of Christianity, its priests, political tyranny, economic injustice, and inhibiting social customs—relate essentially to one overriding theme, man's freedom and liberty. To illustrate this theme, Shelley frequently alludes to the idea of imprisonment. Rarely in the early poetry is imprisonment developed as a spatial reality; rather, images of imprisonment occur unobtrusively,
especially in the metaphor of enchainment. In *Queen Mab*,
the fairy inveighs against the "icy chains of custom"
(I.127), the "chains" of "moral, law, and custom"
(IV.134, 130) which doom the soul from birth "to abjectness
and bondage" (IV.138) and she criticizes commerce, an
"all-enslaving power" which fetters man with a "chain, /
That lengthens as it goes and clanks behind" (V.54, 51-52).
Similarly, she laments that poverty makes man subservient
to the wealthy and unaware of the "chains that bind him to
his doom" (V.131), and she decries "mean lust" after fame
and fortune because it "Has bound its chains so tight
around the earth, / That all within it but the virtuous
man / Is venal" (V.166-69). Paradoxically, Shelley
believes that those who oppress man are also enchained and
imprisoned, for their evil makes them slaves. The king
wears a "gilded chain / That binds his soul to abjectness"
(III.30-31) and

Gloomy troops
Of sentinels, in stern and silent ranks,
Encompass it around: the dweller there
Cannot be free and happy . . . .
(III.24-27)

He is "immured / Within a splendid prison, whose stern
bounds / Shut him from all that's good or dear on earth"
(III.90-92). All of these references to enchainment and
imprisonment occur predominantly as unelaborated metaphors
and images. All seem quite appropriate in the political
context of *Queen Mab* and derive quite naturally from
Shelley's revolutionary ardor and concern with political and social freedom.

In *Leon and Cythna*, Shelley's next major political poem, imprisonment surfaces as an important literal fact with both the hero and heroine imprisoned for their revolutionary activities. Imprisonment, at this point in Shelley's works, has not yet reached the status of an important symbol, and it is still used in a political context only. For example, Cythna describes the pre-revolutionary world as a "dungeon to my blasted kind" where the inhabitants are metaphorically, if not actually enchained:

All that despair from murdered hope inherits  
They sought, and in their helpless misery blind,  
A deeper prison and heavier chains did find,  
And stronger tyrants . . . .  

(II.vi.48-51)

Presumably the post-revolutionary world would no longer be seen as imprisoning; Shelley describes such a utopian state in his fragment, "The Daemon of the World":

Within the massy prison's mouldering courts,  
Fearless and free the ruddy children play,  
Weaving gay chaplets for their innocent brows  
With the green ivy and the red wall-flower,  
That mock the dungeon's unavailing gloom:  
The ponderous chains, and gratings of strong iron,  
There rust amid the accumulated ruins  
Now mingling slowly with their native earth:  
There the broad beam of day, which feebly once  
Lighted the cheek of lean captivity  
With a pale and sickly glare, now feebly shines  
On the pure smiles of infant playfulness:  
No more the shuddering voice of hoarse despair
Peals through the echoing vaults, but soothing notes
Of ivy-fingered winds and gladsome birds
And merriment are resonant around.

(II.484-99)

Freedom and liberty in this world, where falsehood, fear, war, and tyranny have been eliminated, are all that seem necessary for a blissful utopia; imprisonment is a physical and psychological condition attendant on an imperfect political state.

Shelley's interest in imprisonment at this time derives from his personal understanding and experience with oppression. His visit to the prison of Chillon also stimulated his interest in imprisonment as a political fact. Before writing Laon and Cythna, he had seen with Byron that famous castle, and although its dungeons had moved him to write careful prose descriptions of the architecture, the prison is still only a symbol of political injustice. He says in a letter to Thomas Love Peacock:

I never saw a monument more terrible of that cold and inhuman tyranny, which it has been the delight of man to exercise over man. It was indeed one of those many tremendous fulfillments which render the 'pernicies humani generis' of the great Tacitus so solemn and irrefragable a prophesy.

(Letters, I, 485)

Unlike Byron, Shelley seems uninterested at this point in his career in the psychology of imprisonment, nor does he suggest that imprisonment has metaphysical implica-
tions. Furthermore, while the idea of imprisonment is important to him, this idea is not developed in ways which emphasize confinement by space. Imprisonment is an abstract idea, or at most a metaphor, not a concrete spatial reality which symbolizes an idea.

As Yeats suggest, however, with the maturing of his poetic powers, Shelley "began to use these [symbols] with a more and more deliberate purpose," and images which may lack the "definiteness of symbols" become progressively more important in defining broader themes. Imprisonment figures importantly in the poetry of his Italian year: Julian and Maddalo has as its major interest the imprisoned madman; Prometheus Unbound is concerned in the broadest possible context with imprisonment and freedom; the fourth act of The Cenci is set in the Castle of Petrella, "that savage rock," "safely walled, and moated round about" with "dungeons under-ground and "thick towers" (II.1.168-70) while part of the last act takes place in an actual prison; and Epipsychidion, as the subtitle indicates, celebrates an "unfortunate lady" "imprisoned in the convent of ______." But not only does the poetry of Shelley's mature years deal often with literal imprisonment, it also uses imprisonment in a complex way, for what began as a simple image in a revolutionary's mind became a spatial symbol illustrating philosophic and ethical concerns.
In *The Cenci*, for example, Shelley uses this symbol effectively to elucidate ethical themes. After Beatrice's violation by her father, she describes her psychological reaction. First, she feels a spatial disorientation, imagining herself looking at herself:

The pavement sinks under my feet! The walls
Spin round! I see a woman weeping there,
And standing calm and motionless, whilst I
Slide giddily as the world reels.
(III.1.9-12)

Then she feels contracted within herself:

There creeps
A clinging, black, contaminating mist
About me--'tis substantial, heavy, thick;
I cannot pluck it from me, for it glues
My fingers and my limbs to one another,
And eats into my sinews, and dissolves
My flesh to a pollution, poisoning
The subtle, pure, and inmost spirit of life!

... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ...
No, I am dead! These putrefying limbs
Shut round and sepulchre the panting soul,
Which would burst forth into the wandering air!
(III.1.16-23, 26-28)

Somewhat later she imagines that her father "pens [her] up naked in damp cells / Where scaly reptiles crawl, and starves her there, / Till she will eat strange flesh" (III.1.46-48). What Shelley is describing in these passages is the imprisoning effects of evil enacted on the innocent; but it becomes clear as the play progresses, and as *Prometheus Unbound* explicates it, that Beatrice's metaphorical imprisonment will continue, in part as a result of her own inability to forego revenge. She will metaphorically "eat strange flesh." In ethical terms,
the clinging mists, which later become the "undistinguishable mist / Of thoughts, which rise, like shadow after shadow / Darkening each other" (III.1.170-72) as she considers parricide, are of her own making; imprisonment is self-imposed, a result of one's inability to cope with evil and to reject revenge and hatred. Beatrice is not as innocent as she thinks she is, for if she were, she would be, as Shelley suggested in unelaborated form in Queen Mab, like the "virtuous man / . . . who leads / Invincibly a life of resolute good, / And stands amid the silent dungeon-depths / . . . free and fearless" (III.150, 152-55). The innocent, though actually imprisoned, are psychologically free; those who allow evil to penetrate their being are as if imprisoned, or as in the case of Prometheus, are in fact imprisoned.

Just as the passage from Queen Mab quoted above suggested the direction that the imprisonment metaphor might take in ethical terms, so too in embryonic form, a few passages in Laon and Cythna and Queen Mab suggest the uses to which the imprisonment symbol can be used to elucidate Shelley's metaphysics. At the beginning of Queen Mab, the fairy "rend[s] / The veil of mortal frailty" and "The chains of earth's immurement / Fell from Ianthe's spirit" (I.180-81), so that her soul could ascend with Mab in the magic car to her temple in outer space. Later, in a brief paean to the "soul of the Universe," Mab
mentions "the darkness of our prison, / Whose chains and massy walls / We feel but cannot see" (VI.194-96). Presumably, the prison is the phenomenal mortal world which bars man from the larger world of the spirit. In Laon and Cythna, human life is again characterized as imprisoning: "It [old age] cannot dare / To burst the chains which life forever flings / On the entangled soul's aspiring wings" (II.xxxiii.291-93). The prison image, though undeveloped in these early works, functions approximately as it does in Byron's works, especially a poem like Manfred which emphasizes the bondage of the spirit in a mortal body. This negative view derives in part from neo-Platonic sources which developed the idea that the soul was imprisoned in the body and in the world of the senses and which commonly illustrated that idea through the prison image. The dark implications of this attitude toward human life color most of the poetry of Shelley's Italian years. Julian and Maddalo debates two views of imprisonment. Julian, or Shelley, sets up the ethical implications of the symbol when he says, "It is our will / That thus enchains us to permitted ill" (ll. 170-71), and adds:

those who try may find
How strong the chains are which our spirit bind;
Brittle perchance as straw. We are assured
Much may be conquered, much may be endured,  
Of what degrades and crushes us.  
(11. 180-84)

The response of Maddalo, or Byron, to this view is, "You talk Utopia" (l. 179); his attitude is that imprisonment is the human condition. He sees the madhouse and its belfrey tower as a symbol of mortality:

And this must be the emblem and the sign  
Of what should be eternal and divine.--  
And like that black and dreary bell, the soul  
Hung in a heaven-illumined tower, must toll  
Our thoughts and our desires to meet below  
Round the rent heart, and pray--as madman do  
For what?  
(11. 121-27)

The soul of man, aware of the eternal, desires the freedom of space; yet he is condemned to a constricted life, to imprisonment, even in a madhouse. The debate is inconclusive, but that the debate even occurs may indicate, as Earl Wasserman suggests, that Shelley was aware "that Byron represented an opposing aspect within his own mind."13

The results of this debate are more conclusive in Shelley's later works. Even in Prometheus Unbound, which celebrates in its third act the fact that man is "sceptreless, free, uncircumscribed" (III.iv.194), Shelley recognizes that mortal life, or life in time, is spatially confined; man is not exempt

From chance, and death, and mutability,  
The clogs of that which else might oversoar
The loftiest star of unascended heaven, 
Pinnacled dim in the intense inane. 
(III.iv.201-4)

"Clogs" are not prison walls; they are only obstructions. Nonetheless, Shelley reminds us of a higher freedom available only to the spirit unfettered by the restrictions of time and space, a spirit which has presumably the freedom of infinite space. Similarly, in "Ode to the West Wind" he laments that "A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed / One too like thee: timeless, and swift, and proud" (IV.55-56). In part, his lament is Wordsworthian for he claims that in his boyhood it "scarce seemed a vision" to think he was as a "comrade of [the wind's] wanderings over heaven" (IV.49). But the "heavy weight of hours" indicates not only his regret that in his mature years he no longer feels a sympathetic union with nature, but also signifies mature awareness of mutability and mortality which enchain man and deprive him of feeling as if he had the freedom of heaven.

Shelley's view of life darkens in the poetry of his last year. In the fragment, The Triumph of Life, Shelley characterizes man as a captive to Life, but Life is in actuality only "the painted veil which those who live / call life" ("Lift not the painted veil," ll. 1-2). Captivity, though, is not figured in a static, localized space (or prison), but rather is a spatially extended
state since the captives are enchained to a moving chariot. What Shelley has done is to recast the stream metaphor, his familiar image for life in or through time (that is, linear time and space) and combine it with the prison metaphor. The point is still that man is enchained by his mortality, by time and space, even though space is shifting. In *Charles the First*, another unfinished poem which Shelley began working on seriously in January of 1822 and only "laid aside in the last month of his life," Shelley's view is similarly bleak, in spite of several optimistic passages. In that fragment, Hampden, who is sailing for America, the "floating Eden" and "Paradise" for the "exiles from the old and sinful world" (IV.23, 35, 36), laments his state; although the new paradise is described in ecstatically favorable terms, it is still only an earthly Utopia and Hampden imagines that the vaporous horizon

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Presses upon [him] like a dungeon's grate,
A low dark roof, a damp and narrow wall.
The boundless universe
Becomes a cell too narrow for the soul
That owns no master.

(IV.41, 44-48)

Shelley seems to be saying through Hampden that political freedom is only a relative freedom and that, paradoxically, Hampden's desire for total freedom is accentuated by his release from political tyranny; since he is confined to
the earth, he sees boundless space only as an abhorrent imprisoning boundary which emphasizes the absolute freedom inaccessible to him.

In the rather obscure passage which follows the one quoted above, Hampden contrasts (perhaps he only shifts emphasis) the constriction he feels with the "wide prison, England." He says,

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while the loathliest ward
Of this wide prison, England, is a nest
Of cradling peace built on the mountain tops,—
To which the eagle spirits of the free,
Which range through heaven and earth, and
scorn the storm
Of time, and gaze upon the light of truth,
Return to brood on thoughts that cannot die
And cannot be repelled.
Like eaglets floating in the heaven of time,
They soar above their quarry, and shall stoop
Through palaces and temples thunderproof.
(Iv.48-58)
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The point seems to be that only the spirit is free from spatial and temporal boundaries. Physical (and political) freedom is worth nothing, when even the most spatially limited spot, a ward, in an oppressive society, has available to it the "eagle spirits" which transcend spatial limitations in "rang[ing] through heaven and earth" as well as temporal restrictions by "scorn[ing] the storm / Of time" and by "floating in the heaven of time." What Shelley is finally expressing is that only thought transcends mortal limitations while man, even though he "owns no master," is bound by his human state.

The prison image, then, became progressively a more
deliberate symbol in Shelley's works. It had seemed an appropriate image for political oppression to the young revolutionary, but as Shelley's definition of freedom became more inclusive, the prison symbol became more important in defining his themes. It should be added, however, that Shelley's use of the symbol is less all-emcompassing and powerful than Byron's use of that same symbol to define the human condition. Even though a large number of Shelley's characters undergo literal imprisonment and even though the symbol of imprisonment recurs frequently, still the optimism of Shelley's political and philosophical views often counterbalances the pessimism of the prison symbol.

While political concerns, developed early in his life, contributed significantly to his space-consciousness, Shelley's love of nature was also an important formative cause. Like the lives of all the Romantic poets, his was spent in a closeness to nature, a fact that cannot be overemphasized, particularly since his poetry is so often accused of unreality. Country rambles were a common occupation in his youth and a habit which continued throughout his life. He often read among natural scenes and usually wrote poetry in the seclusion of nature or in a spot with a view. Travelling, too, was an early passion with him; while a boy at Eton, he visited all the scenic spots of local interest around the school.
As a young man, he viewed the majestic scenery of the continent on his elopement tour; a year later he made a complicated journey to the sources of the Thames and the following year spent several months in Switzerland. He spent his mature years living in various scenic places in Italy. His early and continued familiarity with nature and his travels among some of the most spectacular scenery in the world played an important role in the development of his space-consciousness. Whereas the young intellectual was concerned with oppression, a concern which led directly to the development of the prison symbol, the young traveller experienced the vastness of the natural world and used that spaciousness to symbolize various kinds of imaginative freedom.

One of the principal advantages of travelling (that is, of encompassing extended space) and viewing scenery (almost always in Shelley's travels and works, vast scenic forms) is that the imagination is enlarged; extended views extend the mind. The result is not wholly different from those benefits accruing from poetry, which "enlarges the circumference of the imagination" (A Defence of Poetry, p. 283) and lifts man "out of the dull vapours of the little world of the self" (Defence, p. 289); or from love, which is "a going out of our own nature" (Defence, p. 282) and a "powerful attraction towards all that we conceive, or fear, or hope beyond ourselves, when we find within
our own thoughts the chasm of an insufficient void"
("Essay on Love," p. 170). Similarly, when the traveller encounters the vastness of the natural world, his tendency is to forget the narrow cares of the self. Shelley voices this idea early, when he explains that he had been "indifferent to all places" after he learned that his wife had been seduced by his friend Thomas J. Hogg, yet he adds, "The scenery is awfully grand [at Cumberland]; it even affects me in such a time as this" (Letters, I, 169).

Not only do extensive views extend the mind and keep it from narrow self-contemplation, but the boundlessness of nature persuades man that his mind is equally infinite. Shelley writes in Julian and Maddalo:

I love all waste
And solitary places; where we taste
The pleasure of believing what we see
Is boundless, as we wish our souls to be;
And such was this wide ocean, and this shore
More barren than its billows . . .
(ll. 14-19)

A few lines later, Julian laments that he had to leave that boundless place, because coming "Homeward . . . always makes the spirit tame" (l. 33). The mind is subdued when it is restricted to a confined "home." A variation of this idea occurs in several of Shelley's comments about boating. He explains that he prefers following great rivers to travelling on roads because "rivers are not like roads, the work of the hands of man; they imitate the mind, which wanders at will over pathless
deserts, and flows through Nature's loveliest recesses, which are inaccessible to anything besides" (Letters, I 490). This attitude towards boating and his comparison between river voyages and mental travels explain Shelley's rather extravagant comments in later life when he was so excited about Henry Reveley's steamboat project. He tells Henry:

One might imagine God when he made the earth, & saw the granite mountains & flinty mountories flow into their craggy forms, & the splendour of their fusion filling millions of miles of the void space, like the tail of a comet, so looking, & so delighting in his work. God sees his machine spinning round the sun & delights in its success, & has taken out patents to supply all the suns in space with the same manufacture.— Your boat will be to the Ocean of Water what the earth is to the Ocean of AEther—a prosperous & swift voyager.— (Letters, II, 158)

Of his own boat, the Don Juan, he exclaims, "she passes the small ones [boats] as a comet might pass the dullest planets of the heavens" (Letters, II, 422). Both of these passages use metaphors of cosmic space, the realm of the infinite. Boating, one of Shelley's passions in the Italian years, is the human and earthly equivalent of the exhilarating flights in space (sometimes in aerial boats) that he describes in his poetry. The speed of the voyage, the adventure it entails, the space it encompasses—all parallel the activities of the mind on the voyage of the imagination.
Although Shelley describes the sights of these voyages with words like "innumerable," "numberless," "limitless," and "countless" in order to emphasize that the circumference outside can fill the "chasm of an insufficient void" "within our own thoughts" ("Essay on Love," p. 170), one of the most frequently used words in his vocabulary to describe space--earthy or cosmic--is the word "wilderness." Often the word is relatively neutral in connotation, referring simply to a large unsettled, uncivilized, uncultivated area of land. But sometimes both the word "wilderness" and the concept it embodies take on important positive symbolic overtones. This positive association, too, derives from Shelley's personal experience. Barren countryside apparently attracted him as early as his Oxford year, for Hogg recalled that Shelley especially "liked a pond in a disused quarry which offered his companion no attraction apart from a certain wildness and barrenness." 27 Although there is no factual record of Shelley's response to the scenes he viewed on his first tour of the Continent (other than Mary Shelley's journal and her History of a Six Weeks' Tour, edited by Shelley), it can be assumed that the wilderness of the Alpine valley where he resided briefly inspired the descriptions of the "happy valley" in The Assassins, an unfinished short story begun on this first tour. 28 The valley in this story has "solemnity and grandeur" as a "desolate recess" in the
"solitudes" of Lebanon (p. 145): "Nature, undisturbed, had become an enchantress in these solitudes" (p. 147) and "some spirit of great intelligence and power had hallowed these wild and beautiful solitudes to a deep and solemn mystery" (p. 147). What, finally, is attractive about this desolate and solitary wilderness is that it seems to have a mysterious power residing within it. Although the beauty of the valley is emphasized as much as its awful sublimity (and the valley is in fact inhabited), the sublimity of desolation becomes increasingly more important in Shelley's poetry. A poem like Mont Blanc, for example, written as a result of his second continental tour, includes descriptions of the mountain which emphasize its mysterious desolation; it is a "desart peopled by storms alone" (l. 67) and a "wilderness" with a "mysterious tongue" (l. 76). It seems "eternal" (l. 75), just as "the fluctuating elements seemed to have been rendered everlastingly permanent in forms of wonder and delight" (p. 146) in the happy valley. Desolate wildernesses struck Shelley's imagination precisely because they were desolate, thereby allowing the imagination to people them with its own conceptions.

There are numerous other references in Shelley's letters and poetry which confirm the fact that "wilderness" is often a positive word. The description of Asia's transfiguration at the end of the second act of
Prometheus Unbound, for example, includes two positive references: she floats in a "paradise of wildernesses" (II.v.81) and passes "Wildernesses calm and green, / Peopled by shapes too bright to see" (II.v.107). Similarly, thought is described metaphorically in Prometheus Unbound as inhabiting the free wilderness. The spirits of thought who appear at the end of the first act are said to have "homes" in "the dim caves of human thought" and "inhabit, as birds wing the wind, / Its world-surrounding ether" (659, 660-61); the "world-surrounding ether" is a wilderness, for the Fourth Spirit mentions "thought's wildernesses" (742) and the Fifth Spirit says it sped "over wide dominions / . . . like some swift cloud that wings the wide air's wildernesses" (763-64). The mutation of the word "wilderness" from literal fact to metaphor is understandable, for if a literal wilderness inspires the imagination, causing it to people desolate areas with mysterious powers or spirits, then the allegorical Spirits of thought can easily be said to inhabit a metaphoric wilderness.

But perhaps the word is most striking when it is used to describe cosmic space. It is impossible to say to what extent Shelley's interest in earth's wildernesses led him to describe outer space as a wilderness, particularly since the word is used to describe outer space as early as Queen Mab, written before he had seen the barren Alpine wilder-
nesses. But no doubt his travels reinforced his attraction to the idea of a wilderness, a word which he continued to use throughout his career and as late as Hellas.32

In Queen Mab, he used the word in this way:

Spirit of Nature! here!
In this interminable wilderness
Of worlds, at whose immensity
Even soaring fancy staggers,
Here is thy fitting temple.

(I.264-68)

And in Prometheus Unbound, Demogorgon refers to the abodes of the spirits "Beyond Heaven's constellated wilderness" (IV.532), which presumably lie in an unconstellated wilderness; and Earth refers to the "planets, struggling fierce towards heaven's free wilderness" (IV.399).33 "Wilderness" in all the passages implies an almost incomprehensively vast realm as well as one totally uncivilized, unlike the Alpine wildernesses which could literally be inhabited. Furthermore, although the word has positive connotations in these passages, there seems to be a hierarchy of wildernesses. Nature's temple in Queen Mab is still in a settled wilderness; the realm may be "interminable," but it is populated by worlds, just as the wilderness is referred to as "constellated" in Prometheus Unbound. There is apparently a wilderness beyond the constellated wilderness, one which is even vaster and more free. This wilderness is no doubt the highest spiritual realm, higher—or more distant, if
Shelley is consistent, than the "intense inane" mentioned at the end of the third act of Prometheus Unbound, since the inane too is constellated (the "loftiest star" is "pinnacled" in it). It is no doubt the same spiritual realm, though the word "wilderness" is not used, as the one mentioned in Adonais. In that poem, Shelley describes the spirit's light as darting "Beyond all worlds" and "satiat[ing] the void circumference" (XLVII.42i). This area should be thought of as empty space, a void or true "inane." The last stanza of Adonais again describes the outermost area in Shelley's hierarchy of wildernesses. In that stanza, Shelley imagines that the "sphered skies are riven," that he is borne "through the inmost veil of Heaven," and that he sees Keats's spirit in "the abode where the Eternal are." Although the word "abode" in Adonais and in Demogorgon's speech in Prometheus Unbound is necessary as a means of identifying the One or the realm of Being, it is an unfortunate choice as a spatial metaphor, particularly in Adonais where Keats's spirit in that abode is "like a star." While Earl Wasserman has demonstrated how the star imagery structures that poem, in terms of Shelley's imaginary cosmos, the simile "like a star" is misleading. As an abode in the realm that Demogorgon describes as "Beyond Heaven's constellated wilderness" [italics mine], it should not be a star or constellation.
Furthermore, the suggestion of any "abode" seems confusing because we automatically regard that word as indicating a restricted static place.\textsuperscript{38}

But finally, Shelley's cosmology is only a means of concretizing what is essentially abstract and unknowable; the wilderness of cosmic space and abodes beyond it are only symbols—and very appropriate ones, for his ideas. In this context, then, Shelley locates the realm of the mind in the free but settled wilderness; mind transcends the space of the ordinary mortal realm by having the freedom of space. Then, not always consistently, he locates the realm of Being beyond the settled "constellated" wilderness: Being, like mind, transcends space, but it has freedom from space by virtue of the fact that it is beyond space. The word "abode," although it implies spatiality for mortals, is essentially non-spatial or non-space, just as "wilderness" implies space but is ultimately only a symbol for freedom in space and transcendence of human spatiality. In the final analysis, the "constellated wilderness" of outer space is no different from the wilderness of the happy valley since as symbols both the earthly and the cosmic wilderness operate identically.

I have attempted to show that Shelley's revolutionary ardor and his personal appreciation for certain types of natural space were important factors in the
development of his space-consciousness. Other influences in that development came from his culture, especially from the scientific theorizing and achievements of his age. Shelley's knowledge of scientific advance is obvious in many of his works and the respect he has for science is especially notable in *Prometheus Unbound* with its scientist-hero, a benefactor to man in many ways:

He taught the implicated orbits woven
Of the wide-wandering stars; and how the sun
Changes his lair, and by what secret spell
The pale moon is transformed, when her broad eye
Gazes not on the interlunar sea.

(II.iv.87-91)

... and [Prometheus] tortured to his will
Iron and gold, the slaves and signs of power,
And gems and poisons, and all the subtlest forms
Hidden beneath the mountains and the waves.

(II.iv.68-71)

Prometheus is a scientist in Shelley's play just as he is associated with science in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* or *The Modern Prometheus*, a novel developing the sinister implications of scientific knowledge. The Prometheus of Greek myth had always been associated generally with the arts of civilization; Shelley's Prometheus is associated both with the new science of geology and the old study of the heavens, the latter of which was becoming in Shelley's day one of the most advanced sciences. It seems appropriate that he would attribute knowledge of these sciences to the most heroic character he created, particularly since Shelley himself was fascinated by
science. In this respect, Shelley is like his fellow Romantic poets for these influences were scarcely to be avoided in the early nineteenth century. But of all the Romantics, Shelley most frequently used his knowledge of scientific theory in his poetry.  

Shelley's interest in science is well known and its importance to his poetry has been demonstrated, especially in Carl Grabo's works dealing with the influence of science notably in *Prometheus Unbound* and *The Witch of Atlas*. Biographers have noted that as a schoolboy Shelley attended various lectures on science, performed many scientific experiments, and owned expensive scientific paraphernalia—"an electric machine, an air pump, the galvanic trough, a solar microscope, and large glass jars and receivers [*sic*]." Shelley's interest in science continued throughout his life, as his reading lists amply demonstrate: he continued to acquire scientific equipment (one piece was a telescope for his twenty-fourth birthday) and to indulge in scientific experimentation (also vicariously, as in Henry Reveley's steam-boat scheme).

Astronomy especially struck his imagination. Sion House Academy, the first school Shelley attended, taught the "elements of astronomy" and by the time Shelley was at Eton, he was a bonafide devotee. An acquaintance of his at Eton records:
Astronomy, like electricity, seized upon his imagination. His jubilee was night. His spirits bounded on the shadow of darkness, and flew to the countless worlds beyond it.  

Given this description (written in retrospect, however), we would have no reason to be surprised that Shelley wrote so early such a poem as Queen Mab. At Eton, his interest in astronomy was encouraged by Dr. James Lind, who was active in various scientific pursuits, and particularly by Adam Walker, a lecturer he had first heard at Sion House. Walker spoke on various sciences but three of the twelve lectures in his series were on astronomy, while two were on pneumatics or "the principles of the air." The conclusion of one of Walker's lectures on astronomy follows:

Let us on the wings of imagination then launch into the immensity of space, and behold system beyond system, above us, below us, to the east, the west, the north, and the south! Let us go so far as to see our sun but a star among the rest, and our system itself as a point, and we shall but even then find ourselves on the confines of creation! How inadequate then must be the utmost stretch of human faculties, to a conception of that amazing Deity who made and governs the whole! Should not the narrow prejudices, the littleness of human pride, soften into humility at this thought.

The information that Shelley received from Walker as well as the enthusiasm his lectures must have inspired fed directly into Queen Mab, written about eight years later. During the interval, Shelley was also reading Laplace and Erasmus Darwin. The influence of the latter is
thought to be especially important since Darwin's scientific knowledge was virtually encyclopedic, since he included long prose notes to his poetry (a practice Shelley imitated in *Queen Mab*), and since "by forecasting the future triumphs of science [he] helped inspire Shelley with enthusiasm for scientific progress, and with his poems he gave Shelley the idea of bringing science into poetry."56 Shelley's reading and interest in astronomy continued throughout his life and indeed *Queen Mab* is only a foretaste of how astronomy would enter his works, for in varying degrees other works display his interest: the first and last cantos of *Laon and Cythna*, *Prometheus Unbound*, *Adonais*, *Epipsychidion*, *The Witch of Atlas*, *Hellas*, and several essays including especially the *Essay on the Devil and Devils*.

A number of astronomical theories and speculations appear in Shelley's works.57 The idea that the universe was immensely large, standard astronomical theory for well over a century, directly informs *Queen Mab* and *The Witch of Atlas*, the main characters of which reside in outer space commanding vast realms.58 Correlative with this theory was the idea that the universe was filled with an innumerable number of stars and planets, a fact Shelley alludes to in his *Essay on the Devil and Devils*:

The late invention and improvement in telescopes has considerably enlarged the notions of men respecting the bounds of the
Universe. It is discovered that the earth is a comparatively small globe in a system consisting of a multitude of others which roll round the Sun . . . . The fixed stars are supposed to be suns, each of them the center of a system like ours. Those little whitish specks of light that are seen in a clear night are discovered to consist of a prodigious multitude of suns, each probably the center of a system of planets. The system of which our earth is a planet has been discovered to belong to one of those larger systems of suns, which when seen at a distance look like a whitish speck of light; and that lustrous streak called the Milky Way is found to be one of the extremities of the immense group of suns in which our system is placed. The heaven is covered with an incalculable number of these white specks, and the better the telescope the more are discovered and the more distinctly the confusion of white light is resolved into stars.

"Countless and unending orbs" (Queen Mab II.73) occur in many of Shelley's works. A speculation common to astronomers and philosophers was that among these innumerable orbs, some would likely be inhabited. Shelley seems implicitly to believe this speculation when alluding to the "inhabitants" of "those million worlds which burn and roll / Around us" (Prometheus Unbound I.163-64). Later in the Essay on the Devil and Devils, he uses the idea of the plurality of the worlds to challenge seriously the Christian doctrines of one creation, one Fall, and one supreme Devil. Then he takes the liberty of uniting scientific speculation, Platonism, and his own eccentric myths in order to populate some of these innumerable worlds with spirits, witches, fairies,
and various temples.

Astronomical theories about heavenly bodies and their movements and properties occur obliquely in his poetry. Herschel's theories about the sun's shell of burning vapors are mentioned in *Essay on the Devil and Devils* (pp. 273-74); in *Queen Mab* (I.243), he alludes to the "black concave" which surrounds the sun—"light on earth is owing to the refraction of the rays by the atmosphere and their reflection from other bodies" ("Notes to Queen Mab"); in *Prometheus Unbound*, Shelley says Prometheus explained how "the sun / Changes his lair" (II.iv.88), an allusion which Grabo suggests may owe to Herschel's idea "that our solar system is moving toward the constellation Hercules." Similarly, Shelley's descriptions of the physical characteristics of the moon in *Prometheus Unbound* derive from astronomical speculation, just as his numerous references to comets and meteors follow the accepted astronomy of his day. Meteor belts are mentioned in *Queen Mab* (I.235-36) and their origin may be suggested in the "sphered fires" which Asia predicts will emanate from the unfrozen moon (III.iv.94). Similarly, the "wide-wandering stars" in that poem (II.iv.87), or comets, since the stars are fixed, have "implicated orbits" (II.iv.86), that is, return in predictable paths. These are only a few examples of the ways astronomical theory enters indirectly
into Shelley's imagery.

It should be mentioned, however, that Shelley's use of astronomy never restricts him to narrowly scientific "truths." In poems as widely separated chronologically as Queen Mab and The Witch of Atlas, new-science yields to the ancient notion of the music of the spheres, a suggestion of which may inhere in the dance of the Hours and Spirits in Prometheus Unbound, who "weave the mystic measure / Of music, and dance, and shapes of light" (IV.77-78). Similarly, the idea in that poem that "the moon is warmed and fertilized by the proximity of the earth," as Carlos Baker points out, "would scarcely gain the assent of astronomers," just as the ideas that Apollo guides the sun (III.11.36-40) or that the earth is guided through the heavens by the spirit of earth would seem too fanciful to the rational scientist. In addition, Shelley has the moon retreating to her cave (Prometheus Unbound IV.207-8), imagines that the stars, like sheep, have been taken to a fold by the shepherd sun (IV.1-4), and places clouds around Mab's palace (II.43), even though it is clear that he understands the nature of the atmosphere. Inaccuracies such as these may be lapses on Shelley's part, but it is more likely that the artist and the mythographer in him took precedence over the astronomer. Certainly his attraction to astronomy was not a mere interest in scientific fact, but was an
Undoubtedly, the attraction of astronomy was in part similar to that which magic had for him, for astronomy opened a whole new world not readily accessible to the senses. When man can peer into space or at least conceive of the vast abyss of space, he may seem to discover the secrets of nature. The distance, and thereby the magic and mystery of outer space, can easily become fascinating subjects for the speculative imagination or for an imagination which refuses to accept being earth-bound. More than anything, Shelley's imagination was enthralled by the idea of the infinity of space and the infinite number of worlds discovered by astronomy. Again and again he refers to these qualities. In his "Notes to Queen Mab," he exclaims, "The plurality of worlds--the indefinite immensity of the Universe--is a most awful subject of contemplation" (Works, I, 135), and he goes on to list distances to various stars; in 1819 in his Essay on the Devil and Devils, he comments again at length on the size of the universe and the "prodigious multitude of suns" and systems within it (pp. 170-71). Queen Mab operates effectively as a didactic and prophetic poem because its perspective is that of vast space. The route to the fairy's palace is through "an immense concave, / Radiant with million constellations" (I.232-33), through "innumerable systems" and "countless spheres"
(I.253–254), through an "interminable wilderness / Of worlds, at whose immensity / Even soaring fancy staggers" (I.265–7); the "ethereal palace" (II.29) itself looks "o'er the immense of Heaven" (II.39), while "Above, below, around / The circling systems formed / A wilderness of harmony" (II.77–79). In this early poem, Shelley has imagined a setting as far distant from earth as he can because in this ethereal place he intends to present a vision of history—past, present, and future. Such an atemporal perspective demands a significant spatial setting; in fact, as he says, "matter, space, and time / In those aerial mansions cease to act" (II.91–92). Prophesy in this poem has moved from oracular caves and from Mount Sinais and has taken up residence in "those mighty spheres that gem infinity" (V.144). Great truths demand great settings and Shelley always imagines that he is delivering great truths, often those which only the elect few can understand.

Equally important in understanding Shelley's attraction to the concept of infinity is what Marjorie Nicolson calls the "psychology of infinity," epitomized for her in the word "capacity" as opposed to contentment.72 Traherne, whom she calls one of the "first Romanticists,"73 indicates how this psychology operates: "The whole hemisphere and the heavens magnify your soul to the wideness of the heavens; all the spaces above the heaven enlarge it
wider to their own dimensions. And what is without limit makes your conception illimited and endless.\textsuperscript{74}

T. E. Hulme, an important critic of Romanticism, makes essentially the same connection; he claims that the "root of all romanticism" is the belief "that man, the individual, is an infinite reservoir of possibilities,"\textsuperscript{75} that "the romantic, because he thinks man infinite, must always be talking about the infinite,"\textsuperscript{76} and that "the whole of the romantic attitude seems to crystallize in verse round metaphors of flight."\textsuperscript{77} The difference between Traherne's and Hulme's comments is that cause and effect are reversed; for Traherne, possibility and potential are evoked by the concept of infinity, whereas for Hulme, the interest in infinity is a result of the particular Romantic psychology. Perhaps it is closer to the truth to say that causes and effects mutually interact. Certainly "new science" contributed to the aspirations of the Romantics, but one could say just as accurately that if there had not been an infinite universe, they would have had to invent one.

Hulme's comments are especially relevant to Shelley since his view of man is often more grandly optimistic than that of any of his peers and his hopes for man more utopian and apocalyptic.\textsuperscript{78} Correspondingly, in his works, "the emancipation of man," as Frye notes of \textit{Prometheus Unbound}, is "purely spatial and so to speak, scientific."\textsuperscript{79} Man's infinite capacities seem to demand infinite space; the
freedom of the imagination is defined through the freedom of space.

Astronomy even suggested to the hopeful Shelley a reason for hope. Early in his career, he focusses on the idea of the tilting of the poles, which in a letter he calls an "astronomical affair" (Letters, I, 349). In that letter, he asks if the "position of the Earth on its poles is not yearly becoming less oblique." And he has Mab exclaim:

How sweet a scene will earth become!
Of purest spirits, a pure dwelling-place,
Symphonic with the planetary spheres;
When man, with changeless nature coalescing,
Will undertake regeneration's work,
When its ungenial poles no longer point
To the red and baleful sun
That faintly twinkles there.

(VI. 39-46)

His note to this passage alludes to several astronomers and scientific discoveries, and says that astronomy gives man hope, having revealed that the "earth is now in its progress, and that the poles are every year becoming more and more perpendicular to the ecliptic"; he connects the "progress of intellect" with the "progress of the perpendicularity of the poles," assuming "that there should be a perfect identity between the moral and the physical improvement of the human species" ("Notes to Queen Mab," Works, I, 143). This identity is explicit in the poem when Mab describes the future state of earth. With its axis straightened, the earth becomes paradise:
The habitable earth is full of bliss;
Those wastes of frozen billows that were hurled
By everlasting snow-storms round the poles,
Where matter dared not vegetate or live,
But ceaseless frost round the vast solitude
Bound its broad zone of stillness, are un-loosed;
And fragrant zephyrs there from spicy isles
Ruffle the placid ocean-deep, that rolls
Its broad, bright surges to the sloping sand,
Whose roar is wakened into echoings sweet
To murmur through the heaven-breathing groves,
And melodize with man's blest nature there.
(VIII.58-69)

And "the human being stands adorning / This loveliest earth with taintless body and mind" and he stands "immortal upon earth" (VIII.198-9, 211). Similarly, in Prometheus Unbound, the regeneration of Prometheus is accompanied by the regeneration of physical nature. While his issuing of the curse "made rock / The orbed world" (I.68-69), an allusion Wasserman believes to the tilting of the earth's axis, 80 his revocation of the curse is accompanied by the arrival of spring and the warming of the earth and moon. With straightened axis, the varying seasons will no longer exist and earth will have perpetual spring. The distortion of earth's angle parallels the distortion of mind just as natural "progress" is identified with human development.

Apocalypse is joined with astronomical theory in Shelley's use of the idea of the perpendicularity of the poles. If Shelley can imagine that the regeneration of man is accompanied by a regeneration of earth, it should
be no surprise that he can also glorify the powers of mind by presenting them as in some way creating, or at least organizing space. Astronomical theory contributed to Shelley's concepts of the void and chaos, which are essential to his attitudes toward imaginative creation. Shelley is not precise in his descriptions of the void. As noted earlier, the "intense inane" (Prometheus Unbound III.iv.204) is not the total void that the word "inane" implies because a star is pinnacled in it. Similarly, the reference to the "void's loose field" (Prometheus Unbound IV.154) is self-contradictory; a "loose field" seems more likely to be descriptive of chaos. In addition, Shelley sometimes uses the word "hollow" to suggest the void, yet he describes hollows which are filled. For example, in the poem "Letter to Maria Gisborne," he says "the moonlight fills the void, hollow, universal air" (ll. 255-56). If the void is filled with air, it is not a void. Similarly, in Prometheus Unbound, the moon says it follows the earth "through the heavens wide and hollow" (IV.478), heavens which cannot be hollow if they are "filled" with planets and stars, and in Laon and Cythna, the Temple of the Spirit is "Hung in one hollow sky" (XII.xli.365).

Furthermore, it is not altogether clear that Shelley made a consistent distinction between chaos and the void. He can say in Adonais, for example, that in "the great
morning of the world" "God dawned on Chaos" (XIX.167); in "The Wandering Jew," that "chaos gave it [the earth] birth" (I.299); and in the "Ode to Liberty," that the sun and moon sprang forth and "The burning stars of the abyss were hurled / Into the depths of heaven" (II.17-18) with the abyss presumably akin to chaos. Yet in Laon and Cythna, his creation myth is different, for "when life and thought / Sprang forth, they burst the womb of inessential Nought" (I.xxv.224-25); and in his excited response to Henry Reveley's steamboat, he refers to God's creation of the world as a "fusion filling millions of miles of void space" (Letters, II, 158). This description sounds as if God took unorganized matter or chaos, combined or fused it, and then filled void space with it. Inconsistencies aside, both chaos and the void are clearly to be thought of as spatial, indeed as vast spatial areas resisting domestication in the human mind in the same way that the concept of infinity does and both are likely to occur in works concerned with space. But in Shelley's works, it is impossible to locate chaos and the void precisely in his cosmography.

What is clear is that Shelley usually imagines an organized universe, the one science had discovered, complete with fixed stars and planets and comets with regular orbits, beyond which is infinite space. This world beyond is sometimes thought of as chaos, sometimes
as a void. When the world is imagined as chaos, as it is in the Prologue to Hellas (the roofless senate-house of the sons of God has chaos as its floor [ll. 1-3]), then Shelley is adopting the then current scientific theory. As Grabo explains, the created (or ordered and evolved) stellar universe was thought to be bordered by loose "nebulous stuff," the "primal matter out of which all the integrated systems of suns and planets had evolved" (according to the nebular hypothesis of Laplace and Herschel). One of Laon's dreams may also indicate that chaos is the realm beyond, for he imagines himself borne "Beyond the sun, beyond the stars that wane / On the verge of formless space" (III.xxvii.237-38). Yet in an earlier dream, he imagined "a fall far and deep. -- / A gulf, a void, a sense of senselessness--" which is, he thinks, analogous to "a shoreless sea, a sky sunless and planetless" (III.xxii.194-95, 198). The void inside parallels the cosmic void outside. Similarly, Beatrice identifies the "void" as a "wide, gray, lampless, deep, unpeopled world" (The Cenci V.iv.59), which is presumably like that realm beyond the ordered and evolved stellar space. Nor can these evocations of the void be explained simply as the mind's vacancy, distortion, or madness imprinting itself on external space, for the void occurs as well in "Ode to Liberty" where a "ray / Of the remotest sphere of living flame / . . . paves the void" (I.11-13). The
void here is clearly that "lampless" realm beyond the stars; it does exist.

But regardless of whether that unorganized, unevolved realm is a chaos or the void, Shelley does not find these concepts threatening. Even though, like infinity, they seem to be beyond human dimensions, still mind, imagination, love, liberty—many of his positive concepts, can nonetheless operate on them. Out of the void or nothing, mind creates something; out of chaos, mind creates cosmos. In both *Hellas* and "Ode to Liberty," freedom is the power which can domesticate chaos. In *Hellas*, when "The spirit of God with might unfurl'd / The flag of Freedom over Chaos," "all its banded anarchists fled" (ll. 47-49). In "Ode to Liberty," "this divinest universe / Was yet a chaos and a curse, / For thou [Freedom] wert not" (II.22-23). In *Epipsychidion*, love ("the world . . . of thoughts that worshipped her") creates a "world within this Chaos" (ll. 245, 243) and in his "Essay on Love," he sees love as creative while self-isolation is imaged as "the chasm of an insufficient void" (p. 170). In *A Defence of Poetry*, poetry "makes us the inhabitants of a world to which the familiar world is a chaos . . . .

It creates anew the universe" (p. 295). It cannot be argued that these are mere metaphors for Shelley, for he often identifies mental and physical activities. Mental activity—the power of love and thought—in *Prometheus*
Unbound is explicitly seen in undeniable physical and spatial terms when Shelley's myth of regeneration is yoked to scientific conceptions. The spirits of thought, emancipated from "thought's stagnant chaos"—an imprisonment resulting from "hate, and fear, and pain" (IV. 380, 381), are free to organize "nebulous stuff" of outer space, even beyond "the bound / Which clips the world with darkness round" (IV. 139-40). They say:

We'll pass the eyes
Of the starry skies
Into the hoar deep to colonize:
Death, Chaos, and Night,
From the sound of our flight,
Shall flee, like mist from a tempest's might.

And our singing shall build
In the void's loose field
A world for the Spirit of Wisdom to wield;
We will take our plan
From the new world of man
And our work shall be called the Promethean.

(IV. 141-46, 153-58)

Chaos will be colonized and the void built into a world through the power of the regenerated imagination. It is difficult to conceive how Shelley could have defined these grand capacities of mind without having a knowledge of astronomy, for the concept of an infinite universe, especially an evolving one, lends itself readily to his purposes. Science-fiction writers have been aware that their scientist-hero must have special knowledge and understand the mysteries of the universe. Although Shelley is rarely as literal as the science-fiction writer, a
similar point can be made about him. To depict the powers of the imagination, there must be a mystery, an infinity, or something grand for that imagination to work on. Shelley's knowledge of astronomy gave him that something grand.

Shelley's interest in geology was not so enthusiastic nor is it so immediately evident in his works as his interest in astronomy. Geology, a relatively new science in Shelley's day, was not part of the curriculum at any of the schools he attended and Adam Walker's scientific lecture series contained no lecture specifically devoted to the history of the earth. Shelley's reading in Erasmus Darwin would have acquainted him with geological evolutionary theory and the evidences of stratification. And we know that he was reading in 1811 some of the works of Comte de Buffon as well as translating one of his treatises. By 1812, he was ready to embark on reading James Parkinson's *Organic Remains of a Former World*, at the suggestion of Elizabeth Hitchener. Shelley also read various travel books, many of which contained information pertinent to geology and kept up with the reviews in the leading journals, which gave him second-hand knowledge of the findings of geologists. Toward the end of his life, his interest in geology appears to have been intense since he asks to be sent "the best modern geological works, which shall give a general idea
of that science—if possible not a mere system, but a history of the progress of discoveries" (Letters, II, 269) and a few months later, says, "I had much rather for my private reading, receive political geological & moral treatises than this stuff in terza, ottava, & tremilesima rima . . ." (Letters, II, 276). This apparently renewed interest in geology antedates, of Shelley's major works, only Adonais, Hellas, and The Triumph of Life. It would be interesting, for many reasons of course, to see the direction his career would have taken after he had assimilated the geological theories in the books he was reading or had sent for. Even so, geology still played an important role in the development of Shelley's space-consciousness.

His interest in geology had its most striking effects in his reaction to and creation of the deeps of subterranean space. For the most part, Shelley associates mysterious origins and secret knowledge with depths. With the advent of the Promethean age in Prometheus Unbound, man understands the mysteries of natural science, including geology:

The lightening is his slave; heavens' utmost deep
Gives up her stars, and like a flock of sheep
They pass before his eye, are numbered, and roll on.
The tempest is his steed, he strides the air;
And the abyss shouts from her depth laid bare,
Heaven, hast thou secrets? Man unveils me;
I have none.
(IV.418-23)

The nature of these secrets had been revealed earlier in Act IV through the "multitudinous orb." Its beams had "pierce[d] the dark soil" and "Made bare the secrets of the earth's deep heart" (IV.278, 279). The description of these secrets is one of the most striking abyssal visions in poetry; the first part reads:

Infinite mines of adamant and gold,
Valueless stones, and unimagined gems,
And caverns on crystalline columns poised
With vegetable silver overspread;
Wells of unfathomed fire, and water springs
Whence the great sea, even as a child is fed,
Whose vapours clothe earth's monarch mountain-tops
With kingly, ermine snow.
(IV.280-87)

This section of the vision focusses on the "natural" composition of the earth. It suffers somewhat from vagueness, but the reaction does not; he uses the same kind of extravagant vocabulary that he employs in describing cosmic space: instead of words like "numberless" and "innumerable," words like "infinite," "valueless," and "unimagined" occur. The wells of fire (again he uses exaggerated diction—"unfathomed") have their source in geologic theory. Although Grabo does not comment on this particular passage, he does quote a section of Darwin's notes to his The Botanic Garden which clarifies
the reference. Darwin had said, "Many philosophers have believed that the central parts of the earth consist of a fluid mass of burning lava, which they have called a subterranean sun, and have supposed that it contributes to the production of metals, and to the growth of vegetables." Darwin himself presumably believed that "the core of the earth is not molten and that the volcanic fires are in wells or pockets." In another note, Darwin comments on vapours which seeped up from cracks and fissures in the earth's surface. While there is no reason to assume that Shelley was writing Prometheus Unbound with The Botanic Garden at his side (he had read Darwin earlier), Shelley does incorporate into his poem fairly standard geological theory, information which Darwin, a popularizer of scientific theory, could have acquainted him with. But science was not to Shelley a cold factual study; rather, it revealed fascinating secrets which could easily be assimilated into a mythic poem like Prometheus Unbound.

The abyssal vision of Prometheus Unbound continues, but with less emphasis on the natural composition of the earth; in this section, he is interested in illustrating the newly advanced theories of evolution based on the evidences of stratification. It reads:

The beams flash on
And make appear the melancholy ruins
Of cancelled cycles; anchors, beaks of ships;
Planks turned to marble; quivers, helms, and spears,
And gorgon-headed targes, and the wheels
Of scythed chariots, and the emblazonry
Of trophies, standards, and armorial beasts,
Round which death laughed, sepulchred emblems
Of dead destruction, ruin within ruin!
The wrecks beside of many a city vast,
Whose population which the earth grew over
Was mortal, but not human; see, they lie
Their monstrous works, and uncouth skeletons,
Their statues, homes and fanes; prodigious shapes
Huddled in grey annihilation, split,
Jammed in the hard, black deep; and over these,
The anatomies of unknown winged things,
And fishes which were isles of living scale,
And serpents, bony chains, twisted around
The iron crags, or within heaps of dust
To which the tortuous strength of their last pangs
Had crushed the iron crags; and over these
The jagged alligator, and the might
Of earth-convulsing behemoth, which once
Were monarch beasts, and on the slimy shores,
And weed-overgrown continents of earth,
Increased and multiplied like summer worms
On an abandoned corpse, till the blue globe
Wrapt deluge round it like a cloak, and they
Yelled, gaspt, and were abolished; or some God
Whose throne was in a comet, past, and cried,
Be not! And like my words they were no more.

(IV. 287-318)

Geology was increasing man's awareness of time; this passage, in detailing the cancelled cycles of earth's history, primarily emphasizes the age of the earth and the tremendous changes which have occurred in the process of its development. Mutability is a common theme in Shelley's works and spatial settings are often important in defining it. In "Ozymandias," for example, "boundless and bare / The lone and level sands stretch far away" (ll. 13-14), highlighting the decay of that "colossal
wreck." But that setting is dwarfed by comparison to the various strata revealed in the abyssal vision of Prometheus Unbound. There vertical space suggests time and emphasizes the ruin and destruction of vast cities and such "prodigious shapes," behemoths and enormous fish and fowl sepulchred in the many layers of earth. Time is literally spatialized in these vast layers of strata.

Shelley's interest in geological theory accounts for many other references and images in his poetry, but his interest was no doubt influenced by his own sight-seeing. He found glaciers impressive and he knew geologic theory about them. The emotional response probably leads to the depiction of glaciers, while his knowledge of theory results in a phrase like "crawling glaciers," an image unsubstantiated by any visual apprehension of such slow movement but evidenced by scientific measurements. He visited Pompeii and Vesuvius, read geologic theory about volcanic action and such mutual interaction of personal experience and reading results in a number of striking volcanic images. The same is true of mountains and other geologic phenomena. Shelley's knowledge of geology cannot account for his attraction to massive earthly forms, but many of his descriptions derive as much from his reading about their formation, composition, and function, as from his actual sight of them. These forms--
glaciers, mountains, abysses, lava plains—are massive earthly forms which, like Shelley's infinite heavens, help to define Shelley as a supreme poet of space.

The Apprehension and Creation of Space in Shelley's Works

Space in all poetry is by definition "created." All poets create a world, their own place, a heaven or hell, and populate this world with the creations of the mind. The degree to which their created poetic world resembles the world as we know it depends on the biases and talents of the writer being considered. But in Shelley's case, we are inclined to take him seriously when he says, "As to real flesh & blood, you know that I do not deal in those articles,—you might as well go to a ginshop for a leg of mutton, as to expect any thing human or earthly from me" (Letters, II, 363). In many of his poems, the same is true of his spatial constructs; they are means of concretizing and literalizing his conceptions and are not "human and earthly" in any empirical sense. In the works of Wordsworth, Keats, or Byron, space may have symbolic values attributed to it, but in the majority of their works, it still resembles space as we know it and its symbolic value derives largely from experience. Certainly a great many of Shelley's spatial symbols are experientially derived (Mont Blanc, for example) and as
concretions for abstractions seem to partake of the reality they represent. But in other cases only the logic of analogy determines the appropriateness of the spatial referent. The most obvious example is Shelley's use of outer space, derived from science which had made outer space accessible to the mind, though not entirely to the senses. The volcano, too, particularly as G. M. Matthews describes its symbolic function, operates in somewhat the same way. The world that Shelley creates is less "real" than the one we experience, first because it is sometimes literally alien from our experience and second because its reality is not stressed since he is often more interested in the abstraction which the spatial symbol represents than in the spatial symbol itself.

In a poem like *Prometheus Unbound*, Shelley had especially difficult problems; in order to make his abstract concepts accessible, he had to try to literalize and concretize them. Although the poem is about the powers of the imagination, in order to concretize this concept, Shelley had to invent characters. Of all the characters, Prometheus seems the most "real," yet he is still primarily a vehicle to elucidate Shelley's ideas. Shelley also used temporal directions and spatial locations to give the drama a sense of reality; seasons and times of day and specific place names, like the Indian Caucasus, help to concretize the poem. At times,
the poem's space resembles "real" or empirical space—the Fauns, for example, in Act II describe a forest not unlike the groves in Wordsworth's or Keats's poems. On yet another level, space is mythic, mediating between "real" and created or imagined space. It is quantitatively similar to perceived space, but qualitatively unlike it; it is filled with recognizable, sensible objects, but it assumes a particularized significance relative to the functions performed in it and the emotional attachment to it. Yet space and time in the ordinary sense are finally irrelevant to Prometheus Unbound. Time is not only relative, as Prometheus says ("moments [have been] aye divided by keen pangs / Till they seemed years" [I.13-14]), but this mental drama, according to the level on which it must finally operate, is devoid of temporal and spatial dimensions. A question like "when" is unanswerable, although admittedly the poem demonstrates a kind of causality. "Where," in terms of Shelley's abstract conceptions, is equally irrelevant. There is, of course, an appositeness in Shelley's choice of places—like the mountain-top exposure-confinement and the cavern retreat, but these locations exist primarily to illustrate abstract ideas.

Shelley's A Defence of Poetry elucidates in part why time and space in explicit terms are unimportant. Shelley claims that "a poet participates in the eternal,
the infinite, and the one; as far as relates to his con-
ceptions time and place and number are not" (p. 279).
Poetry is not merely universal, though Shelley does say
that, but poetry as he conceives it "ascend[s] to bring
light and fire from those eternal regions" (p. 294). 
While those eternal regions are beyond space and time,
they are also beyond presentation in their "original
purity" (p. 294), and while "time and place and number"
are not related to the "conceptions" of the poet, those
conceptions can only be illustrated in spatial and temporal
dimensions.

Various kinds of confusion result if one tries to
read a poem like Prometheus Unbound too literally. Earth,
for example, is both a character and a place. The spirits
of thought are literalized as characters who range through-
out outer space which, on one level, as I have demon-
strated, is a location conceived in scientific terms, but
on another is only an analogy useful in concretizing
Shelley's conceptions of the powers of the mind. Thought
really resides in the mind, but outer space becomes the
analogue for Shelley's immense conceptions of mind. This
same necessity to concretize explains how Being or the One
can be represented spatially in Shelley's works as a star
"out there." The star is a symbol but one divorced from
the reality of stars which are empirically located, fixed
in space. But Shelley's stars should not actually be
associated with place at all. It is simply that the
star, for Shelley, is the closest approximation in human
terms (of necessity, they are spatial and concrete) of a
state which Shelley imagines as extra-spatial and extra-
temporal.

At the same time that we recognize that Shelley's
physical universe is sometimes only a symbol for "beauti-
ful idealisms," it is important to recognize that Shelley
does create and evoke a sense of space, regardless of
what that space represents and regardless of its final
integrity as space per se. Furthermore, even though many
of Shelley's major poems use space primarily as a vehicle
for ideas, these same poems as well as a great many
other less important works demonstrate that Shelley, as
much as his Romantic peers, responded to "real" space and
attempted to create it in all its fullness and variety
in his poems.

The kind of space Shelley personally found most
inspiring fits generally the category of the sublime.
His long description of the Baths of Caracalla, among
which he wrote the second and third acts of Prometheus
Unbound, is characteristic of the kinds of space he
is most often attracted to. To Peacock, the recipient of
most of Shelley's long descriptive letters, he says:

These [the Baths] consist of six enormous
chambers, above 200 feet in height, and
each enclosing a vast space like that of a
field. There are in addition a number of towers & labyrinthine recesses hidden & woven over by the wild growth of weeds & ivy. Never was any desolation more sublime & lovely. The perpendicular wall of ruin is cloven into steep ravines filled with flowering shrubs whose thick twisted roots are knotted in the rifts of the stones. At every step the aerial pinnacles of shattered stone group into new combinations of effect, & tower above the lofty yet level walls, as the distant mountains change their aspect to one rapidly travelling along the plain. . . . But the most interesting effect remains. In one of the buttresses which supports an immense & lofty arch which "bridges the very winds of Heaven" are the crumbling remains of an antique winding staircase, whose sides are open in many places to the precipice. . . . These woods are intersected on every side by paths, like sheep tracks thro the copse wood of steep mountains, which wind to every part of these immense labyrinths. From the midst rise those pinnacles & masses, themselves like mountains, which have been seen from below. In one place you wind along a narrow strip of weed-grown ruin; on one side is the immensity of earth & sky, on the other, a narrow chasm, which is bounded by an arch of enormous size, fringed by the many coloured foliage & blossoms, & supporting a lofty & irregular pyramid, overgrown like itself by the all-prevailing vegetation. Around rise other crags & other peaks all arrayed & the deformity of their vast desolation softened down by the undecaying investiture of nature.

(Letters, II, 84-85)

Shelley's description continues at length, but the selection above indicates in general the type of space that Shelley responded to, not only at the Baths, but in the other places he visited. He is always impressed with size, claiming in one letter that "the immensity of these aerial summits [the Alps] excited, when they suddenly
burst upon the sight, a sentiment of extatic wonder, not
unallied to madness" (Letters, I, 497).

But as his descriptions of the Baths indicate, it is
not merely vastness which inspires him, but outline, form,
shapes, perpendiculars, and irregularities as well; 108
his comments on the Alps also make this point: "There is
more in all these scenes than mere magnitude of propor-
tions--there is a majesty of outline, there is an awful
grace in the very colours which invest these wonderful
shapes . . . " (Letters, I, 497-98). 109 The outlines and
shapes most awful in their sublimity are irregular ones:
"a number of towers," "labyrinthine recesses," "perpen-
dicular walls[s]," "aerial pinnacles," "shattered stone,"
"arches," "winding staircase[s]," "intersections,"
"irregular pyramid[s]," "deformities." 110 This predis-
position to jagged forms was established early in his
life; in 1811 from Wales he wrote:

This country of Wales is excessively grand;
rocks piled on each other to tremendous
heights, rivers formed into cataracts by
their projections, & valleys clothed with
woods, present an appearance of enchant-
ment--but why do they enchant, why is it
more affecting than a plain, it cannot be
innate, is it acquired?

(Letters, I, 119)

It is impossible to say just what caused Shelley's
undoubtedly "acquired" taste for irregular forms. In
part, their attraction lies simply in the fact that
"inequality & irregularity of form [are] requisite to
force on us the relative idea of greatness" (Letters, II, 79). But Shelley's comments on the Apennines also yield a clue: of these mountains, he says: "This part of the Apennines is far less beautiful than the Alps; the mountains are wide & wild & the whole scenery broad & undetermined--the imagination cannot find a home in it" (Letters, II, 18). Shelley did not always respond in this way to "undetermined" space, as his fondness for desolate wildernesses and for comparatively empty outer space would demonstrate; nonetheless, the attraction to irregular forms might result from the fact that they are not "broad & undetermined," but provide instead homes for the imagination in their angles, corners, and recesses. Whatever the cause, spatial descriptions in Shelley's poetry often echo these predispositions towards vast natural space, interesting in its irregular outlines and angularity.

The locus classicus for these descriptive elements in the poems themselves is Mont Blanc, and quite naturally, since the Alps originally contributed to Shelley's feeling for these natural spatial characteristics and since the poem has Mont Blanc itself as its subject. The poem's descriptions are intensely spatial, particularly in vertical terms with the "dark, deep Ravine" (l. 12) and "unfathomable deeps" (l. 64) countered by the peak "far, far above, piercing the infinite sky" (l. 60).
Irregularity, too, recurs throughout the descriptions, climaxing in Part III: Mont Blanc "pierc[es]" the sky (l. 60), "Its subject mountains their unearthly forms / Pile around it, ice and rock" (ll. 62-63), and there are "accumulated steeps" (l. 66) and shapes "heaped around" which are "rude, bare, and high, / Ghastly, and scarred, and riven" (ll. 70-71). In Prometheus Unbound, too, Shelley uses vastness and angularity, though for negative purposes. The vast scene is the spatial equivalent for the length of Prometheus's captivity. If eternity is to be rendered in spatial terms, the space must obviously be infinite space, as in Adonais: near-eternity (three-thousand years) demands near-infinite space (an "eagle-baffling mountain" [I.20]). In an early scene in Prometheus Unbound, Prometheus appeals to a triumvirate of vastness—Earth, Heaven, and Sea, and throughout this scene harsh angularities occur, stressing Prometheus's exposure and vulnerability: literally in the abysses, cataracts, precipices, and splitting rocks; figuratively in the glaciers which "pierce" as with "spears" by their "moon-freezing crystals" (I.31, 32); and implicitly in the "Earthquake-fiends" (I.38).

Still, these descriptions have an aura of inevitability about them, given Shelley's subjects. Other poems demonstrate a less likely use of these elements; even such a fanciful poem as The Witch of Atlas uses a
similar conjunction of spatial attributes. First, the Witch speeds "down the streams which clove those mountains vast" and "By many a star-surrounded pyramid / Of icy crag cleaving the purple sky, / And caverns yawning round unfathomably" (xxxviii). Later, although Shelley removes her from the sublunary world, he places her in a vast, strangely angular heavenly realm with clouds rather than mountains composing the jagged outlines: these clouds have "moving turrets" as "bastions of the storm" (xlviii) and the vapors are described as

... dreadful crags, and, like a shore
Of wintry mountains, inaccessibly
Hemmed in, with rifts and precipices gray,
And hanging crags, many a cove and bay.
(xlix)

Shelley's predisposition for "determined," irregular outline has led him to describe water vapour, commonly a symbol for evanescence, in solid, angular terms.113

Another spatial configuration for which Shelley has special fondness is the architectural form, open to the sky. In his letters, he attributes Greek excellence in the arts to the fact that "they lived in a perpetual commerce with external nature and nourished themselves upon the spirit of its forms" (Letters, II, 74). This commerce with nature is further evidenced in their architecture, of which Shelley notes:

Their theatres were all open to the mountains & the sky. Their columns that ideal type of a sacred forest with its roof of interwoven
tracery admitted the light & wind, the
odour & the freshness of the country
penetrated the cities. Their temples
were mostly upaithric [probably meaning
"open to the air, having no roof"114];
& the flying clouds the stars or the deep
sky were seen above.

(Letters, II, 74-75)

In a later letter, Shelley makes special mention of the
Pantheon's openness: "It is open to the sky, & its wide
dome is lighted by the ever changing illumination of the
air. The clouds of noon fly over it and at night the
keen stars are seen thro the azure darkness hanging
immoveably or driving after the driving moon among the
clouds" (Letters, II, 87-88).

Shelley's creation in his poetry of this particular
kind of spatial construct occurs as early as Laon and
Cynthia.115 In that poem, he has the lovers retreat to
a ruin which has a "shattered portal," which "Looks to
the eastern stars," and a roof overgrown with ivy "clasp­
ing its gray rents with a verdurous woof" (VI.xxvii).
Through this "hanging dome of leaves," supposedly a
"canopy moonproof" (xxvii), they see a "wandering Meteor
... / Hung high in the green dome" (xxxii), a "wondrous
light" which etherealizes the consummation of their love.
This scene is not unlike the setting of the natural
marriage of Haidée and Don Juan except that Shelley
emphasizes the ethereal aspect to a greater degree (the
lovers are like "two disunited spirits" "leap[ing] in
union" [xxxiv]). Given Shelley's feelings for cosmic space, the realm of the immaterial, it is important for him to have it seem to penetrate the earthly and thereby consecrate it.

Architectural symbols like this one recur in Shelley's poetry. In Prometheus Unbound, the Spirit of the Hour describes the temple where it will reside forever; it has a "dome fretted with graven flowers, / Poised on twelve columns of resplendent stone, / And open to the bright and liquid sky" (III.iv.116-18). This temple too is a kind of paradisal space, for in it the Spirit of the Hour "will live exempt from toil" (III.iv.109), will gaze on Phidian forms, forms which Shelley characteristically identified with the Ideal, and will presumably be in contact with the influences from above. The same is true of the tower on the Golden Age isle imagined as the lover's retreat in Epipsychidion. It has been in such "perpetual commerce with external nature" that it seems "grown / Out of the mountains" (11. 495-96) and in it the sky

Peeps through their [the twining stems of flowers] winter-woof of tracery
With Moon-light patches, or star atoms keen,
Or fragments of the day's intense serene;
Working mosaic on their Parian floors.
(11. 504-7)

In this Eden, "Earth and Ocean seem / To sleep in one another's arms" (11. 509-10) and the isle itself exists
between "Heaven, Air, Earth, and Sea" (l. 457). This tower seems to have the permanence of nature, the safety of enclosed semi-artificial space, and unity both with nature and the eternal heaven.

Thus far, the kind of spatiality I have discussed in Shelley's poetry is that which can be apprehended and created only through visual means; forms, outlines, spatial constructs are by definition visual. "Vision was," as Grabo notes, "to him the master sense. He is essentially an eye-minded poet." Most of the striking evocations of space in this eye-minded poet's works utilize visual techniques, the most important of which is his use of perspective and distance to create a sense of space. Whereas Keats seems to prefer the close-up view, Shelley, like Byron and Wordsworth, revels in the vast panorama, the distant scene. His earliest important poem, Queen Mab, is set in a palace far distant from earth, looking "o'er the immense of Heaven" (II.39). Distance is conveyed primarily through "space" words: "Below lay stretched the universe! / There, far as the remotest line / That bounds imagination's flight" (II.70-72); "Above, below, around / The circling systems formed / A wilderness of harmony" (II.77-79; all italics mine). And only the vaguest suggestions of other sense, like the slight reminder of sound above in "harmony" add to the visual effect. Earth is then viewed as a "little
light" (II.83), twinkling in the distance with its "ant-hill's citizens" (II.101), visible clearly to the spirit's eye which, telescope-like, can transcend the distance. The vantage-point in Queen Mab is clearly important since the revelation of history demands a vast perspective, and particularly since in a vision of this sort (Adam's in Paradise Lost, for example) time is typically spatialized, that is materialized and made visible: Ianthe's spirit "hast beheld" "the present and the past" (VIII.1) and has seen the "flood of ages combating below" (II.254; italics mine).120

Although distance and perspective are often used in Shelley's works, in some instances these visual techniques seem little more striking than what one finds in the typical picturesque poem.121 But at their most impressive, such creations of space can emphasize either, from the earthbound perspective looking afar, the desire "to pierce through, to go beyond physical possibility into the realm of the supernatural"122 or, from the outbound perspective looking in, "the escape into a transcendent eternity . . . [seeing] as both man and God see, in time and out of it."123 Therefore, these visual techniques of depicting space can have important thematic value. Just as Wordsworth emphasizes his theme of the harmony of nature by adopting the picturesque idea of a distant composed scene, so Shelley could symbolize the dichotomy between
the spiritual and the earthly by creating a sense of distance.

We tend to think of visual space as being inherently steady and fixed, in the way a picture can immobilize space and make it permanent. But visual space in Shelley's poems is sometimes comparable to visual space in a painting like Turner's "Steamer in a Snowstorm," which McLuhan claims offers "an augury of the Romantic shift from the picturesque scene to the dynamics of process." The difference still is that Turner has, in the act of painting, necessarily immobilized process, whereas Shelley's verbal descriptions sometimes present visual space in such a way that it always seems to be shifting, always seems to be in process. In one respect, it is clear that Shelley enjoys shifting, or the appearance of shifting space. For example, he writes to Peacock:

I take great delight in watching the changes of the atmosphere here, & the growth of the thunder showers with which the noon is often overshadowed, & which break & fade away towards evening into flocks of delicate clouds. Our fire flies are fading away fast, but there is the planet Jupiter who rises majestically over the rift in the forest-covered mountains to the south, & the pale summer lightning which is spread out every night at intervals over the sky. (Letters, II, 20)

This description lacks the speed and swiftness of change more characteristic of the descriptions in the poetry,
but indicates nonetheless the appeal of kinetic space. Clouds in Shelley's poetry commonly create shifting boundaries of space; and more violent forms of motion, like earthquakes, avalanches, volcanoes, tempests, and waterfalls occur as well. Not all of these natural changes are used to create a sense of shifting space (some exist merely as similes) and some indicate that process, rather than being appealing like the atmospheric changes he described in the letter, is the frightening or unhappy consequence of life. In "Ode to the West Wind," kinetic space is dominant: blowing leaves shift the boundaries of space, clouds continually change form, and storms alter the orientation of space. Kinetic space in this poem is presented ambiguously: on the one hand, such violent disorientation represents mutability and destruction; on the other, shifting space signals creative change and freedom from boundaries, just as movement in Mab's chariot in a sense represents a control of space. The value attached to motion depends in part on the position of the viewer.

Shelley also creates a sense of space by kinetic description in Mont Blanc. The first stanza establishes a world dynamically filled and changing:

The everlasting universe of things
Flows through the mind, and rolls its rapid waves,
Now dark—now glittering—now reflecting gloom—
Now lending splendour . . . .

(ll. i-4)
Then the Ravine of Arne is visually created in kinetic terms: "Fast cloud-shadows, and sunbeams" sail over "pines, and crags, and caverns" (ll. 14-15). The scene which follows is dizzying and the mind "renders and receives fast influencings" and holds an "unremitting interchange / With the clear universe of things around" (ll. 38-39). Space seems more filled when there is continuous motion; nonetheless, the scene is dizzying in contrast to the tranquillity, remoteness, serenity, and silence of Mont Blanc, the poem's symbol of eternity. Kinetic space has this dual role throughout Shelley's poetry. It can represent freedom, possibility, potential, activity, effective change, or it can demonstrate symbolically that permanence is impossible in human life, that "All things that move and breathe with toil and sound / Are born and die; revolve, subside and swell" (94-95).125

After calling Shelley an "eye-minded poet," Grabo adds that "sound, touch, and smell are vastly less important in his sensational experience."126 In fact, I would add that sensational experience per se was not important in Shelley's creation of space or spatial constructs. Interests in form and outline, in distance and perspective or even in motion are not particularly "sensational" experiences. These interests demonstrate much more nearly a geometrical and/or abstract instinct, rather than a vital response of the senses. But Grabo's
generalization about the other senses is certainly true of Shelley's creation of space, for these sensations play a minor role.

When sound is used to evoke a sense of space, Shelley characteristically uses either loud and violent sound or silence—extremes with little in between. Fogle's conclusion that "Shelley's more agreeable auditory images are numerous but less fully realized than his discordances" can be readily evidenced in passages where one would expect sensuously realized auditory description. The island paradise in *Epipsychidion*, though it occupies almost two hundred lines of description, is characterized by sound in less than five lines: at the beginning, the sea around it has "ever-changing sound" (l. 431) and later "waterfalls / Illumining, with sound that never fails, / Accompany the noonday nightingales" (ll. 442-44); the "silent night" (l. 534) is also mentioned. Similarly, unless one counts the actual songs of the spirits in the fourth act of *Prometheus Unbound*, set near the cave, this paradisal retreat lacks significant definition through sound; only the fountains have an "awakening sound" (III.iii.14), the air whispers (III.iii.19) and "echoes of the human world" are "almost unheard" (III.iii.44-45). Few descriptions of pleasant sound of a length and concreteness sufficient to evoke a realized sense of space occur in any of Shelley's poems. On the other hand,
noise and violent sounds occur more often to define space, sometimes in conjunction with kinetic descriptions. Partly because its subject involves war, Hellas has among its concrete images a large proportion of sound images. In one long passage (ll. 814-29), Mahmud defines an assaulted imaginary city almost totally in terms of sound. Striking descriptions which define nature both as noise-filled space and kinetic space occur throughout Alastor and "The Wandering Jew" (these characteristics may derive in part from the Gothic tradition130), and occur with less frequency in Mont Blanc and the opening of Prometheus Unbound.131 At the other extreme, silence, usually in connection with lack of motion, is used to evoke a sense of space in "A Summer Evening Churchyard," in the final section of Alastor which takes place in the "silent nook," and the descriptions of Mont Blanc. The ways in which these poems use sound to define space are typical of the Romantics' methods.132 They, as well as Shelley, use silence to suggest infinity, eternity, death, while noise suggests the impermanence and the unpleasantness of earthly life.

A sense of space is almost never conveyed through olfactory imagery in Shelley's poems. He was personally quite aware of smells, particularly those of flowers, as his letters show,133 but references to smells in his poems are usually brief and rarely contribute signifi-
cantly to the feeling of space. Fogle cites only two instances in which smell is important to the scene: the description of the plague-stricken city in *Laon and Cythna* (X.115-17, 181-83) and that of the dying garden in *The Sensitive Plant* (III), both examples of "a powerfully realized strain of the sinister." Similarly, with the exceptions of the pervasive sense of cold and harsh immediate tactile sensations at the beginning of *Prometheus Unbound* and, referring apparently to the death of Harriet, the wintry setting of "To ____," neither thermal nor tactile imagery plays an important role in Shelley's creation of space. While I have shown earlier that much of Keats's visual imagery has tactile implications, the same cannot be said of Shelley's visual imagery, not even of the jagged or rough forms which recur in his works, largely because these forms are seen from such a distance that any immediate tactile apprehension of them would be impossible.

In conclusion, it seems clear that Shelley's creation of space, when space is concretized, is predominately visual. Furthermore, his eye is so often directed to the distance that more immediate spatial receptors are inoperative and therefore space is almost totally a matter of the eye, with sound, also apprehendable from a distance, playing the next most important role in his creation of space. Shelley's fondness for shifting space also
contrtributes to the relative absence of other evocations of a space sense, because other sense recognitions require more careful and leisurely apprehension. Shelley's creation of visual space offers the strongest possible contrast among the Romantic poets to Keats's multisensuous evocations of space, a contrast by which Shelley too often has unfortunately suffered.

Symbolic Space in Shelley's Poetry

Describing the poetic process as Shelley conceives it, the Fourth Spirit says of the poet:

He will watch from dawn to gloom
The lake-reflected sun illume
The yellow bees in the ivy-bloom,
Nor heed nor see, what things they be;
But from these create he can
Forms more real than living man,
Nurslings of immortality!

(Prometheus Unbound I.743-49)

To the visionary poet, the forms he creates, though they may derive their particularity from the phenomenal world, transcend their "thing-ness," achieving ultimately a meaning independent of mortality and beyond space, time, and matter. Whereas Keats and Wordsworth often seem to appreciate sensuous appearances and "heed" and "see what things they be," even in the process of mythologizing them, Shelley's visionary poet creates a new world, surpassing that of sensory perception. But since that
world is essentially imageless, he is reduced to termin­
ology and symbolism which is derived from this world.
The problem of creating and communicating a sense of
that "other" world is described by Mircea Eliade:

The sacred always manifests itself as a
reality of a wholly different order from
"natural" realities. It is true that
language naively expresses the tremendum,
or the majestas, or the mysterium fascinans
by terms borrowed from the world of nature
or from man's secular mental life. But we
know that this analogical terminology is
due precisely to human inability to express
the ganz andere; all that goes beyond man's
natural experience, language is reduced to
suggesting by terms taken from that
experience.139

Shelley is not always clear or consistent in defining
whether the sacred ideal realm is one he himself creates,
as is suggested by the Fourth Spirit, or whether that
realm is one he discovers through the powers of the
imagination, as the Defence maintains. In both cases,
though, the reality of the sacred ideal realm can only
be expressed through analogies and symbols; and the
natural world usually has significance only insofar as
it provides these symbols for the ideal world or only
insofar as cosmic and mythic significance is imposed on
it by the poet.

This extreme view is not characteristic certainly
of all of Shelley's poetry and indeed it is quite at odds
with Shelley's own personal response to nature--often
that of the ecstatic tourist--as recorded in his letters.
But this view is nonetheless common in Shelley's most mythical poems and offers a strong contrast to the attitudes of Shelley's Romantic peers. Wordsworth, for example, in his mythologizing of nature, sanctifies it; nature, empirically understood, becomes in reality for Wordsworth, sacred nature. In Wordsworth's view, the natural reveals the supernatural. To Shelley, on the other hand, various aspects of the natural world are symbols; while all of the Romantic poets use this technique, for Shelley the quality of natural objects and forms often remains unchanged, because to start with they exist in a created poetic myth predominantly as symbols. Even if the natural symbolizes the supernatural, this symbolic quality is not inherent in the natural, but is imposed on it by the demands of a poetic myth.

Paradoxically, several similar mythic qualities appear in both Wordsworth's and Shelley's works. Space in the works of both is not always homogeneous; it has boundaries and divisions which define certain special areas. Both use sacred spaces; Wordsworth's sacred groves and vales have a kind of parallel in Shelley's islands and oracular caves. Both occasionally use the mythic concept of the axis mundi; while the sacred center for Wordsworth is often the mountain, a high point connecting earth and heaven, rarely does Shelley's axis mundi lead up (Mont Blanc is a notable exception). Instead, the
most remarkable center in Shelley's works leads downward; it is Demogorgon's "mighty portal, / Like a volcano's meteor-breathing chasm, / Whence the oracular vapor is hurled up" (Prometheus Unbound II.iii.2-4). This entrance, later called "life's portal" (II.iii.96), is nonetheless located in the center of a spacious panorama on a "pinnacle of rock among the mountains" (Shelley's stage directions). The portal to Demogorgon's realm is also a kind of boundary image or threshold symbol—a connection between two modes of being; this kind of image while occurring in Wordsworth's poems is especially prevalent in Shelley's works with the alteration that various female figures operate as connections between spatial realms: Emilia in Epipsychidion as a sort of mediator between heaven and earth, Queen Mab—the "Daemon of the World," and the Witch of Atlas, the result of a union between sun and water, and a mesocosmic daemonic figure who mediates between realms. Various mythic qualities, then, like those mentioned above, recur in works by Wordsworth and Shelley. But the distinction in Shelley's use of mythic techniques should be emphasized: Wordsworth's mythologizing of nature is religious, akin to that of primitive man; Shelley's mythologizing of nature provides him with a sophisticated poetic cosmos, a symbolic world the imagination has created.

Many of the symbols which comprise Shelley's
poetic universe are spatial. In fact, of all the Romantic poets (excepting Blake), Shelley's symbolic cosmos appears to be the most complicated spatial construct, partly because the various levels and separations are sometimes inconsistently maintained and difficult to visualize. While the four-fold classical topocosm provided the most accessible spatial symbolism for Keats and to some extent for the other Romantic poets, in Shelley's works that spatial hierarchy is expanded; depths seem to be deeper and cosmic space, as we have seen, has various levels. Not only is space discriminated in vertical terms in Shelley's works but horizontal space is sometimes divided into discrete zones with boundaries. Creating space in these various ways, that is as essentially non-homogeneous, fulfills the definitions of mythic space, with the exception that Shelley's spatial constructs often operate as analogies for ideas rather than as experienced, qualitative differences. But because space does operate symbolically in Shelley's poetry and because it is relevant to an understanding of his themes, it is important to examine his mythic-poetic cosmos and the spatial symbolism it includes.

Although horizontal discriminations of space are neither as obvious nor as well developed in Shelley's poetic cosmos as vertical distinctions, their existence is important. The most important horizontal discrimi-
nation is that between land and sea. A separation between land and sea is of course a natural division since the boundaries between these areas are visually evident and differences between solid earth and water are obvious. In addition, the sea is, as we have seen, an important symbol in Romantic poetry: in The Prelude and Endymion, the sea operates as a metaphor for experience, unorganized by the imagination; in The Rime of the Ancient Mariner and Don Juan, the sea operates as a symbol for both the creative and destructive powers of the universe. While some of these same symbolic values operate in Shelley's poetry, his specific development of the symbol is thematically important to his poetry.

As various commentators have noted, Shelley often associates the sea with mortality or human existence; as such it has a function parallel to that of another water image common in his poetry—the metaphor of the stream of life. Both too use space as a way of talking about time. The stream is a way of spatializing temporal process while the ocean provides a rather inadequate means of concretizing man's relation to time; therefore, time is seen contrarily as both an "unfathomable Sea" or "shoreless flood" and as having a shore, even though it is an "inhospitable" one ("Time," ll. 1, 4, 7). The beginning and end of time extend infinitely and incomprehensively to mortal man, yet for him time has
limits. While a poem like "Time" emphasizes Shelley's characteristic interest in the abstraction—in this case, the "Ocean of Time" (l. 2), the spatial implications of the analogy should not be overlooked. Shelley attempts neat parallels (sea: time; waves: years), one of which is an equation between the extent of time and the "shoreless flood" of the ocean. As a spatial metaphor for human existence, this is a much more compelling symbol than the stream of life metaphor: while the stream of life can imply direction from a source to a goal, the sea metaphor implies much greater vastness as well as an absence of linear direction. A short fragment describes the ocean as "homeless, boundless, unconfined" ("A Wanderer," l. 4) with wandering, not linear motion, as an inevitable result. Given this result, the sea assumes the character of chaos in its spatial significance. In this connection, it is perhaps important that the battle between the Serpent and the Eagle at the beginning of Laon and Cythna occurs over the ocean. As a kind of cosmological myth depicting the struggle between good and evil, it is appropriate that this archetypal battle be played out over amorphous chaos or an as yet uncreated world.

The sea occupies a significant role in Shelley's cosmos, however, because it often serves primarily as a polar opposite to the island. Shelley's most direct
explanation of these opposites occurs in "Lines Written Among the Euganean Hills":

Many a green isle needs must be
In the deep wide sea of misery,

Ay, many flowering islands lie
In the waters of wide Agony

(11. i-2, 66-67)\(^{147}\)

Many spatial symbols seem to recur in the works of the Romantic poets and "the island (with its companion trope, the lone boat)" as Herbert Lindenberger notes, "is one of the great Romantic images."\(^{148}\) In Wordsworth, the literal or figurative island is important as a means of emphasizing a separation which leads to momentary vision; it is a kind of spot of time.\(^{149}\) The island in Shelley's works too is often a prophetic place. Byron's use of the island more nearly approximates Shelley's, for in The Island and the Haidee episode of Don Juan, the island is a kind of recovered Eden in a world which is essentially a "wide sea of misery" (or, in Byron's terms, a constraining prison). The element of escape is important to both Byron and Shelley.\(^{150}\) But neither Wordsworth nor Byron seems quite as obsessed with the island symbol as Shelley;\(^{151}\) Wordsworth is not because the island for him is essentially a metaphor for a fleeting visionary experience, one which can be integrated into and transform ordinary life; Byron is not because his sense of realism almost always predominates and he must therefore undercut the Edenic island
experience, altering his emphasis to concentrate on the "wide sea of misery." Furthermore, it is the contrast between island and sea which is important to Shelley; even when his symbolic counters are not the island and sea, what these two polarities represent forms the basis for Shelley's most obsessive themes.

Whereas Byron's islands are places of innocent Edenic happiness, the island in Shelley's poetry is a much more complex symbol and seems to exist on an entirely different plane from the world of ordinary experience. Like the magic isle of The Tempest,\textsuperscript{152} Atlantis, or the Isle of the Blessed in Greek myth, all of which it is partially derived from, Shelley's island is a created, symbolic place which embodies his ideals, not concrete possibilities. Shelley's comment on the isolated isle in Epipsychidion makes the point: the "favoured place" (l. 461) is an "isle 'twixt Heaven, Air, Earth, and Sea, / Cradled, and hung in clear tranquillity" (ll. 457-58). Although the island in Epipsychidion is described with sensuous richness and realistic detail (it is even geographically located in lines 422 and 430), it exists as a means for making concrete an abstract ideal. This island has an intermediate position in Shelley's imaginary cosmos. It is not part of the ordinary world—the sea of misery. Although it seems to be outside space and time, it is not quite part of the ideal realm.
Rather, it is "'twixt" these realms. It is a place where mutability is held in check (ll. 520-23) and a place absolutely spatially discriminate, a kind of circle of perfection where "within that calm circumference" (l. 550) love can be perfect and immortal. 153

Paradoxically, the opposition between island and ocean is no longer operative in Epipsychidion since to recover Eden is also to recover the unity of space. Discriminate and opposing zones in space presuppose a fallen world, one in which only certain areas are sacralized while other zones represent the profane world. Thus, in Epipsychidion, "The treacherous Ocean has forsworn its wiles" (l. 413) and "the Earth and Ocean seem / To sleep in one another's arms" (ll. 509-10). In "Lines Written Among the Euganean Hills," the reverse process is inherent in Shelley's description of Venice, which he thinks of as an island (l. 93). According to Shelley's survey of its history, Venice had been "Ocean's nursling" (l. 95), but change is imminent:

Sun-girt City! thou hast been
Ocean's child, and then his queen;
Now is come a darker day,
And thou soon must be his prey,
If the power that raised thee here
Hallow so thy watery bier.
(ll. 115-20)

While Shelley does not represent Venice as one of his "island eternities set in the sea of time," it attained a kind of perfection in political terms, a
perfection which was similarly mirrored in its harmonious relation with the sea. But with its conquest by Austria had come decay; its final degeneration Shelley then symbolizes in his prediction that it will become the sea's "prey." Like Atlantis, which was presumably swallowed by the sea because of the immorality of its inhabitants, Venice too will be engulfed by the sea to which it had been "married" in annual celebration for hundreds of years. From one viewpoint, Venice will maintain its relation with the ocean (it will be "like a rock of ocean's own" [l. 131]) and its ruin will be "A less drear ruin then than now" (l. 121); still, it will no longer exist as a "green isle" giving hope to those in the "deep, wide sea of misery."

The "green isle" is important in Shelley's cosmos in yet another way: not only does it represent possible earthly perfection (Venice, America) and concretize impossible dreams of earthly oneness (the isle in Epipsychidion), but it is sometimes the spatial symbol for otherworldly perfection. In the latter case, the island, which is at least visually an aspect of horizontal space, becomes a three-dimensional construct and part of Shelley's vertical universe. As early as Queen Mab, Shelley described death as a gate leading to "azure isles and beaming skies, / And happy regions of eternal hope" (IX.162-63). In Laon and Cythna, the heavenly
temple in the sky is "girt by green isles which lay / 
On the blue sunny deep" (I.xlviii.431-32); in a later 
passage, Shelley mentions the realm of the "Better Genius" 
surrounded by "Elysian islands bright and fortunate, / 
Calm dwellings of the free and happy dead" (XII.xxxix.277- 
78) and the Temple of the Spirit is set among "radiant . 
isle[s]" (XII.xli.363). In these passages, stars are 
described as islands and the sky assumes the characteristics 
of water (in fact, it is called a "glassy ocean" in the 
"Prologue to Hellas," I. 72); sky-water is, of course, an 
appropriate medium for the flying boats to "swim" through. 
To locate the spirits of the dead on planets or stars has 
a long history, but to transform the stars to island- 
spheres and the sky to a watery medium is Shelley's own 
unique transmutation. 156

Of Shelley's poems, Prometheus Unbound uses spatial 
concepts most interestingly and subtly. When the 
poem begins, the world is a "waste world" (II.i.126) and 
Prometheus is enchained and separated from Asia; when the 
poem ends, the world is renewed, Prometheus is free and 
reunited with Asia. This positive direction is also 
indicated in Shelley's use of space. In a fallen world, 
space is affected; it is mortal profane space, constrict-
ing and separated into discrete areas. In a rejuvenated 
world, space is sacred, it is not imprisoning and the 
world is unified in an harmonious whole. A divided man
(or Mind) yields a divided universe, whereas a whole man
(or Mind) creates a unified world, unlimited by space or
time. *Prometheus Unbound* illustrates in a variety of ways
these views of space.

At the beginning of the poem, the separation of
space is indicated in several ways. The most obvious is
the simple citing of areas of space to indicate their
separation. For example, Prometheus addresses Earth,
Heaven, and Sea—as separate entities—asking them if they
are aware of his pains (I.25 ff.) and later, the character
Earth implores "Land and Sea" (I.308) to lament
Prometheus's state. In a fallen world, these areas are
opposing realms just as a fallen Venice or a fallen
Atlantis (land masses) is "prey" to the sea. More subtle
kinds of separation are suggested through the characters.
Although Prometheus and Asia exist as characters in the
play, the drama of ideas is also illustrated through their
symbolic roles and actions. While Prometheus and Asia
have multiple symbolic roles, in some respects
Prometheus represents time whereas Asia represents space.
While Prometheus's name implies foreknowledge and his
function in the plot establishes his knowledge of future
events, Asia's name and genealogy associate her with
space. She is an Oceanid and her association with the
sea is indicated throughout the play. She is a "sea-
sister" to Panthea and Ione (II.1.57), she is called a
"Child of the Ocean" (II.i.194, 206) and a "Daughter of Ocean" (II.iv.168). Yet she is also named Asia which associates her with land. The original unity between land and sea is also recalled through her character when Panthea remembers Asia's Venus-like ascent from the sea:

The Nereids tell
That on the day when the clear hyaline
Was cloven at thine uprise, and thou didst stand
Within a veined shell, which floated on
Over the calm floor of the crystal sea,
Among the AEgean isles, and by the shores
Which bear thy name; love, like the atmosphere
Of the sun's fire filling the living world,
Burst from thee, and illumined earth and heaven
And the deep ocean and the sunless caves
And all that dwells within them . . . .

(II.v.20-30)

Mary Shelley identified Asia with "Venus and Nature." Asia's function as a symbol of Love's powers is well-illustrated in this passage, but the activity of love here is that of unifying space. Asia in this passage suggests more than Nature simply understood; she represents all space: she is heaven (as the sun), earth (as a floating island), and sea (as its transformed daughter). At Asia's birth all space was a harmonious whole with earth, heaven, deep ocean, and sunless caves (that is, depths) irradiated and joined through her sacred presence.

With Prometheus's fall, the mind was divided; Asia, essential to the unity of the mind, separated from Prometheus, and with that separation came this disharmony and separation of nature, the "waste world," and imprison-
ment by space. The mind, which can control and/or transcend space and time and which can create a unified world, became a "stagnant chaos" (IV.380); space and time became isolated concepts, with time associated with Prometheus and space with Asia. A further separation also occurred: the separation of Asia from her sisters. Although Ione and Panthea have rather vague symbolic roles in the drama, it is clear that once they and their sister Asia had lived together, a situation which has changed apparently after the fall. Ione and Panthea sleep "under the glaucous caverns of old Ocean" (II.1.44) while Asia "waits in that far Indian vale / The scene of her sad exile; rugged once / And desolate and frozen . . ." (I.826-28). This separation suggests an additional separation into spatial zones, since the fallen Asia seems to lack both the earlier connection with her sisters and the sea which is still their home. Although a "Daughter of Ocean," she seems to have lost her original parent.

The drama, however, is less concerned with the results of the fall than with the results of rejuvenation and through the positive effects, we can readily infer the earlier negative state. Rejuvenation appears to be progressive in *Prometheus Unbound*. At the end of Act One, we learn that Asia's previously desolate vale has become "invested with fair flowers and herbs, / And haunted by sweet airs and sound" (I.829-30), as a result
of Prometheus's recanting of the curse. A chain of causation then ensues. After Asia's ritual descent into the tomb-womb of Demogorgon and resulting rebirth and resurrection and after the fall of Jupiter, a tyrant of the mind, profane space can be abolished and original sacred harmonies can be restored. Asia's rebirth parallels the original birth as recalled by Panthea (II.v.20-30). Again, she is associated with the sun, again she rises up on an "ivory shell" (II.iv.157), and again the universe is sacralized. The depths are reborn; the earth feels life and joy "Even to the adamantine central gloom / Along [its] marble nerves" (III.iii.86-87). Land, sea, and heaven are unified; the island Atlantis is the setting for a conversation between Ocean and Apollo, in which we learn of the mutual interaction of the three. Ocean describes itself as being like "plains of corn / Swayed by the summer air" (III.ii.20-21) and like "fields" (III.ii.18) and as being "unpastured" (III.ii.49). It thinks of itself as land, not destructive chaos. The sea will "flow / Round many-peopled continents, and round / Fortunate isles" (III.ii.21-23) and reflect the flowers, odors, and music of the land. No longer will the sea be the land's prey, for all the earth is like a newly risen Atlantis in harmonious interplay with the sea. The ocean too describes itself as "fields of Heaven-reflecting sea" (III.ii.18), a unity symbol which is reinforced in the
fourth act when Ione describes the "deep music of the roll-
ing world" (IV.186) which pierces her sense "As the sharp
stars pierce winter's crystal air / And gaze upon them-
selves within the sea" (IV.192-93). Reflection becomes
a symbol for interaction. The point is made explicit when
Panthea explains the symbolism of the details on the
multitudinous orb: they "[emblem] heaven and earth
united now" (IV.273) and when Shelley portrays the love
duet between Moon and Earth,\textsuperscript{159} space is no longer defined
by its separation, but rather by mutual interaction and
unity.

The renewal of space which I have discussed thus
far in \textit{Prometheus Unbound} is a renewal of this world;
this world is transformed yet it is not exempt from
"chance, and death, and mutability" (III.iv.201). Shelley's
mixed goals, the millennial as opposed to the apo-
  lyptic, account for the two conceptions of space which
dominate the positive conclusion of the drama. On the
one hand, space becomes a unity without opposing separa-
tions or boundaries; this is the millennial view of space.
On the other hand, space is viewed apocalyptically; the
mind transcends all spatial categories. Just as Time is
borne to his tomb in eternity, so too space is no longer
a limiting factor. Redeemed space in this view is for all
practical purposes no space. The mind overcomes all space;
whereas thought had been a "stagnant chaos," in its renewed
form, it is no longer limited by space. The Earth describes the new apocalyptic powers:

The lightning is his slave; heaven's utmost deep
Gives up her stars, and like a flock of sheep
They pass before his eye; are numbered, and roll on.
The tempest is his steed, he strides the air;
And the abyss shouts from her depth laid bare,
Heaven, hast thou secrets? Man unveils me; I have none.
(IV.418-23)

The mind organizes and transcends space. A similar point is made by the Chorus of "Spirits of the human mind" (IV.81). They sing:

We are free to dive, or soar, or run;
Beyond and around,
Or within the bound
Which clips the world with darkness round.

We'll pass the eyes
Of the starry skies
Into the hoar deep to colonize . . . .
(IV.137-43)

The powers of the apocalyptic imagination surpass those of the earthbound imagination which sees only a renewed and unified earth. The apocalyptic imagination creates a new cosmos totally ungoverned by space-time conceptions. This imagination can "build a new earth and sea, / And a heaven where yet heaven could never be" (IV.164-65).

Shelley can never describe this new, non-spatial cosmos, since it is essentially imageless. Confusion results even when he attempts to create a setting for apocalypse. Earlier I have discussed the contradictions
in placing Keats's spirit on a star since the human imagination conceives of that "abode" as spatially fixed. The setting to which the immortal, reintegrated Prometheus retreats presents some of the same problems. Not only is it sensually described and therefore earth-like, but in ordinary visual terms the cave retreat is no more spatially expansive than his mountain-top enchainment. The difference is that it is an eternity symbol, like Keats's spirit's star. In the cave the immortal Titans "will sit and talk of time and change, / As the world ebbs and flows, [themselves] unchanged" (III.iii.23-24). In the cave they will presumably be free of the limitations of space as they "weave harmonies divine, yet ever new" (III.iii.38) and receive the echoing winds "which meet from all the points of heaven" (III.iii.41). The Prometheus of Act One who was bound by hate could say:

"... torture and solitude, 
Scorn and despair,—these are mine empire. 
More glorious far than that which thou surveyest From thine unenvied throne, O, mighty God!"

(I.14-17)

The unbound Prometheus, united with the other aspects of mind's being, still has no outward empire, no throne from which he surveys all space. Instead, the empire he creates is within. Of all the Romantic poets, Shelley has most completely illustrated the truth of Satan's boast. In Prometheus Unbound, "The mind is its own place, and in itself / Can make a Heav'n of Hell, a Hell
of Heav'n" (Paradise Lost I.254-55). Time and space cease to have meaning to a mind which can create its own heaven.

Although Prometheus Unbound represents the optimistic side of Shelley's nature and thus perhaps yields a false view of his total production, as his most mythic poem, it does illustrate the variety of ways spatial symbolism expresses his themes. In a fallen mortal world, space is often imprisoning and bound into discrete, opposing areas; in a renewed earthly world, space is sacralized and unified; in an apocalyptic other-world, the human concept of space is transcended and the mind has the freedom of and from space.
FOOTNOTES


2 See Shelley's letter to Thomas Jefferson Hogg, May 9, 1811, in The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley, ed. Frederick L. Jones (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), I, 81, and his "Notes to Queen Mab," in The Complete Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley, ed. Roger Ingpen and Walter E. Peck (London: Ernest Benn, 1926-30), I, 141, note to 1. 189. All references to the Letters and Works are from these editions and will be cited by volume and page numbers in the text.

3 See also "To Mary—," the dedicatory poem to Laon and Cythna. His praise of her reads:

How beautiful and calm and free thou wert
In thy young wisdom, when the mortal chain
Of Custom thou didst burst and rend in twain,
And walked as free as light the clouds among,
Which many an envious slave then breathed in vain
From his dim dungeon, and my spirit sprung
To meet thee from the woes which had begirt it long.
(Works, I, 252-53)

4 In his "Notes to Queen Mab," Shelley criticizes laws, especially those dealing with love and morality (Works, I, 141-42); he refers twice to Harriet Westbrook's school as a "prison" (Letters, I, 66, 83), and in his later revolutionary poem, Laon and Cythna, he recognizes that women have been imprisoned by tyrannical husbands; Cythna says:

"But chiefly women, whom my voice did waken
From their cold, careless, willing slavery,
Sought me: one truth their dreary prison has shaken,—
They looked around, and lo! they became free!
Their many tyrants sitting desolately
In slave-deserted halls, could none restrain . . . ."
(Works, I, 367, ll. 82-87)
In a later poem, The Mask of Anarchy, Shelley repeats this idea when he calls the homes of the rich "those prison halls of wealth and fashion" (LXXII.291).

Literal imprisonment had, of course, played a role in his two gothic novels, Zastrozzi and St. Irvyne, but since these apprentice works owe their settings to the gothic tradition, I have not considered them important to my point.

In Rosalind and Helen, written immediately after Laon and Cythna, literal imprisonment is still seen in a socio-political context. In that poem, the poet Lionel, an advocate of free love, is imprisoned for his "keen blasphemy" (l. 862).

See also his description of the dungeon which had imprisoned Tasso, written two years after he had seen Chillon (Letters, II, 48).

Earl R. Wasserman's discussion of these lines in reference to Shelley's ideas about "self-anatomy" is illuminating; see his Shelley: A Critical Reading (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1971), p. 111 ff.

The idea which these passages from Queen Mab and The Revolt of Islam suggest is amply illustrated in Alastor, which intervenes between the two revolutionary poems. However, Alastor makes little use of the prison symbol since the spatial symbol which controls it is linear vastness.


An unusual implication of this attitude toward the soul's imprisonment in the body is indicated by Count Cenci; referring to his cruelty, he says, "I rarely kill the body, which preserves, / Like a strong prison, the soul / Within my power, / Wherein I feed it with the breath of fear / For hourly pain" (The Cenci I.i.114-17).

Wasserman, Shelley: A Critical Reading, p. 60.

Captives enchained to a floating barge might be a more fitting conjunction of his usual images. See also "An Allegory" in which Shelley uses the "highway of life" metaphor.
Like the other Romantic poets, Shelley too seemed to have a strong antipathy to the city. He did not want to live near the city as an early letter to Thomas Charles Medwin shows: requesting Medwin’s assistance in locating a cottage for rent, Shelley sets up his requirements: “Let it be in some picturesque retired place . . . . Let it not be nearer to London than Horsham, nor near any populous manufacturing dissipated town.— We do not covet either a propinquity to barracks” (Letters, I, 197; italics Shelley’s). In Rosalind and Helen, Helen describes London as a “million-peopled City,” a “desert where each one / Seeks his mate yet is alone, / Beloved and sought and mourned of none” (ll. 945, 946-48). Her description, which probably reflects accurately Shelley’s own views, is a kind of capsule view of the attitudes shared by Shelley’s fellow Romantic poets (especially Wordsworth) and uses the kind of spatial imagery (crowded vastness, deserts) which we are accustomed to seeing in Romantic poetry. See also a much later poem, “To Jane,” which is a personal statement of Shelley’s views. In that poem, Shelley sets up a “silent wilderness” (l. 23) in opposition to the city. The wilderness is uninhabited harmonious space as opposed to the crowded isolation of urban space.


Mary Shelley’s comments on Shelley’s poems almost always include details about where they were written. Many of her comments are reproduced in the Woodberry edition of the complete works. Shelley, too, sometimes makes a point of mentioning the natural scenes in which his poetry was written. See, for example, the dedicatory poem to Laon and Cythna, addressed to Mary. And in the
preface to Prometheus Unbound, he notes similarly the place of composition.

21 Blunden, Shelley, p. 29.

22 The Shelleys lived in various places in Italy; although they did more or less settle in Pisa in 1820, they continued to speculate on various other travels. Mary comments too: "But for our fears on account of our child, I believe we should have wandered over the world, both being passionately fond of travelling" (Woodberry, ed., Works, p. 372).

23 On this point, an early Shelley scholar has this to say: "Bookishness early developed in Shelley a power of expression out of proportion to his first-hand knowledge of life. A sporting, juvenile Gothicism, an earnest, excited, timid anarchism, and a personal, sentimental romanticism were effects of that inequality. Then the mountains, and other impressive rhythms of nature, vastly enriched his experience, developing his sensitiveness, deepening his moods, fecundating his imagination" (B. P. Kurtz, The Pursuit of Death: A Study of Shelley's Poetry [London: Oxford University Press, 1933], p. 106).

24 All quotations from Shelley's prose are from Shelley's Prose or The Trumpet of a Prophesy, ed. David Lee Clark (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1954).

25 This had even been true initially of the poet in Alastor; of him Shelley says: "[He was] a youth of uncorrupted feelings and adventurous genius led forth by an imagination inflamed and purified through familiarity with all that is excellent and majestic to the contemplation of the universe. He drinks deep of the fountains of knowledge and is still insatiate. The magnificence and beauty of the external world sinks profoundly into the frame of his conceptions and affords to their modifications a variety not to be exhausted. So long as it is possible for his desires to point towards objects thus infinite and unmeasured, he is joyous and tranquil and self-possessed" (Woodberry, ed., Works, pp. 32-33).

26 See for example his letter to Peacock (Letters, I, 495). All of Shelley's letters to Peacock are long and provide a fairly complete catalogue of the sights Shelley saw on the continent and his reaction to them.
27 Quoted from Blunden, Shelley, p. 47, who paraphrases Hogg's recollections.

28 Several critics have also cited Johnson's Rasselas as an inspiration for the descriptions of the happy valley.

29 The obvious reason the wilderness is attractive is of course that it is natural and uncivilized. In The Assassins, he refers to the "poison of a diseased civilization" and in one of his first letters after settling permanently in Italy, he praises the countryside and adds, "I depend on these things for life for in the smoke of cities & the tumult of humankind & the chilling fogs & rain of our own country I can hardly be said to live" (Letters, II, 3-4). It does seem strange that the image of desolate wilderness would be so often positive, especially in contrast to the kinds of nature so often praised by his Romantic contemporaries. It also seems strange, given Shelley's near-obsession with his health that the wilderness, often explicitly cold, would be positive.

30 Shelley's letters describing Mont Blanc (Letters, I, 495 ff.) mention the desolation of the area several times, call the glacial slopes "horrible deserts," and "people" Mont Blanc: "Do you who assert the supremacy of Ahriman imagine him throned among these desolating snows, among these palaces of death & frost, sculptured in this their terrible magnificence by the unsparing hand of necessity, & that he casts around him as the first essays of his final usurpation avalanches, torrents, rocks & thunders--and above all, these deadly glaciers at once the proofs & the symbols of his reign" (Letters, I, 499). The Jura mountains too are described as a "white wilderness," as "awfully desolate" and as an "uninhabited desert" (Letters, I, 475-76).

31 The concordance to Shelley's poetry lists over fifty uses of "wilderness(es)." Some of these are clearly negative, however. See F. S. Ellis, ed., A Lexical Concordance to the Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley (London: Bernard Quaritch, and Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1892). It should be noted, however, that both the island in Epipsychidion and the scene of Shelley and Jane's "friendship" in "To Jane" are called "wildernesses."

32 The outer atmosphere is called a "wilderness" in the Prologue to Hellas, l. 41.
The influence of science on these conception is the subject of the next section of this chapter.

The "inane" should be empty space or the void if Shelley is using the word properly. Shelley does not always, however, make careful distinctions between the wilderness, chaos, and the void.

It is somewhat ironic that Shelley has adopted the spatial symbolism that he seemingly ridicules in his Essay on the Devil and Devils. There he says that Heaven "is generally supposed to be placed beyond that remotest constellation of the visible stars" (Clark, ed., Shelley's Prose, p. 266).

Wasserman, Shelley: A Critical Reading, Chapter 15.

Some part of Shelley must have believed at least occasionally in the idea that after death the soul resides on a planet or star. He apparently said after nearly drowning: "another minute I might have been in another planet" (Blunden, Shelley, p. 268).

In a less crucial way, Shelley has somewhat the same problem in Epipsychidion when he refers to the "fields of immortality" (I. 133; my italics), using a spatial metaphor for something essentially beyond space.

In Hellas, Ahasuerus also has special powers, among them a scientific imagination. Like Prometheus, he understands astronomy and geology. He "measurest the stars" (I. 743) and "sees / The birth of this old world through all its cycles" (II. 745-46).

Shelley's Prometheus is also associated with medicine (II.iv.85-86) and perhaps with chemistry, since poisons are mentioned (II.iv.70) and the "power of herbs and springs" (II.iv.85), and with mechanics, or at least navigation (II.iv.92-93).

It could certainly be argued that Byron, in contrast to Shelley, was more crucially affected by his knowledge of scientific theory, especially astronomy and geology. But with the exception of Cain, the effects of Byron's knowledge are less evident and less numerous in his poetry.

mentioned that at least two students of Shelley claim that the influence of science on Shelley's works has been overemphasized. Ross Woodman (The Apocalyptic Vision in the Poetry of Shelley [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1964], p. 147) claims that "too much has been made of the influence of science upon Shelley (he was more a magician than a scientist) . . ." and Carlos Baker (Shelley's Major Poetry, p. 286) claims that "Shelley's attainments in the field of nineteenth-century science were [not] uncommon," that he was essentially an "intelligent amateur." Grabo would undoubtedly agree, given the following explanation in his "Science and the Romantic Movement" (Annals of Science, IV [1939], 191):

Happily the period of the latter part of the eighteenth and the early part of the nineteenth centuries is one in which scientific thought is, for the most part and at least in its broad outlines, intelligible to those not trained in science or the higher mathematics. The technical language of science as we know it to-day was mostly at that time not yet invented, nor had refinements of specialization precluded understanding to all but experts. Scientific discoveries were not then so remote from ordinary experiences as to be unintelligible to the layman. It was still the day of the gentleman amateur, the day in which the skilled artisan, if of a scientific bent, might fruitfully explore the science that underlay his craft. Science was the avocation of many, and discoveries that were the product of intellectual recreation were discussed before provincial scientific societies. Nor were these discoveries necessarily trivial. Both in fact-finding and in scientific theory, the frontiers of science were so close that in some fields even a few months of study might suffice to bring a man abreast of them.

But I (and presumably Grabo) see no reason to discount the influence of science on Shelley's poetry, merely because he was an amateur.

43 Blunden (Shelley, p. 40) quotes Thomas Jefferson Hogg.

44 Jones (Letters, II) includes an appendix listing works we can be fairly certain that Shelley had read.

45 Blunden, Shelley, p. 126.
See also Letters, I, 501, and II, 361, for Shelley's interest in botany.


Blunden, Shelley, p. 17.

White, Shelley, II, 493.

Blunden, Shelley, p. 34.

White, Shelley, I, 565, n. 16. Most sciences occupied one lecture apiece except for pneumatics and electricity which included two lectures apiece. Each lecture was of two hours duration (White, Shelley, I, 22).

Ibid., I, 22.

Ibid., I, 23.

Blunden, Shelley, p. 86.


Ibid., p. 31. Shelley's reading of Lucretius, Woodberry suggests, also gave him the idea of embodying scientific conceptions in verse (Works, p. 594). Chapter 3 of Grabo's A Newton Among Poets summarizes Darwin's specific views of the cosmos.

Much of the information in this section derives from Grabo, A Newton Among Poets. When a specific piece of information is directly derived from Grabo, I have cited the page.

The witch seems to have a more limited domain, largely sublunary ("she sate, and heard all that had happened new / Between the earth and moon" [LIV]), the playfulness of this poem does not demand that she live in such an apocalyptic realm as the Fairy Mab.

Shelley could have received his information about astronomy from a great many sources. Grabo (A Newton Among Poets, p. 80 ff.) is undoubtedly correct, however, in assuming that Shelley knew many of the elder William
Herschel's theories, if not directly from his "papers reported in the proceedings of the Royal Society," then indirectly from popular monthlies which summarized the latest scientific discoveries (p. 86). Shelley's summary of astronomical discoveries in the Essay on the Devil and Devils might further substantiate Grabo's claim since Herschel's chief interest "was to determine the shape and extent of the Milky Way and the place of our solar system therein" and to systematize star counts and determine "the number and relative magnitudes of stars in each unit of space" (p. 80). David L. Clark (Shelley's Prose, p. 273, n. 11) assumes that Shelley was influenced by Herschel, since Shelley refers to him by name in the Essay on the Devil and Devils. But see Letters, II, 458; we can assume from this letter either that Shelley had not read Herschel directly or did not own his own copies of Herschel's works.

60 Grabo, A Newton Among Poets, p. 169.

61 Ibid., p. 170.


63 Grabo, A Newton Among Poets, pp. 159-60.

64 Since it too wanders through the sky, in contrast to the fixed stars, the earth is also described as a "wanderer" (Prometheus Unbound IV.325).


66 See Queen Mab VIII.18, The Witch of Atlas XVIII and LVI, and Epipsychidion, I. 86.

67 See also Prometheus Unbound IV.129-34. Ants Oras ("The Multitudinous Orb: Some Miltonic Elements in Shelley," MLQ, 16 [1955], 252-53) suggests that the dance of the Hours and spirits resembles the dance of the angels in Paradise Lost V.618-27.


69 See Wasserman's explanation of Shelley's transformation of the Platonized-Christian angelic guides of the spheres to the Eros-like Spirit of Earth (Shelley: A Critical Reading, pp. 278-79).
In a letter to Hogg, Shelley said, "our ideas of infinite space &c are scarcely to be called ideas for we cannot either comprehend or explain them" (Letters, I, 45).

Grabo (A Newton Among Poets, pp. 80-88) believes that Shelley followed William Herschel's belief (which the scientist amended in 1818) that the universe, though vast, was finite and that Shelley was probably unaware of Herschel's newer view in 1818 that the universe was infinite in extent. Unless one makes a very careful distinction between an infinite universe (comprised of planets, stars, etc.) and infinite space, I can find little evidence to support Grabo's thesis.


Ibid., p. 204.

Ibid., p. 201.


Ibid., p. 566.

Ibid., p. 566.

Milton Wilson's distinction between these two words, I find very helpful (Shelley's Later Poetry [New York: Columbia University Press, 1959], passim).


For the discussion of the implications of the obliquity of the earth's eclipse in Prometheus Unbound, I am indebted to Wasserman, Shelley: A Critical Reading, pp. 262-65. He also sees Earth's refusal to repeat Prometheus's curse because it would "link [her] to some wheel of pain / More torturing than the one wherein [she] roll[s]" (I.141-42) as a reference to "the twisting motion resulting from the displacement of its axis from the perpendicular" (p. 263). In a footnote (p. 262), Wasserman quotes from Mary Shelley's The Last Man in which an astronomer believes that "in an hundred thousand years" the "pole of the earth will coincide
with the pole of the ecliptic" and "an universal spring will be produced, and earth become a paradise."

81 I admit that Shelley may only use the word "hollow" here because he needs a rhyme for "follow." But see also Prometheus Unbound I.108 where he describes the Heaven as "hollow."

82 David Lee Clark (Shelley's Prose, p. 82, n. 1) says that "Shelley's mature belief was that the universe was never created; it always existed."

83 Robert Martin Adams's comments on the void are relevant here: "In fact, like those other absolutes infinity and eternity, void cannot even be fully conceived—a finite mind formed by experience being able to propose to itself only imperfectly a state in which it does not exist, a state which is the negation of experience. At least, if we can conceive of Nothing, it must be boundless, eternal, and seen from no particular point of either space or time, since any of these limitations would immediately make it something" (Nil: Episodes in the literary conquest of void during the 19th century (1965; rpt. London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 12.

84 Several critics of Shelley's works have noted the general influence of Milton on Shelley's works; Milton's chaos is thought to be an important influence on Shelley's concept of space.

85 Grabo, A Newton Among Poets, pp. 166 and 85.

86 Wasserman (Shelley: A Critical Reading, p. 205, n. 2) explains that "in [Shelley's] vocabulary 'create' means 'organize,' not creation ex nihilo" and he uses Mary's preface to Frankenstein, which he quotes, as further evidence that invention is creation out of chaos, not out of the void. I suspect that he is right in the final analysis and that Shelley was simply careless in his occasional use of the word "void."

87 See Grabo (A Newton Among Poets) who quotes sections of Darwin's notes in The Temple of Nature.

88 White, Shelley, I, 158.

89 G. M. Matthew's model article, "A Volcano's Voice in Shelley" (ELH, 24 [1957], 191-228), summarizes Shelley's reading and probable reading in geology, especially that relevant to volcanos. He mentions
particularly Sir George Mackenzie's Travels in Iceland which contained various kinds of scientific information (p. 197).

90 Ibid., p. 197. Shelley definitely read reviews of the Italian geologist Breislak's Introduzione alla Geologia (pp. 197-99) and, given Shelley's voracious reading, Matthews thinks it reasonable to assume that Shelley knew about many books reviewed in journals like the Edinburgh Review, the Quarterly Review, Gentleman's Magazine. It is clear from the evidence of Shelley's poetry, as Matthews demonstrates, that Shelley was getting information from somewhere, not recorded in his letters, Mary's journal, or his reading lists.

91 In April, 1822, he was sent from Paris Pierre Simon Laplace, Essai philosophique sur les probabilités, Georges Cuvier, Recherches sur les ossement fossiles, and Daubuisson, Geognosie (Letters, II, 458 and Appendix viii).

92 Edward Hungerford (Shores of Darkness [New York: Columbia University Press, 1941], p. 207) explains that the multitudinous orb resembles the Orrery, an astronomical apparatus which illustrated the motions of heavenly bodies. Given Shelley's interest in scientific apparatus and given the Orrery's popularity, it seems likely that the orb of Prometheus Unbound derives originally from such a concrete source.

93 In his year at Oxford, Shelley had apparently thought he was interested in mineralogy for he hastily broke off his first excited meeting with Thomas J. Hogg in order to attend a lecture on the subject which proved, however, to be unexciting; "stones! stones, stones, stones! nothing but stones!" was Shelley's disappointed response (White, Shelley, I, 78).

94 Quoted in Grabo, A Newton Among Poets, p. 49.

95 Ibid., p. 49.

96 Ibid., p. 49.

97 The quality of mystery is emphasized in a later poem, "Fragments of an unfinished Drama." In it Shelley has the Spirit say:

Within the silent centre of the earth
My mansion is, where I have lived insphered
From the beginning, and around my sleep
Have woven all the wondrous imagery
Of this dim spot, which mortals call the world;
Infinite depths of unknown elements
Massed into one impenetrable mask;
Sheets of immeasurable fire, and veins
Of gold, and stone, and adamantine iron.
(ll. 15-23; my italics)

Many of the specific details, as H. W. Piper points out, occur in the geological literature of Shelley's day and many derive from specific discoveries of archaeologists and palaeontologists. See The Active Universe (London: The Athlone Press, 1962), pp. 187-89, for specific sources. Piper also compares Keats's summary of the cycles of history in Endymion III.123-37 with Shelley's survey.


See Matthews, "A Volcano's Voice."

See Wasserman's discussion of lines 71-75 of Mont Blanc which derive from the "then current theories of the origin of mountains" (Shelley: A Critical Reading, p. 232).

Jones is clearly right of course to note that in this letter Shelley is intending "to make the poem [Epipsychidion] more of a mystery than it really is" (Letters, II, 363, n. 5).

See Matthews, "A Volcano's Voice."


Mythic space is the subject of part three.

See especially A Defence of Poetry: "A poet therefore would do ill to embody his own conceptions of right and wrong, which are usually those of his place and time, in his poetical creations which participate in neither" (Clark, ed., Shelley's Prose, p. 283; my italics).

Letters, II, 84, n. 2.

Milton Wilson (Shelley's Later Poetry, pp. 116-24) discusses Shelley's "tendency to see nature in terms of architectural and geometric shapes."
Color, as this passage indicates, also contributes to the total effect. See also Shelley's letter to Byron in which he says, "It is not alone that these mountains are immense in size, that their forests are of so immeasurable an extent; there is a grandeur in the very shapes and colours which could not fail to impress, even on a smaller scale" (Letters, I, 494).

In commenting on the glacier at Chamounix, Shelley says: "Its surface is irregularly broken into a thousand unaccountable figures. Conical & pyramidal crystallizations more than 50 feet in height rise from its surface, & precipices of ice of a dazzling splendour overhang the woods & meadows of the vale" (Letters, I, 497). These irregularities lead to Shelley's summary comment that "there is a majesty of outline" in these scenes (Letters, I, 497).

A letter two years later admittedly seems to confuse the point. In it, the "resting place to the sense" is the soft foliage of trees set up in contrast to the "jagged horizon." The passage reads: "What a glorious prospect you had from the windows of St. Elmo! The enormous chain of the Apennines, with its many folded ridges islanded in the misty distance of the air, the sea, so immensely distant appearing as at your feet, & the prodigious expanse of the plain of Pisa, & the dark green marshes lessened almost to a strip by the height of the blue mountains overhanging them--then the wild & unreclaimed fertility of the foreground, & the chestnut trees whose vivid foliage made a sort of resting place to the sense before it darted itself to the jagged horizon of this prospect--I was altogether delighted." (Letters, II, 202).

Although only peripherally related to my point, Gaston Bachelard's comments on "corners" in Chapter 6 of The Poetics of Space (1964; rpt. Boston: Beacon Press, 1969) are interesting. He views corners and angles as symbols of solitude for the imagination, but he is primarily interested in the inhabiting of corners, not the distant recognition of their outlines, and in their potential for inspiring subjective, internal responses, not the centrifugal motion more characteristic of Shelley's imagination.

The discussions by both Wilson (Shelley's Later Poetry, p. 125) and Richard Harter Fogle (The Imagery of Keats and Shelley [1949; rpt. Hamden, Conn.; Archon Books, 1962], pp. 47-57) of the strange conjunction in Shelley's poetry of solid geometric pattern or skeletal outline
with shimmering ethereality are interesting in this context.

114Letters, II, 74, n. 10.

115"The Colosseum," a fragmentary prose sketch begun in 1818, also shows Shelley's attraction for the open architectural form:

"Around us lie enormous columns, shattered and shapeless--and fragments of capitals and cornice, fretted with delicate sculptures."

"Is it open to the blue sky?" said the old man.

"Yes. We see the liquid depth of heaven above through the rifts and the windows; and the flowers, and the weeds, and the grass and creeping moss are nourished by its unforbidden rain. The blue sky is above--the wide, bright, blue sky--it flows through the great rents on high, and through the bare boughs of the marble rooted fig-tree, and through the leaves and flowers of the weeds, even to the dark arcades beneath. I see--I feel its clear and piercing beams fill the universe and impregnate the joy-inspiring wind with life and light, and casting the veil of its splendor over all things--even me. Yes, and through the highest rift the noonday waning moon is hanging, as it were, out of the solid sky, and this shows that the atmosphere has all the clearness which it rejoices me that you feel."

(Clark, ed., Shelley's Prose, pp. 225-26)

116See also the use of this architectural form as a metaphor in The Witch of Atlas: "... deep her eyes are / Two openings of unfathomable night / Seen through a temple's cloven roof" (V).


118Grabo, A Newton Among Poets, pp. 89-90.

119See also, for example, Queen Mab II.253-56 where "space" words again set the visual expanse.
Spatializing time is not uncommon in Shelley. For example, he has Beatrice say: "It [hope] is the only ill which can find place / Upon the giddy, sharp, and narrow hour / Tottering beneath us" (The Cenci V.iv.99-101).


Fogle, The Imagery of Keats and Shelley, p. 46.


See also "A Vision of the Sea," and Fogle's discussion of Shelley's motor imagery (The Imagery of Keats and Shelley, pp. 94-98).

Grabo, A Newton Among Poets, p. 90. Fogle would disagree, but I do not find his statistical approach entirely convincing.

Fogle, The Imagery of Keats and Shelley, p. 82. The most notable exceptions to Fogle's statement are "To Constantia Singing" and "With a Guitar: To Jane."

A longer passage (ll. 560-64) uses sound imagery to describe thought and looks, but this is obviously not descriptive of the island. Shelley's "vision," which occurs earlier in the poem, mentions music in several lines (ll. 329-32), but the description is generalized and evokes little sense of space.

It should be mentioned that in at least two instances sound does not merely evoke a sense of space, it is described as space, specifically as water. In the scene describing Asia's transfiguration, she says she floats "down, around, / Into a sea profound, of ever-spreading sound" (II.v.83-84). And later Panthea rises "as from a bath of sparkling water, / A bath of azure light, among dark rocks, / Out of the stream of sound" (IV.503-5). Such synthesis is not surprising in such visionary and ethereal passages.

Fogle makes this suggestion (The Imagery of Keats and Shelley, p. 82, n. 59) which is at least true of
"The Wandering Jew."

131 See also "Ode to Liberty," a poem which describes the effects of liberty in terms of violent auditory space.

132 See also "To Jane," the setting of which is defined not only by the "Elysian glow" (V) and "light of Paradise" (II), but also by its silence. In this poem, silence defines a kind of mesocosmic setting, one not quite eternal but not quite earthly either.

133 Shelley often mentions smells in his descriptive letters; see Letters, I, 483, and II, 74, 79, for example.

134 Edward E. Bostetter's discussion of the use of odor in Shelley's poetry is interesting; he sees odor as suggesting sexual union (The Romantic Ventriloquists [Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1963], pp. 208-10). This suggestion, obviously, has little to do with the power to create space through smell.

135 Fogle, The Imagery of Keats and Shelley, pp. 85-86. To his list might be added the pleasant smells briefly evoking a sense of a grove in Alastor (11. 448-53).

136 Fogle makes these suggestions (The Imagery of Keats and Shelley, pp. 70-71, 74-75).

137 "Lines" begins "The cold earth slept below" and is in the Julian Edition of the Works, III, 118-19.

138 Fogle (The Imagery of Keats and Shelley, pp. 67-76) classifies several images of roughness or jaggedness as tactual images, although it is clear that actual touch is out of the question.


140 Bernard Blackstone, in The Lost Travellers (London: Longmans, 1962), p. 259, comments that Shelley has little of Byron's delight in oceanic vastness and energy. Yet personally "Shelley's passion was the ocean; he wished that [their] summers . . . should be spent on the shores of the sea" (Mary Shelley in Woodberry, ed., Works, p. 402). When describing the ocean positively, his poetry displays an appreciation for the beauties of a calm ocean, not a vast, kinetic one. This verse from "Stanzas Written in Dejection, Near Naples" makes the point:
I see the Deep's untrampled floor
With green and purple sea-weeds strown;
I see the waves upon the shore,
Like light dissolved in star-showers, thrown:
I sit upon the sands alone,
The lightning of the noontide ocean
Is flashing round me, and a tone
Arises from its measured motion,
How sweet! did any heart not share in my emotion.
(ll. 10-18)

As early as 1812, Shelley associated the ocean with time: "The ocean rolls between us. O thou Ocean, whose multitudinous billows {eve}r lash Erins green isle on whose shores this venturous arm would plant the flag of liberty, Roll on! and with each wave whose echoings die, amid thy melancholy silentness shall die a moment too— one of those moments which part my friend and me. I could stand upon thy shores O Erin and could count the billows that in their unceasing swell dash on thy beach, and every wave might seem an instrument in Time the giant's grasp, to burst the barriers of Eternity. Proceed thou giant conquering and to conquer" (Letters, I, 251).

In Don Juan the ocean operates similarly:

The eternal surge
Of time and tide rolls on, and bears afar
Our bubbles; as the old burst, new emerge,
Lash'd from the foam of ages; while the graves
Of empires heave but like some passing waves.
(XV.xcix)

In Hellas, Shelley speaks of "a diviner clime" "on some Cape sublime / Which frowns above the idle foam of time" (ll. 105, 106-7). The ocean metaphor is somewhat submerged, but Shelley thinks characteristically of the ocean-time analogy. See also Letters, I, 292, where Shelley says to Elizabeth Hitchener that she is "to [his] fancy as a thunder-riven pinnacle of rock, firm amid the rushing tempest & the boiling surge."

The source is of course sometimes the ocean. If this is the case, the ocean can sometimes be identified with post-mortal existence as in Laon and Cythna VI.xxiv, where Shelley calls it the "Ocean / Of universal life."

The first line of "A Wanderer" is "He wanders, like a day-appearing dream" (Works, IV, 119).
Shelley's "A Vision of the Sea," which seems to operate on a literal level, is perhaps his most striking evocation of the destructive and chaotic qualities of the ocean. *Alastor* too sets up the ocean as a violent and chaotic wasteland, at times so violent as to be three-dimensional—"ocean's mountainous waste" (l. 342).

See also "Prince Athanase," Part II, 1. 10, where Zonora's companionship is like a "fertile island in the barren sea" to lone Athanase.


The island in Shelley's poetry is sometimes viewed as one of the "secret places of the earth." In "Ode to Liberty," for example, the inaccessibility of the island is stressed. Shelley speaks of liberty's hiding to lament its ruin in "Hyrcanian glen or frozen hill, / Or piny promontory of the Arctic main, / Or utmost islet inaccessible" (VIII).

In actuality, Shelley was attracted to the idea of living on an island. In 1821 he writes: "My greatest content would be utterly to desert all human society. I would retire with you & our child to a solitary island in the sea, would build a boat, & shut upon my retreat the floodgates of the world" (*Letters*, II, 339); and perhaps wish-fulfillment is in operation in the advertisement for *Epipsychidion*: "The writer of the following Lines died at Florence, as he was preparing for a voyage to one of the wildest of the Sporades, which he had bought, and where he had fitted up the ruins of an old building, and where it was his hope to have realized a scheme of life, suited perhaps to that happier and better world of which he is now an inhabitant, but hardly practicable in this."

White (*Shelley*, II, 336) explains that *The Tempest* was Shelley's favorite play and David Lee Clark (*"Shelley and Shakespeare,"* *PMLA*, 54 [1939], 267) has traced parallels between *Epipsychidion*, 11. 422-62, and Prospero's isle in *The Tempest*.

Shelley's "To Jane: The Recollection" describes a similar paradisal scene. Although the setting is a forest, it is island-like. It "skirts the Ocean's foam" (l. 10) and has a kind of circularity: "the centre of / The magic circle there, / Was one fair form that filled with love /
The lifeless atmosphere" (IV).

154 Wilson, Shelley's Later Poetry, p. 179.

Shelley uses the island to represent political perfection in at least two other works. In Charles the First, Hampden sails from "the old and sinful world" to a new paradisal home where kings and religious oppression are non-existent; this home will be the "isles of the evening land" which he calls "floating Edens" (IV.22, 23). In Hellas, islands are referred to as "Paradise islands" (1. 1047) and "Kingly continents sinless as Eden" (1. 1052). In Hellas too, the islands/continents exist in an harmonious relation with the musical sapphire sea.

155 Sometimes, too, Shelley's attraction to the island image leads him to describe another favorite natural phenomenon, the evanescent cloud, as a solid island. In Hellas, the chorus sings, "Oh, bear me to those isles of jagged cloud / Which float like mountains on the earthquake" (ll. 957-58), and the Witch of Atlas has a throne "Upon those wandering isles of aery dew" (LIV).

156 Woodberry, ed., Works, p. 162.

157 It is not clear to me why, in symbolic terms, Asia's sisters can remain with Prometheus. In dramatic terms, they function appropriately to comfort Prometheus and to comment chorus-like on the drama, but in symbolic terms, it seems they should leave Prometheus as Asia does.

158 A less serious poem, "Love's Philosophy," shows in miniature Shelley's conception of the harmonious interaction of spatial levels as a result of love's power:

The fountains mingle with the river,  
And the rivers with the ocean;  
The winds of Heaven mix forever  
With a sweet emotion;  
Nothing in the world is single;  
All things by a law divine  
In one another's being mingle—  
Why not I with thine?

See the mountains kiss high Heaven,  
And the waves clasp one another;  
No sister flower would be forgiven  
If it disdained its brother;  
And the sunlight clasps the earth;  
And the moonbeams kiss the sea;
What are all these kissings worth,
If thou kiss not me? (Works, III, 299)

160 This is a distinction that Milton Wilson makes throughout his book Shelley's Later Poetry. Shelley's Platonism, he believes, leads to apocalyptic goals, whereas Shelley's radicalism (broadly defined) leads to millennial goals.
CHAPTER IV

A GIRDLE ROUND ABOUT THE EARTH:
KEATS AND SPACE

Biographical and Cultural Influences
on Keats's Space-Consciousness

In the second book of Endymion, the hero, weary after exploring the hollows of the world, rests only to discover that "when new wonders ceased to float before" him, "thoughts of self came on, how crude and sore / The journey homeward to habitual self!" (II.274-76). Keats's works often have a close relation to his own life, and in Endymion's dismay at his return to the self we can read Keats's own fear of the "habitual self," called in the appositive which follows "the bosom of a hated thing" (II.280). This fear of the enclosed subjective self leads in the early poetry to a reliance on what Keats would later view as the "escape" of the imagination and in the later poetry to the doctrine of empathy. Both approaches affect Keats's space-consciousness; both movements are centrifugal; both lead out of the self to more expansive or sometimes different spatial realms;
potentially both can lead to a transcendence of the mortal limitations of space and time.

The circumstances of Keats's personal life indicate readily why as a sensitive youth he would need to escape the conditions of his own life and either create a more desirable imaginary realm or possess through empathy the world of other beings or things. Although Keats can imagine himself mounting "upon wide spreading pinions / Far from the narrow bounds of thy [the world's] dominions" ("To my Brother George," ll. 105-6) or upon a peak in Darien surveying the wide Pacific ("On first looking into Chapman's Homer"), in reality his life was a constricted one. If not in the "city pent" ("To one who has been long in city pent"), he complains of being "confined" (Letters, I, 172) at various residences, of being "emprisoned" (Letters, I, 328) because of weather, of having a "little coffin of a room" (Letters, II, 141) or of a room like a "sepulchre" (Letters, II, 122). He calls himself a Hermit, almost "accustomed to the privations of the pleasures of sense learning to bear any thing, any misery, even imprisonment" (Letters, II, 186). Toward the end of Keats's life when he was actually confined because of his tuberculosis, the metaphor of imprisonment recurs frequently, but restriction had been a condition of his entire life. Financial problems prevented him from extensive
travelling, which was a desire he often expressed; the sickness of his brother Tom at times necessitated Keats's almost constant attention; and his own weak health, recurring colds and sore throats kept him inside. Freedom, Bernard Blackstone says, was a passion with Keats, one which led to the renunciation of his medical career and caused him to face poverty and scorn, yet he found himself in chains. The search for freedom is an obvious and almost obsessive urge in the lives and works of the Romantic poets; but while Byron and Shelley can speak of the chains of mortality, they did have a kind of personal freedom that Keats, for most of his life, never possessed.

One way Keats could possess a kind of freedom was to live, at least temporarily, in imagined spatial realms—the worlds created by Spenser and Milton. The possibility for this kind of spiritual freedom is explained in an early poem describing Hunt's free spirit as he lives in the imagined worlds of Spenser and Milton, although he is actually imprisoned for political offenses ("Written on the day that Mr. Leigh Hunt left Prison"); Keats believes he too can attain this kind of freedom and explains that "any one grand and spiritual passage serves him [man] as a starting post towards all 'the two-and thirty Pallaces'" (Letters, I, 231). Or he could live in his own created world, one created by the powers of
the imagination. This possibility he elucidates in a letter:

I feel more and more every day, as my imagination strengthens, that I do not live in this world alone but in a thousand worlds—No sooner am I alone than shapes of epic greatness are stationed around me, and serve my Spirit the office (of) which is equivalent to a king's body guard—then 'Tragedy, with scepter'd pall, comes sweeping by' According to my state of mind I am with Achilles shouting in the Trenches or with Theocritus in the Vales of Sicily. Or I throw my whole being into Triolus and repeating those lines, 'I wander, like a lost soul upon the stygian Banks staying for waftage,' I melt into the air with a voluptuousness so delicate that I am content to be alone . . . .

(Letters, I, 403-4)

Either way he could transcend the limitations of the self and extend the boundaries of the self into a spatial world as large or as undefined or as different from ordinary reality as he desired or needed.

Probably too the occasional constriction motif in Keats's poetry has a specific derivation in his illnesses and his brother's. The body-spirit dichotomy, often expressed in terms of constriction, is a common Romantic theme, but when Keats says in Endymion, for example, that a "prison / Of flesh and bone curbs, and confines, and frets / Our spirit's wings" (IV.20-22) or that Endymion is trapped in "dull mortality's harsh net" (III.907), he may be voicing a concern derived more from experience than from philosophical speculation. Certainly the use of the constriction motif expressed in terms of
suffocation and smothering has origins in Keats's illness. Hyperesthesia, Lewis J. Moorman claims, is typical of tubercular writers, and given the extraordinary number of references to breathing and smothering in Keats's works, one might assume this kind of hypersensitivity is typical too. We are not particularly surprised to find references to suffocating in Keats's letters after his tuberculosis became evident. What is surprising, however, is that suffocation plays an important and striking descriptive role in the poetry before his tuberculosis was detected. Keats has the peculiar way of describing space (real or imagined) by means of the quality of its air or lack of pure air—and thereby emphasizing its constriction—and by means of the way one breathes in it.

The Baldwin concordance lists over one hundred uses of "breath" and "breathe" and variations of the word, and about the same number of "air" and its variations. Over fifteen references occur to "smothering," "suffocation," and their variations. And of the latter group, few can be considered positive. The most notable examples of space defined by these qualities occur in Otho the Great and in Hyperion. In Otho the Great, Keats defines a constricted forest setting:

Ludolph. Must I stop here? Here solitary die? Stifled beneath the thick oppressive shade Of these dull boughs,—this oven of dark thickets,—
Silent,— without revenge?— pshaw!— bitter end,—
A bitter death,— a suffocating death,—
A gnawing— silent— deadly-quiet death!
Escap'd— fled— vanish'd— melted into air—
She's gone— I cannot catch her! no revenge!
A muffled death, ensnared in horrid silence!
Suck'd to my grave amid a dreary calm!
O, where is that illustrious noise of war,
To smother up this sound of labouring breath,
This rustle of the trees!
(V.1.18-30)

Similarly, the opening scene of Hyperion is characterized
by its oppressive lack of air. Saturn is "Deep in the
shady sadness of a vale / Far sunken from the healthy
breath of morn" (I.1-2); "Forest on forest hung about his
head" and "no stir of air was there" (I.6-7). The
description of the den of the fallen Titans, though
detailing various kinds of sensual claustration, also
emphasizes it in terms of suffocation; they

Were pent in regions of laborious breath;
Dungeon'd in opaque element, to keep
Their clenched teeth still clench'd, and all
their limbs
Lock'd up like veins of metal, cramp't and screw'd;
Without a motion, save of their big hearts
Heaving in pain, and horribly convuls'd
With sanguine feverous boiling gurge of pulse.
(II.22-28)

The sickness and the pain of the Titans in this passage is
automatically correlated with physical imprisonment and
suffocation. While imprisonment is often a literal
fact and an important symbol in many Romantic works,
only Keats defines claustral space in quite this manner.

Another aspect of Keats's personality which
undoubtedly influenced the space-consciousness in his
poetry was his intense concentration often resulting in a state of trance. While the word "trance" sometimes has negative connotations in Keats's poetry, it is the best word to describe the state of the individual who lacks apparent consciousness of the external world and who is yet intensely alive imaginatively and/or perceptually. Words like "mystical," "daemonic," or "visionary" to describe such an experience, while perhaps more precise, emphasize the effect of the trance-like state, tend to judge the quality of the experience, and do not allow for variations in what happens in the state of trance. In the state of trance, the restrictions of consciousness are removed and the mind is free to dwell on the real or to imagine the unreal. According to his friends and acquaintances and according to the evidence of his poetry, Keats did both. Joseph Severn commented that Keats "went again and again to see the Elgin Marbles, and would sit for an hour or more at a time beside them rapt in revery," once "with eyes shining so brightly and face so lit up by some visionary rapture" that Severn stole away without disturbing him. Charles Dilke claimed that Keats "could at any time have thought himself out of mind and body. Thought was intense with him and seemed at times to assume a reality that influenced his conduct . . . ." A fellow medical student recalled how "In a room, he [Keats] was always at the window, peering
What we might ordinarily think of as mere day-dreaming was, however, in Keats apparently much more intense and intimately related to the poetic process.

What happens in these trances, Keats explains in a letter to Reynolds:

I have an idea that a Man might pass a very pleasant life in this manner—let him on any certain day read a certain Page of full Poesy or distilled Prose and let him wander with it, and muse upon it, and reflect from it, and bring home to it, and prophesy upon it, and dream upon it—untill it becomes stale—but when will it do so? Never—When Man has arrived at a certain ripeness in intellect any one grand and spiritual passage serves him as a starting post towards all "the two-and thirty Pallaces" How happy is such a "voyage of conception," what delicious diligent Indolence! A doze upon a Sofa does not hinder it, and a nap upon Clover engenders ethereal finger-pointings—the prattle of a child gives it wings, and the converse of middle age a strength to beat them—a strain of musick conducts to 'an odd angle of the Isle' and when the leaves whisper it puts a 'girdle round the earth. Nor will this sparing touch of noble Books be any irreverance to their Writers—for perhaps the honors paid by Man to Man are trifles in comparison to the Benefit done by great Works to the 'Spirit and pulse of good' by their mere passive existence. Memory should not be called knowledge—Many have original Minds who do not think it—they are led away by Custom—Now it appears to me that almost any Man may like the Spider spin from his own inwards his own airy Citadel—the points of leaves and twigs on which the Spider begins her work are few and she fills the Air with a beautiful circuiting; man should be content with as few points to tip with the fine Webb of his Soul and weave a tapestry empyrean—full of Symbols for his spiritual eye, of softness for his
spiritual touch, of space for his wanderings
of distinctness for his luxury . . . .
(Letters, I, 231-32)

In this case, the trance would be activated by reading, not by staring at sculpture or gazing out the window. Keats calls it a "voyage of conception," the same kind of metaphor he uses to describe poetic activity. And indeed the two are similar with the exception that writing poetry calls the rational faculties into play as well. What is important here is that by means of the trance, Keats can, as he says in a later letter, live "in a thousand worlds" (Letters, I, 403). The retreat into self is a means out of the self; the trance can lead Keats to "two-and thirty Pallaces," to his "own airy Citadel," and can give him wings to inhabit a "space for his wandering." In an early poem, Keats describes the trance of a poet:

... when a Poet is in such a trance,
In air he sees white coursers paw, and prance,
Bestridden of gay knights, in gay apparel,
Who at each other tilt in playful quarrel,
And what we, ignorantly, sheet-lightning call,
Is the swift opening of their wide portal,
When the bright warder blows his trumpet clear,
Whose tones reach naught on earth but Poet's ear.
When these enchanted portals open wide,
And through the light the horsemen swiftly glide,
The Poet's eye can reach those golden halls,
And view the glory of their festivals.
Their ladies fair, that in the distance seem
Fit for the silv'ring of a seraph's dream . . . .
("To my Brother George," 11. 25-38)

The content of this flight of the imagination is literary;
the world is that of medieval romance. And like the experiences described in the letters, there is no suggestion that what the poet sees is other than fictional, for the enchanted world envisioned is that of coursers, knights in playful quarrel, and fair ladies, not any kind of Higher Reality. This is most often the case in Keats's poetry. We should perhaps remember his definition of his poetic practice: that he describes what he imagines as opposed to Byron who describes what he sees (Letters, II, 200). Keats reproduces in poetry the images of his mind. He may feel as if he has transcended time, space, and the restrictions of the physical, yet he has not really reached a transcendent and infinite realm. 20 Keats was, of course, concerned throughout his poetic career to define the nature of the imagination and its "truth." But in general, I think, the word "trance," if we think of it as highly intense day-dreaming and meditation, more adequately defines his imaginative activity than the terms we usually use to describe the imagination of Wordsworth, who when seized by it feels that "the light of sense goes out" and the ineffable is revealed, or the imagination of Shelley or Blake, who attribute to it apocalyptic powers.

If imaginative activity as Keats conceives of it is different from that of the other Romantics, we might expect differences in the kind and quality of space-
consciousness in Keats's works. As I have indicated, I believe when Keats or his characters are in the trance-like state, they feel as if winged, as if they had burst their "mortal bars." What is different from other Romantic poetry, however, is the spatial realm apprehended by means of the poetic trance. In spite of images of wings and poetic flight, there is in Keats's works almost no extended description of infinite or even vast cosmic space. Descriptions of space during these airy flights (and one only has to think of Byron's *Cain* or of Shelley's *Queen Mab* for contrast) are non-existent. For example, in a dream in the first book of *Endymion*, Endymion beholds the sky, the "doors of heaven" open for his flight, yet in this "airy trance" when he spreads his "imaginary pinions wide," he has no sense of infinite space, but instead drops his "vision to the horizon's verge" and gazes at the moon (I.572 ff.). In the fourth book, he travels through cosmic space on a winged steed, yet we are given no sense of what surrounds him. Similarly, Hyperion's journey from his palace to the Titan's den is omitted, Fancy's cloudward soaring yields only a variety of concrete earthly details ("Fancy"), and even Keats's own dream of being in Hell when he "floated about the whirling atmosphere" (*Letters*, II, 91) consisted, not of a sensuous awareness of that vast region, but rather a static union "with
a beautiful figure to whose lips [his] were joined at it seem'd for an age." The world Keats dreams of and creates is an enclosed fictional world. It is certainly not the infinite cosmos explored by science nor is it the infinite ideal or spiritual realm apprehended by the secular or religious visionary. It is an invention or metaphor of the mind.

The peculiar lack of interest in spatial relationships on a grand scale that is characteristic of Keats's letters and poetry is apparently typical of trances and day-dreams. Susanne Langer, comparing the medium of the film with dreams, claims that both lack a framework of fixed space; although dream events, she says, "are spatial--often intensely concerned with space--intervals, endless roads, bottomless canyons, things too high, too near, too far . . . they are not oriented in any total space." The space of dreams (and movies) "comes and goes." 23 It is "fixed space," I believe, that Keats's works lack; there is a kind of discontinuity from scene to scene; and without a sense of spatial relationships, it is unlikely that a total sense of vastness can be conveyed.

Aldous Huxley's generalizations about his drug-induced experiences also bear on this problem. Huxley claims that in his trance "spatial relationships had ceased to matter very much and [his] mind was perceiving
the world in other than spatial categories." Ordinary concerns like "where? how far? how situated in relation to what?" were irrelevant; in short, "place and distance cease[d] to be of much interest." Rather, during his mescaline-induced trance, the mind did "its perceiving in terms of intensity of existence, profundity of significance, relationships within a pattern . . . . The mind was primarily concerned, not with measures and locations, but with being and meaning." What Huxley says of his own experiences is not entirely true of Keats's—in spite of the fact that Huxley generalizes his experiences and compares them to those of "natural" visionary poets. We should, of course, allow for the eccentricity of the individual poet. What is primarily different is that Keats is often concerned with place and its concrete attributes; he is simply not concerned with place in relationship to other places. Vast fields rarely occur; perspectives are rarely described and backgrounds, middlegrounds, foregrounds are seldom described in close enough propinquity for them to compose a harmonious and continuous picture (not even in "I stood tip-toe upon a little hill," a poem which derives its initial impulse from the prospect poem). What is similar, however, is that Keats does perceive in "terms of intensity of experience." Furthermore, what is experienced and particularly what is described, correlate
not only to Huxley's experiences, but to those described by other visionaries. Huxley explains that in numerous and various literatures and folklores dealing with "other worlds" several classes of objects consistently recur, among which are precious stones (or bright glass), preternaturally brilliant flowers and patterned things—carpets, mosaics, and perhaps complicated and geometric buildings. The similarity of intensely significant objects, Huxley believes, is explained by the "psychological other world of visionary experience." Some of these intensely significant objects play an important role in Keats's visionary poetry. I am not suggesting that Keats would not have included these elements had he not gone into trances, but only that this particular kind of unconscious activity perhaps catalyzed their appearance. Flowers, of course, recur frequently in Keats; sometimes they occur primarily in catalogues of natural beauties. But in the early poetry especially, they are sometimes embued with much greater significance than we would expect. In *Endymion* for example, it is a "magic bed / Of sacred diatamy, and poppies red" (I.554-55) which, though part of a dream-like state, occasions further mental activity. In the "flowery spell," he muses:

*Perhaps, thought I, Morpheus,*
*In passing here, his owlet pinions shook;*
*Or, it may be, ere matron Night uptook*
Her ebon urn, young Mercury, by stealth,  
Had dipt his rod in it; such garland wealth  
Came not by common growth. Thus on I thought,  
Until my head was dizzy and distraught.  
Moreover, through the dancing poppies stole  
A breeze, most softly lulling to my soul;  
And shaping visions all about my sight  
Of colours, wings, and bursts of spangly light;  
The which became more strange, and strange, and dim,  
And then were gulph'd in a tumultuous swim;  
And then I fell asleep.

(I.559-72)²⁷

The caves and caverns of the second book of *Endymion*  
(II.221 ff. and II.593 ff.) are filled with various  
kinds of jewels and precious metals. The architectural  
element is also important in Keats's works, especially  
the longer ones. In addition to real temples and castles,  
natural areas like caves, chasms, and dens, are described  
in terms of architecture. What is important about  
these recurring classes of objects is that as objects  
they preclude a sense of orientation in any kind of  
total space. The objects themselves are isolated while  
they are concentrated upon; and often a passage itself  
will be isolated, followed only by another descriptive  
passage. Even the descriptions of architecture tend to  
work as isolated units and the architecture itself is  
enclosed. The trance-state allows for very careful  
concentration, for intensity, and for empathy;²⁸ and it  
invests the object focussed upon with a kind of  
absoluteness, but sometimes at the expense of a full and  
total spatial experience.
It is likely, then, that what is unique in Keats's sense of space derives essentially from eccentricities in his personality and physical make-up. Even when his space-consciousness and use of spatial symbols are typically Romantic, illustrating common Romantic themes, they seem to result naturally from the circumstances of his life and the unique psychology of his imagination.

Although Keats's own personality and psychology undoubtedly played the major role in the development of his space-consciousness, cultural influences are also important in that development. In the introduction to his edition of Keats's poetry, Ernest de Sélincourt comments:

Whilst each of his great contemporaries owed no little debt to the influence of a culture either inherited or acquired naturally from early surroundings, and to a wide and generous training which stimulated the mind from many sources, Keats was educated almost exclusively by the English poets. 29

What is true of influences on Keats's poetry as a whole is naturally true of the influences on his space-consciousness; the English poets, especially Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton, educated his imagination. While much Romantic poetry was influenced in varying degrees by these great writers, Keats's poetry often recreates the timeless, spaceless worlds of romance or the cosmic-mythic realms of Milton's prophetic works. Both romance and prophesy demand "created" space or a sense of space
in many ways radically different from empirical space.

As de Sélincourt claims, it is true too that these influences are almost exclusive; except for literature and art, few other cultural aspects inform Keats's space-consciousness. By contrast with Byron, he was unaffected by religion. Unlike Byron and Shelley, who were profoundly influenced by scientific thought, Keats seems almost untouched by it. We know that he read John Bonnycastle's *Introduction to Astronomy*, the last chapter of which contains a "vivid description of Herschel's discovery of the new planet Uranus," so vivid apparently that it suggested the metaphor in "On first looking into Chapman's Homer":

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Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken.
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(11. 9-10)

But the real science of astronomy contributes almost nothing to Keats's poetry. There is no evidence in his poetry or letters which indicates that he believed in or was even affected by the idea of an infinite universe. Only in *Hyperion*, admittedly the most cosmological of Keats's poems, is space mentioned in a way to suggest its vastness. Saturn, in that poem, asks Thea to search for his lost identity, to turn her eyes

```'Upon all space: space starr'd, and lorn of light;
'Space region'd with life-air; and barren void;
'Spaces of fire, and all the yawn of Hell.--
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(I.118-20)
But even in *Hyperion*, as in *Paradise Lost*, the number of stars is limited—"stars by thousands" (III.109). And in many of Keats's poems, the sky's expanse is also limited: in *Endymion* he refers to "heaven's airy dome" (IV.38) and its "starry roof" (IV.491); in "Hence, Burgundy, Claret, and Port" the sky is a "bowl" (l. 7) from which his eye drinks; in "To my Brother George," it is a "blue dome" (l. 5); and in "I stood tip-toe upon a little hill," he refers to the "blue fields of heaven" (l. 10) which become implicitly a bowl when he refers to the "dwindled edgings of its [the horizon's] brim" (l. 18). Domes, roofs, bowls—all imply a closed universe.

For the most part, Keats's references to the heavens are either tinged with astrological or mythological lore or bear the imprint of the "old" astronomy, which he would have found in the Renaissance writers he read so avidly. Heavenly bodies are mythologized, notably in *Endymion* with Cynthia, the moon, and in *Hyperion*, with the sun its eponymous hero. In *Endymion*, too, the song Endymion hears in the Cave of Quietude describes at length the procession of guests at Cynthia's wedding; all are mythical figures, many of which are associated with stars (Aquarius or Ganymede, Castor and Pollux or the Gemini, for example). In short, the sky holds for Keats, as he says in "When I have fears that I may cease to be," "huge cloudy symbols of a high
He can refer unabashedly to the music of the spheres (in "To Kosciusko," ll. 3-4) and praise Milton as "Scholar of the Spheres" (in "Lines on seeing a Lock of Milton's Hair," l. 2), for his sensitivity to outer space is totally unscientific. This is not to say that he is uninterested in outer space or its heavenly bodies, for the moon pervades his poetry, stars recur, and the sky itself often serves as inspiration; however, these elements occur as mythical realities, sometimes as symbols, not as elements of a scientifically ordered and conceived universe.

Other sciences, too, seem to have left few imprints on Keats's works. His knowledge of medicine plays a miniscule role in his poetry, and had it played a larger role, it is unlikely that it would have influenced his space-consciousness. There are passing geological references—in Hyperion, Enceladus, god of wrath and of volcanoes, plots rebellion and "even now / Was hurling mountains in that second war" (II.69-70) and he imagines "world on world upon these [his own] shoulders piled" (II.313); these, of course, mythologize geological fact. And there are two other important references. Seeing Ailsa Rock "with the peculiar perspective of the Sea in connection with the ground [he] stood on, and the misty rain then falling gave [him] a complete Idea of a deluge" (Letters, I, 329); this "Idea" is transformed
in his sonnet "To Ailsa Rock," which condenses the geological eras the rock has lived through, reminding him of eternal time, past and present:

Hearken, thou craggy ocean pyramid!  
Give answer from thy voice, the sea-fowls' screams!  
When were thy shoulders mantled in huge streams?  
When from the sun was thy broad forehead hid?  
How long is't since the mighty Power bid  
Thee heave to airy sleep from fathom dreams?  
Sleep in the lap of thunder or sunbeams,  
Or when grey clouds are thy cold coverlid?  
Thou answer'st not; for thou art dead asleep;  
Thy life is but two dead eternities--  
The last in air, the former in the deep;  
First with the whales, last with the eagle-skies--  
Drown'd wast thou till an earthquake made thee steep,  
Another cannot wake thy giant size.

Similarly in Endymion, Keats telescopes time showing how history is preserved on the bottom of the sea. The passage begins (III.123) with a description of human historical evidence and ends with the "secrets" of the deep--the "skeletons" "Of beast, behemoth, and leviathan,  
And elephant, and eagle, and huge jaw / Of nameless monster" (III.134-36). Both of these references say more about Keats's time-consciousness, however, than about his space-consciousness. They do indicate something of Keats's fascination with the deep, as is also evidenced by the subterranean and undersea worlds of Endymion, but for the most part these worlds are so highly imagined that it is difficult to see how a knowledge of geology contributed in any significant way to their realization. It is probably safe to say, as
Lamia seems to indicate, that science and poetry exist in disparate worlds. Even when the imagination "uses" scientific fact, it transforms it, mythologizes it, imbues it with the mystery of the unknown and unreal. 42

The only cultural influences which affect Keats's space-consciousness profoundly are literary and artistic. Keats's knowledge of art and debts to it are well-known, particularly since Ian Jack's exhaustive study, Keats and the Mirror of Art. 43 Of the artistic influences, many must have contributed to the development of Keats's space-consciousness as we see it in his poetry, but because it was primarily through his reading of literature that he saw how the arts were "sisters," my discussion of artistic influences is merged with that of art in literature. Literature, too, was the earlier influence, touching Keats from the first moments he wrote poetry. 44 His "sources," usually assimilated thoroughly, are important not for particular details but for their effect on the ways he visualized and created space in his poetry.

Keats's early reading included such works as Robinson Crusoe, Arabian Nights, Vathek, the Aeneid, the Metamorphosis, the novels of Mrs. Radcliff and "Monk" Lewis, and the works of Spenser, Milton, and Shakespeare (especially his romances). What appealed to the young Keats particularly was the imaginary world
depicted in these books, one which was often radically different in spatial terms from the ordinary world. For example, there are the mazes and labyrinths of Gothic romance, imported into the subterranean exploration of Endymion; there are flights to heaven and undersea exploration which Sidney Colvin notes are familiar in the medieval and Renaissance romances that Keats had probably read. Submarine, subterranean, and heavenly wanderings could have come from many of the books he read. What is important is that Keats’s early reading set this precedent for him: the imagination lived in an enchanted and marvellous world, one in which the geometry, indeed the physics or the biology of the ordinary world does not apply. Gravity, for example, is irrelevant and oxygen is unnecessary under water. This imaginary world is rarely governed by the space-time concepts of empirical reality.

Without doubt, the writer who most strongly influenced the young Keats was Spenser. Cowden Clarke, who introduced the eighteen-year-old Keats to poetry by way of Spenser, recalled that Keats went through The Faerie Queene “like a young horse through a spring meadow—ramping.” The placeless, timeless world of The Faerie Queene had undeniable effects on the development of Keats’s conceptions and depictions of space, effects which culminated in Endymion. But even Keats’s
first poem, "Imitation of Spenser," indicates how the influence affected him. This poem depicts a pastoral scene complete with kingfisher, swan, and fish; in spite of Keats's later interest in architecture and artificial beauties, Keats would continue for the most part to describe rural rather than urban space. The imitation also forecasts his later interest in levels of space for it describes the sunrise, coerulean sky, and clouds; the earth's hills, bowers, and waters; and briefly the fish and their reflection below the surface of the lake. But unlike the magical world of Spenser's poems, the world of Keats's imitation is not that of a mythical fairyland, even though Keats does fictionalize his scene by saying "so fair a place was never seen, / Of all that ever charm'd romantic eye" (11. 23-24) and by wishing that he could "tell the wonders of an isle" (1. 19) so that Dido and Lear could be comforted.

In *Endymion*, however, Keats does create a magical imagined world replete with the wonders of the romance genre. In it his imagination, like Spenser's, is given free play. Keats praised the Elizabethans because they were "emperors of vast Provinces," not like the moderns who governed their "petty state[s]" and because they were "Eagles" not "owls" (*Letters, I, 224*). In *Endymion* Keats becomes like the visionary "Eagle" soaring over the vast and varied province that he has
created, one which encompasses earth, its subterranean hollows, undersea regions, and the heavens. The wanderings of Endymion are as lengthy and as complicated as those of Spenser's heroes and heroines, the underground spaces of Book II are more labyrinthine and complex than Spenser's maze-like Cave of Mammon, and the "Province" of Keats's poem seems both vertically and horizontally more vast than that of his poetic predecessor.

The vertical vastness of Keats's "Province" results from the fact that he uses the traditional fourfold hierarchy of symbolism much more literally than Spenser does. Whereas the action of The Faerie Queene takes place in the realm of Faerie, the second world in the traditional structure of symbolism, and whereas Spenser only alludes to the top level, heaven (in the Mutabilitie Cantos) and only presents the third and fourth worlds (the worlds of history and ordinary experience and the daemonic world, respectively) through allegory, Keats presents a much more schematic cosmos. Although Endymion begins in the second world, the world of Faerie, Endymion travels both "down" to Glaucus's undersea world, the approximation of Hell, and "up" to the moon goddess's realm, the approximation of Heaven. The scenic levels of Endymion change, while usually in The Faerie Queene, beings, especially daemonic ones, enter the world of Faerie from other levels. These
are discrete levels or modes of being until the end of the poem when Endymion from his "mortal state" is "spiritualized" and the forest in which he and Phoebe will dwell presumably will be spiritualized as well, so that level two, the innocent pastoral Faerie world, is transformed into the topmost level, Keats's vision of heaven.

Space also has similar functions in *Endymion* and *The Faerie Queene*. Space is the medium through which man operates just as being "free of space" (*Endymion* I.780) is the condition of spiritualization and a "oneness" in which man's "state / Is like a floating spirit's" (*Endymion* I.796-97). But it is through man's awareness of space, particularly as a traveller, that he can progress, be educated, and feel unity—with himself, with others, or with some higher being or principle. For both Spenser and Keats, the story of the pilgrimage or the quest is important, for it provides a metaphor for life. The journey of life in Spenser's works is of course conceived in Christian terms (the wayfaring Christian makes a pilgrimage through life with heaven as his ultimate goal), whereas in Keats's works the journey is secularized. But in both, the journey is necessary and positive. "Imagination's struggles" (*Endymion* II.155) are literalized through Endymion's wanderings just as moral trials and development are presented through
Spenser's heroes' travels. Intensity or "feel[ing] existence" (II.158) is the positive result of "long toil and travelling" (II.145), though the ultimate "spiritualization" of Endymion is a much more positive result, just as knowing existence in moral terms is the positive effect Spenser illustrates. Caves, hollows, mazes, labyrinthine woods, wildernesses—all further the progress and growth of man.

Keats may have learned ways of depicting space from Spenser as well. Of Spenser's works, The Faerie Queene in particular is notable for its pictorial qualities and its formal set pieces. Keats was apparently struck by these qualities from the beginning for in his "Imitation of Spenser" he attempts neither story nor allegory but only description of a place. Throughout Keats's career, regardless of changes in poetic styles, philosophy, or particular influence, he continued to paint verbal pictures. Although Keats's interest in the art of painting certainly contributed to his attempts to create verbal paintings, it was undoubtedly Spenser's poetic art which provided the initial impetus. Perhaps the most striking pictorial effect in Endymion, itself derived from The Faerie Queene, occurs in the second book (II. 387-427) when Keats describes Adonis in a "chamber, myrtle wall'd, embowered high" (II.389), on a silken couch; Adonis's appearance and position are described
as well as what surrounds him so that the picture is complete, detailed, and self-enclosed. This technique occurs frequently in Endymion. For example, at the beginning of the poem (11. 135 ff.), Keats describes in a pageant-like manner (again reminiscent of Spenser) the series of worshippers with careful directions to orient them in space and to create a formal scene. While these two scenes are particularly striking in the accumulation of pictorial detail which goes to complete the entire picture (the initial description of Glaucus should perhaps be added to this list), throughout Endymion less complete pictures occur. The net effect of this poetic technique is a strange kind of discontinuity in the total poem. Although each picture may be detailed, each seems isolated from the other and therefore space often seems discontinuous in the poem. We can, for example, plot the course of Byron's journey in Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, partly because he is dealing with actual, not mythical geography, but often in Endymion we have difficulty following Endymion from scene to scene because we lack a sense of movement from one scene to the next.59

While Spenser was one of the most important early influences on Keats, Shakespeare was the most pervasive. Keats first read Shakespeare's works (particularly the romances) with Clarke, and he continued to read and re-read the plays almost obsessively until his death.60
Scholars have located a great many verbal reminiscences of Shakespeare in Keats's poetry; his letters are filled with quotes from and references to Shakespeare; he studied carefully Hazlitt's criticism of the plays and wrote himself several reviews of Shakespearean productions; and his developing "philosophy" of empathy depends largely on his understanding of Shakespeare's poetic methods. Much of what Keats admired and emulated in Shakespeare's works is not relevant to Keats's space-consciousness; furthermore, it is sometimes difficult to pinpoint the direct influence on Keats's space-consciousness of any particular writer, Shakespeare included. But a few generalizations can be advanced.

The first plays Keats read were the romances, *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* and *The Tempest*. Just as the fairyland atmosphere of *The Faerie Queene* was appealing to him, so too were the enchanted settings of these plays. It is quite clear from Keats's underlinings and marginal notes in his copy of *The Tempest* and *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* that he is particularly drawn to the created, or imaginary, space of those plays. His intense interest in the scene, in the picture it would make, is evident in the fact that he underlined nearly all the stage directions and many of the long speeches, many of which are vividly descriptive, and in the fact that he "borrowed" pictures from the plays on occasion (Spurgeon
notes, for example, the pictorial resemblance between
A Midsummer-Night's Dream III.ii.203-8 and Endymion
I.431-35). Similarly, Keats's marginalia beside
Dr. Johnson's comments, which were included in Keats's
text of the plays, show his bias. Dr. Johnson's comment
after A Midsummer-Night's Dream, for example, reads:

Wild and fantastical as this play is, all
the parts in their various modes are well written,
and give the kind of pleasure which the author
designed. Fairies in his time were much in
fashion; common tradition had made them familiar,
and Spenser's poem had made them great.65

Keats crossed out the entire comment, wrote "Fie" before
Johnson's name, and added apt quotations from the play to
express his indignation at Johnson's criticism:

"Such tricks hath weak imagination.
To kill cankers in the Musk rose buds.
The clamorous Owl that hoots at our quaint Spirits.
Newts and blind worms do no wrong
Come not near our faery queen . . . . 66

Shakespeare's strong imagination was to Keats one which
could create a fairyland, one which could imagine space-
defying Puck "put[ting] a girdle round about the earth /
In forty minutes,"67 or an Ariel willing "to fly, / To
swim, to dive into the fire, to ride / On the curl'd
clouds"68 (both lines are underlined and marked with a
single bar in the margin of Keats's copy of the plays).
Whether or not Keats wrote the review in The Champion
of December 28, 1817, until recently attributed to him,69
its sentiments are certainly his. The reviewer says:
The poetry of Shakespeare is generally free as is the wind—a perfect thing of the elements, winged and sweetly coloured. Poetry must be free! It is of the air, not of the earth; and the higher it soars the nearer it gets to its home. The poetry of "Romeo and Juliet," of "Hamlet," of "Macbeth," is the poetry of Shakespeare's soul—full of love and divine romance. It knows no stop in its delight, but "goeth where it listeth"—remaining, however, in all men's hearts a perpetual and golden dream.70

The reviewer in this essay contrasts the romantic Shakespeare with the Shakespeare of the history plays, in which the poetry is "ironed and manacled with a chain of facts, and cannot get free; it cannot escape from the prison house of history, nor often move without our being disturbed with the clanking of its fetters."71

The distinction can be seen at least in part as one between literal or "real" space and created or imagined space. In the former, myth, superstition, the improbable, the romantic, have no place, while in the latter the poet is free to break out of ordinary space-bound, time-bound, matter-bound conceptions and create the ghosts, witches, fairies, and magicians who frequent these realms. In A Midsummer-Night's Dream, Theseus makes a similar distinction between "cool reason" and "shaping fantasies"; his lines express a concept of the imagination and its powers which Keats would agree with:

The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;
And as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shapes and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name. 72

Poets are not confined to the earth of ordinary rational
men, for the boundaries of space do not exist to the
imagination; poets create space by naming and describing
the fantasies of their imagination. The charioteer, as
Hunt noted, in Keats's "Sleep and Poetry" is in part
derived from this concept of the imagination, as
expressed by Theseus; 73 and Endymion, written during one
of Keats's re-readings of The Tempest and A Midsummer-
Night's Dream, owes its entire ambience to the "freedom"
of Shakespeare's romances.

Throughout Keats's career, he must have been
impressed with the vastness of conception in Shakespeare's
works. Finney quotes Clarke's description of Keats's
emotional reaction to poetry:

"It was a treat to see as well as hear him read
a pathetic passage. Once, when reading the
'Cymbeline' aloud, I saw his eyes fill with
tears, and his voice faltered when he came to
the departure of Posthumus, and Imogen saying
she would have watched him—
'Till the diminution
Of space had pointed him sharp as my needle;
Nay followed him till he had melted from
The smallness of a gnat to air; and then
Have turn'd mine eye and wept."74

This passage which so impressed the young Keats presents
a striking sense of distance and perspective. Later in
Keats's career, he was moved by another passage in
Shakespeare which also conveys a sense of space and
perspective; it was the passage in *King Lear* (IV.vi.4 ff.) beginning with the disguised Edgar's question to Gloucester, "Hark, do you hear the sea?" and continuing with his description of the imaginary scene below him:

Come on, sir; here's the place; stand still. How fearful.

And dizzy 'tis, to cast one's eyes so low!
The crows and choughs that wing the midway air
Show scarce so gross as beetles; half way down
Hangs one that gathers samphire, dreadful trade!
Methinks he seems no bigger than his head:
The fishermen, that walk upon the beach,
Appear like mice; and yond tall anchoring bark,
Diminish'd to her cock, her cock, a buoy
Almost too small for sight: the murmuring surge,
That on the unnumber'd idle pebbles chafes,
Cannot be heard so high. I'll look no more;
Lest my brain turn, and the deficient sight
Topple down headlong.75

Keats wrote from the Isle of Wight that he had "been rather narvus--and the passage in Lear--'Do you not hear the Sea?'--[had] haunted [him] intensely" (*Letters*, I, 132).

In this same letter to Reynolds he enclosed his own sonnet "On the Sea." What he does in that poem, inspired by his own sight of the sea from a "cleft"--described earlier in the same letter--and inspired by the passage from *King Lear*, is to combine Edgar's suggestion of hearing the murmur of the sea with Edgar's description of the imagined vast approach to the sea. Keats focusses on the sea itself, describing it primarily in terms of its aural qualities--"whisperings" and "shadowy sound."

But a "mood" of vastness, temporal (he calls the whisperings "eternal") as well as spatial, pervades the
poem, and he mentions specifically the "wideness of the Sea" and the "twice ten thousand caverns" its swells glut. Although Keats had described the sea before and would do so again, none of his descriptions have the awe-inspiring grandeur and vastness that this brief sonnet, catalyzed by his brooding on King Lear, conveys.

Whereas Spenser and Shakespeare influenced Keats's earliest work, Milton's influence was felt somewhat later. At Enfield with Clarke, he had read Paradise Lost, as well as Comus, Lycidas, Il Penseroso, and L'Allegro. But it was not until late 1817 when he began seriously re-reading Paradise Lost with Benjamin Bailey and later with Charles Dilke that the influence of Milton was felt in any important way.

For some of the same reasons that Keats admired Spenser and Shakespeare, he also admired Milton. Like them, Milton was an "emperor of vast Provinces." He was, Keats says, explaining how Milton's blindness added to the "magnitude of his conceptions," like "a bat in a large gothic vault." Mixed metaphors notwithstanding, Keats talks consistently of the "world of its own" that Milton's imagination created, a world impressively vast. He praises specifically several lines from the third book of Paradise Lost for the "grand Perspective" in the descriptions first of heaven and then of hell. He first quotes lines 135-37, "Thus while God spake
ambrosial fragrance filled / All Heaven, and in the blessed Spirits elect / Sense of new joy ineffable diffused," and then adds, "Hell is finer than this" (and he is right if the "grand Perspective" is his point), quoting lines 487-89: "A violent crosswind from either coast / Blows them transverse to thousand leagues awry, / Into the devious air." What, finally, Keats's "Notes on Milton's Paradise Lost" do is praise Milton for his use of what is ordinarily called "the sublime." Keats is struck by the power and magnificence of the poem, by the immensity or vastness of its descriptions, by its intensity, particularly the intensity of the terror it evokes. For example, he singles out for comment the lines describing Satan's entering the serpent (Paradise Lost IX.179-91) saying:

Whose spirit does not ache at the smothering and confinement— the unwilling stillness— the "waiting close"? Whose head is not dizzy at the possible speculations of Satan in the serpent prison? No passage of poetry ever can give a greater pain of suffocation.

In almost every instance the qualities he comments on are the counters used in establishing "the sublime." And in many instances what Keats focuses on is Milton's power in both creating an imaginary spatial world (or worlds) and evoking a sense of space.

Milton's influence on Keats's depiction of space is notable in several ways. While Endymion uses the
four-level classical topocosm, Hyperion, influenced by Milton, uses this schema most effectively. At the beginning of the poem Saturn is seen on earth after his Fall; later he descends to the realm of the Titans, Keats's representation of Hell. Hyperion's cloud palace corresponds to Heaven while the earth Apollo will rule is rejuvenated, signalling the return to the beautiful Golden Age. Keats works variations on the myth of the Fall (for example, Apollo has superior knowledge and an awareness of suffering), but he still retains the essential features of Milton's symbolic cosmos. But while Keats uses this four-level schema and sets up a vast arena encompassing heights and depths, unlike the "old Scholar of the Spheres" ("Lines on seeing a Lock of Milton's Hair," 1. 2), Keats is uninterested in describing infinite realms, cosmic space, or spherey regions. For example, he only tells us that Hyperion "plung'd all noiseless into the deep night" (I.357); never is that journey through deep night depicted. On the other hand, Keats was clearly impressed by Milton's descriptions of Hell, for in his "Notes" the passages he selects most often for commentary portray Hell. So, too, the passages in Hyperion that we find most striking in their sense of space are those about hellish depths, descriptions which owe their inspiration to Milton's vividly realized sense of Hell.
The influence of Milton also helped to confirm in
Keats's works a particular trait in dealing with space:
stationing. In Keats's "Notes," he says:

Milton in every instance pursues his
imagination to the utmost—he is "sagacious
of his Quarry," he sees Beauty on the wing,
pounces upon it and gorges it to the
producing his essential verse. "So from
the root springs lighter the green stalk."
&c. But in no instance is this sort of
perseverance more exemplified, than in what
may be called his stationing or statuary.
He is not content with simple description,
he must station,—thus here we not only see
how the Birds "with clang despised the
ground," but we see them "under a cloud in
prospect." So we see Adam "Fair indeed,
and tall—under a plantane"—and so we see
Satan "disfigured—on the Assyrian Mount."
This last with all its accompaniments, and
keeping in mind the Theory of Spirits' eyes
and the simile of Galileo, has a dramatic
vastness and solemnity fit and worthy to hold
one amazed in the midst of this Paradise
Lost.85

We have seen how the pictorialism of Spenser influenced
Keats's descriptions in Endymion. In Milton's works, it
was the sculptural element, apparently, that impressed
him.86 Keats's examples could be better chosen, I
suspect, since it is difficult, for example, to imagine
clouds or plantanes in stone or plaster. Nonetheless,
what he is intrigued by is sculpture or the arrangement
of space by a single object or closely-knit group, not
the spatial enclosure organized by painting. There are
important differences between the two, although the
differences become less important when each is transformed
through a verbal medium. Paintings organize space while sculpture dominates or even creates it, partly of course because it is three-dimensional. Susanne Langer's explanation is helpful; she says that sculpture is "essentially volume, not scene," and she continues:

The volume, however, is not a cubic measure, like the space in a box. It is more than the bulk of the figure; it is a space made visible, and is more than the area which the figure actually occupies. The tangible form has a complement of empty space that it absolutely commands, that is given with it and only with it, and is, in fact, part of the sculptural volume. The figure itself seems to have a sort of continuity with the emptiness around it, however much its solid masses may assert themselves as such. The void enfolds it, and the enfolding space has vital form as a continuation of the figure.

A piece of sculpture is a center of three-dimensional space. It is a virtual kinetic volume, which dominates a surrounding space, and this environment derives all proportions and relations from it, as the actual environment does from one's self. The work is the semblance of a self, and creates the semblance of a tactual space--and, moreover, a visual semblance. It effects the objectification of self and environment for the sense of sight. Sculpture is literally the image of kinetic volume in sensory space.87

While a painting may center certain objects, the painting cannot extend beyond its frame nor effect a sense of continuity of space, even though a painter may try to create this sense by a disappearing perspective. An object in a painting cannot "command" space in quite the way sculpture can; furthermore, sculpture is not merely visual since it has both the suggestion of motion and a
real tactile quality. In short, sculpture is a more powerful spatial creation than painting by virtue of the fact that it creates its own space and is the center of that space. Keats must intuitively have recognized these differences when he equated the word "stationing" with the word "statuary." Stationing seems to imply not only three dimensions but also powerful focussing, not merely the center of an enclosed space (i.e., a picture) but the center of a space which extends outward. Additionally, while painting has the advantage of color and detail, the tactile element implicit in sculpture must have appealed to Keats, whose descriptions so often use and combine various senses.

The differences between these two media when both are transformed through words are not so obvious. However, two long passages may illustrate some differences and indicate as well how the influences of Milton and Spenser differed. The first passage is from the Spenserian poem *Endymion*:

He [Endymion] saw far in the concave green of the sea
An old man sitting calm and peacefully.
Upon a weeded rock this old man sat,
And his white hair was awful, and a mat
Of weeds were cold beneath his cold thin feet;
And, ample as the largest winding-sheet,
A cloak of blue wrapp'd up his aged bones,
O'erwrought with symbols by the deepest groans
Of ambitious magic: every ocean-form
Was woven in with black distinctness; storm,
And calm, and whispering, and hideous roar,
Quicksand, and whirlpool, and deserted shore
Were emblem'd in the woof, with every shape
That skims, or dives, or sleeps, 'twixt cape
and cape.
The gulphing whale was like a dot in the spell,
Yet look upon it, and 'twould size and swell
To its huge self; and the minutest fish
Would pass the very hardest gazer's wish,
And shew his little eye's anatomy.
Then there was pictur'd the regality
Of Neptune; and the sea nymphs round his state,
In beauteous vassalage, look up and wait.
Beside this old man lay a pearly wand,
And in his lap a book, the which he conn'd
So stedfastly, that the new denizen
Had time to keep him in amazed ken,
To mark these shadowings, and stand in awe.

(III.191-217)

The passage, because it locates Glaucus at a distance,
seems to have the small scale of a picture. The viewer's
perspective is then altered to a closer range when Keats
describes the details on the cloak (suggestive of the
careful detailing of tapestries and apparel in the
paintings of Pre-Raphaelite admirers of Keats). While
the details do admittedly have a kinetic quality, perhaps
similar to several frames in a motion picture, they are
quite different from the massiveness of sculptural
details and still seem two-dimensional. But most
important, the entire passage creates the illusion of a
picture, a scene. The focussing is so totally on the
minute pictorial details that the picture is enclosed and
framed; no sense of space (either of vastness or
constriction) is conveyed after the first line in the
quoted passage. 89

A contrasting passage from Hyperion shows how
Milton's technique of stationing creates a totally different spatial effect from Spenser's pictorialism:

In pale and silver silence they remain'd,
Till suddenly a splendour, like the morn,
Pervaded all the beetling gloomy steeps,
All the sad spaces of oblivion,
And every gulf, and every chasm old,
And every height, and every sullen depth,
Voiceless, or hoarse with loud tormented streams:
And all the everlasting cataracts,
And all the headlong torrents far and near,
Mantled before in darkness and huge shade,
Now saw the light and made it terrible.
It was Hyperion—a granite peak
His bright feet touch'd, and there he stay'd to view
The misery his brilliance had betray'd
To the most hateful seeing of itself.
Golden his hair of short Numidian curl,
Regal his shape majestic, a vast shade
In midst of his own brightness, like the bulk
Of Memnon's image at the set of sun
To one who travels from the dusking East:
Sighs, too, as mournful as that Memnon's harp
He utter'd, while his hands contemplative
He press'd together, and in silence stood.

(II. 356-78) 90

In this passage Hyperion is the focus point, just as Glaucus was in the passage above. He is "stationed" on a "granite peak" which recalls Keats's praise of Milton's line describing Satan "disfigured—on the Assyrian Mount." But the stationing of Hyperion seems quite different in spatial terms from the close focussing on Glaucus. There is much more dynamism in his pose, which again recalls the arrested motion of sculpture, for he has just landed on the peak and has not yet moved from his commanding pose. Furthermore, he is not enclosed by space as in a picture; rather, space moves outward from him. Just as
sculpture creates its own space and dominates it, so too does the statue-like Hyperion. We are reminded of the vast spaces which extend beyond him—gulfs, chasms, depths, heights, torrents far and near—which his presence pervades and of which he is the center. Even the details describing his form are sculptural outlines only (excepting the quality of light and color), unlike the minute pictorial details of Glaucus's cloak. Verbal sculpture and pictorialism, then, produce different kinds of space-consciousness.

Keats's interest in the sculpturesque quality of verbal descriptions was rather short-lived, as was his specific indebtedness to Milton. Like painting, sculpture would have had its limitations for the sensuously aware Keats. Neither painting nor sculpture held the possibility for defining space in all its variety—in its aural or olfactory qualities, for example. Keats was simply being true to his various inner urges when he tired of imitating Milton and proceeded to trace his own course. Nonetheless, it has been important to examine the variety of ways the great tradition of English poetry, especially that of Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton, affected the aspiring Keats. It is commonly recognized that Keats borrowed details, phrasing, and stylistic qualities from these great poets; it should be recognized as well that Keats's creation of space, both in its
details and in its mythic character, derives from this same tradition of romance and myth.

Keats's Apprehension and Creation of Space

As we have seen earlier, the picturesque tradition exerted a powerful influence on the works of the Romantic poets. Since this tradition had established the legitimacy and importance of natural space in poetry and had influenced crucially the ways a poet would both perceive and create space, each of the Romantic poets had to deal with it—reject it, transform it, or transcend it. Keats's rejection of this tradition and his reasons for that rejection illuminate the essential qualities of his apprehension and creation of space, that is, his multi-sensuous or synaesthetic awareness of space.

In the summer of 1819, Keats called himself "an old Stager in the picturesque" (Letters, II, 135) and indeed his life had fitted him to be a practitioner of the art of the picturesque. He was raised in the country surrounded by the gentler aspects of the picturesque—cornfields, meadows, sloping hills, and copses. It is obvious that he appreciated this gentler side of nature as well as its particulars, especially birds and flowers. Later in his various residences at Margate, or on the Isle of Wight, or at Teignmouth (Devon), he was deeply impressed with the
scenery and was always aware of his immediate surroundings, describing them in detail in his letters. He was anxious to travel to Scotland and Europe, "to see the Kingdoms of the Earth and the glory of them" (Letters, I, 268), "to clamber through the Clouds and exist" (Letters, I, 264), "to gorge wonders" (Letters, I, 268), to "get such an accumulation of stupendous recollections [sic] that as [he] walk[ed] through the suburbs of London [he might] not see them" (Letters, I, 264). When he did finally tour the Lake Country and Scotland with Charles Brown, his letters are filled with descriptions of the awe-inspiring sights he saw--prospects, mountains, caverns, and waterfalls, but with the copious descriptions are also statements expressing his dislike of them ("descriptions are bad at all times" and "For myself I hate descriptions" [Letters, I, 301; II, 198]) and apologies for his inadequacy at description, the most humorous of which I quote:

I'll not run over the Ground we have passed, that would be merely as bad as telling a dream--unless perhaps I do it in the manner of the Laputan printing press--that is I put down Mountains, Rivers Lakes, dells, glens, Rocks, and Clouds, With beautiful enchanting, gothic picturesque fine, delightful, enchanting, Grand, sublime--a few Blisters &c--and now you have our journey thus far . . . . (Letters, I, 322)

After this introduction, he begins to describe seriously.
Throughout the letters about his tour, Keats is perfectly aware of his position as a typical tourist. He had predicted his reaction before the journey:

... I am going among Scenery whence I intend to tip you the Damosel Radcliffe—I'll cavern you, and grotto you, and waterfall you, and wood you, and water you, and immense-rock you, and tremendous sound you, and solitude you.

(Letters, I, 245)

Afterwards, he says that he has been "worry romantic indeed, among these Mountains & Lakes" (Letters, I, 360) and that his "Scotch jou[r]ney gave [him] a doze of the Picturesque with which [he] ought to be contented for some time" (Letters, II, 52). His humorous self-deprecation and his hesitancy to describe the sights (even though he does it in great detail in the letters) result from more than self-consciousness, more than a realization that verbal description is inadequate to the task, and more than a reaction to too much of the picturesque. While Keats the man was certainly impressed with the picturesque scenes, Keats the poet was not sure.

What may seem strange is that Keats's poems written before his tour of the Lake Country and Scotland seem to have more of the "picturesque" than those written after it. "I stood tip-toe upon a little hill," for example, derives in part from eighteenth-century prospect poems. Lines like the following were commonplace:

There was wide wand’ring for the greediest eye,  
To peer about upon variety;
Far round the horizon's crystal air to skim,
And trace the dwindled edgings of its brim;
To picture out the quaint, and curious bending:
Of a fresh woodland alley, never ending;
Or by the bowery clefts, and leafy shelves,
Guess where the jaunty streams refresh themselves.
(ll. 15-22)

Similarly, "Calidore. A Fragment" presents a prospect,
"a sweet spot of earth" (1. 25), complete with lonely
turret, the stock-in-trade "ruin," appropriately placed
for the "goodliest view" (1. 24). Even Endymion, more
mythological and pictorial than "picturesque," has
reminiscences of the loco-descriptive tradition.

Intermingled with myth we find lines like these:

Beyond the matron-temple of Latona,
Which we should see but for these darkening boughs,
Lies a deep hollow, from whose ragged brows
Bushes and trees do lean all round athwart,
And meet so nearly, that with wings outraught,
And spreaded tail, a vulture could not glide
Past them, but he must brush on every side,
Some moulderd steps lead into this cool cell,
Far as the slabbed margin of a well,
Whose patient level peeps its crystal eye
Right upward, through the bushes, to the sky.
(1. 862-72)

But these examples only show that Keats was at times
susceptible to the literary fads of his day. The absence
of picturesque descriptions in the poetry after the
northern tour, taken in fact "to strengthen more [his]
reach in poetry" (Letters, I, 342), makes one suspicious
of Keats's comment that he was "an old Stager in the
picturesque." Although "stager" means "one who possesses
the wisdom of long experience," it is likely that the
sense of "poseur" inhere in Keats's phrase. That is, Keats has affected the pose of picturesque observer in his poetry, but it was not or at least is not at the time he said it his truest impulse. And while it is true that his northern tour influenced the descriptions in his later poetry (craggy mountains as opposed to sloping hills, chasms, and caves appear), these descriptions are not overtly picturesque—or, to put it another way, they are so much more than "picturesque" that one can scarcely claim this tradition as an influence. And given Keats's criticisms of picturesque descriptions in his letters, it seems reasonable to suggest that something about the picturesque may not have been congenial to his poetic aims.

Keats's own statement, in a descriptive letter to his brother Tom, perhaps gives a clue to his ultimate dissatisfaction with the picturesque. In the letter, he is very optimistic about the effects of seeing "the space, the magnitude of mountains and waterfalls," for he says:

I shall learn poetry here and shall henceforth write more than ever, for the abstract endeavor of being able to add a mite to that mass of beauty which is harvested from these grand materials, by the finest spirits, and put into ethereal existence for the relish of one's fellows.

(Letters, I, 301)

But then he adds, "I live in the eye; and my imagination,
surpassed, is at rest." As a sight-seer, the passive response may be desirable, but for a poet, a relaxed imagination is disaster. Loco-descriptive verse demands a keen eye and an ability to select and arrange, but it may not necessarily demand an active imagination. His own description of the difference between himself and Byron is telling: "There is this great difference between us. He describes what he sees—I describe what I imagine—Mine is the hardest task" (Letters, II, 200). Of the poet of the "picturesque" he could also say, "he describes what he sees." Given the value Keats places on the imagination and thereby on created space, the "real" landscapes in poetry he would necessarily find wanting. To follow the picturesque tradition would be to forego the fairyland space of Endymion, the exotic orientalism of the "Ode to Sorrow" in that poem, the archetypal settings of the two Hyperions, the classical and architectural setting of Lamia and the medieval ambience of The Eve of St. Agnes (Gothic ruins were, of course, acceptable). To forego created space would be to forego myth, something Keats could not even do when describing scenes literally in his letters.98

One of the poems written during his tour also demonstrates a kind of anti-picturesque approach and puts the emphasis not on sight but on touch and sound and finally on an imaginative understanding of space rather
than a visual record of it. In "Lines written in the Highlands after a visit to Burns's country," Keats begins by saying, "There is a charm in footing slow across a silent plain." This beginning sets the sensuous atmosphere of the poem through "footing" and "silent" as well as the imaginative response signalled through the word "charm," to be thought of in a quasi-magical way. The poem continues to develop tactile sensations ("When weary steps forget themselves upon a pleasant turf, / Upon hot sand, or flinty road, or sea-shore iron scurf" [ll. 9-10]) and auditory awareness:

Light heather-bells may tremble then, but they are far away;
Wood-lark may sing from sandy fern,—the Sun may hear his lay;
Runnels may kiss the grass on shelves and shallows clear,
But their low voices are not heard, though come on travels drear . . . .
(ll. 13-16)

But the main emphasis in the poem lies in its development of the idea of what the space evokes, not how it looks, for while

Blood-red the Sun may set behind black mountain peaks;
Blue tides may sluice and drench their time in caves and weedy creeks;
Eagles may seem to sleep wing-wide upon the air;
Ring-doves may fly convuls'd across to some high-cedar'd lair;
(ll. 17-20)

yet "the forgotten eye is still fast lidded to the ground" (l. 21; my italics) and "forgotten is the worldly heart"
While the highlands first induced thoughts of history (patriot battles and Druids), later they "charmed" him into a kind of imaginative trance "beyond the bourn of care, / Beyond the sweet and bitter world,— beyond it unaware!" (ll. 29-30). Visionary experience is a far cry from the spy-glass approach; and this response to picturesque space seems far more consistent with Keats's personality than the mere visual record of a scene that the picturesque tradition would dictate.

In addition, the spy-glass approach put too much emphasis on the broad scene, on the prospect, on distant space. Charles Brown, Keats's travelling companion on the northern tour, makes this point explicit. He says:

After all, I was not much gratified by this sort of bird's-eye view. If you would be delighted with a garden, it is surely better to walk in it, than to stare down upon it from a garret-window. It must be acknowledged there is some thing grand in looking down on a country, as if it were a map; but the strangeness of the sight, more than any thing else, is its attraction. The mountains, which but yesterday I had gazed on with reverence, became comparatively insignificant. People talk of the extensive prospect— it may be too extensive.

\[*Letters, I, 433*\]

We do not know whether Keats agreed with Brown's judgment, but the evidence of his poetry suggests that he might have. For it is generally true, as Bernard Blackstone states, that "Keats does not, as Wordsworth does, create
large landscapes and connect them with the quiet of the sky. . . . There is no attempt at synthesis.¹⁰¹ There is often a lack of wholeness and a correlative absence of vastness in Keats's landscapes, primarily because he seems much more interested in the particular, viewed intensely from a close perspective.¹⁰² When we think of the nature poetry of the other Romantic poets, we think of vast space, of spaciousness, of bare fields, mountains, seascapes, and cosmic skies; Keats, by contrast, often evokes a sense of lush vegetation, of blades of grass and single buds of flowers, of birds seen directly out the window. Keats's view is often microscopic, not that of the Claude glass; the kind of space that view yields in his poetry will necessarily be radically different from that of his Romantic peers.

Perhaps the most important reason that Keats inclined to reject the picturesque tradition was that its method for apprehending space was not in fact his instinctive response.¹⁰³ The picturesque tradition depended on visual qualities in space. Keats's comment, "I live in the eye," quoted earlier, was exactly the appropriate response for an observer of a picturesque scene or for a writer or reader of a picturesque description. But Keats could say with Wordsworth that the "eye is the most despotic of the senses," and his poems demonstrate amply that such despotism does not
control his responses to nor his creation of space.
Instead, Keats's space-consciousness is multi-sensuous. 104
Examples of this multi-sensuous awareness of space could
be cited from almost any of Keats's poems, but the two
following make the point. The first, from the beginning
of The Fall of Hyperion, describes an Edenic setting, a
forest grove, typically in Keats's poetry an enclosed,
protected arbour replete with the joys of the senses.
The poet says:

\[
\text{Methought I stood where trees of every clime,}
\text{Palm, myrtle, oak, and sycamore, and beech,}
\text{With Plantane, and spice blossoms, made a screen;}
\text{In neighbourhood of fountains, by the noise}
\text{Soft-showering in mine ears; and, by the touch}
\text{Of scent, not far from roses. Turning round,}
\text{I saw an arbour with a drooping roof}
\text{Of trellis vines, and bells, and larger blooms,}
\text{Like floral censers swinging light in air;}
\text{Before its wreathed doorway, on a mound}
\text{Of moss, was spread a feast of summer fruits,}
\text{Which nearer seen, seem'd refuse of a meal}
\text{By Angel tasted, or our Mother Eve;}
\text{For empty shells were scattered on the grass,}
\text{And grape stalks but half bare, and remnants more,}
\text{Sweet smelling, whose pure kinds I could not know.}
\text{Still was more plenty than the fabled horn}
\text{Thrice emptied could pour forth, at banqueting}
\text{For Proserpine return'd to her own fields,}
\text{Where the white heifers low. And appetite}
\text{More yearning than on earth I ever felt}
\text{Growing within, I ate deliciously . . . .}
\text{(I.19-40)}
\]

With the exception of the phrase "turning round," Keats
relies on no directional words to establish the place in
space or to give the reader a sense of space. The grove
is defined entirely in terms of sensuous apprehension:
sights, sounds, smells, touch (in the synaesthetic
image "touch of scent"), and even taste. While it is inconceivable that taste could be a quality of space (that is, we could never refer to a "tasty place" as we could to a colorful one, a noisy one, a smelly one), Keats's places often have nonetheless qualities of taste inherent in them. Because taste is so often important to him (as well as its correlative, smell), one has to say that taste does indeed for Keats define space and allow him to totally experience a place.105

The second example, from Lamia, again shows Keats's multi-sensuous apprehension of space, but in this case it is combined with a more mechanical method of spatial description—the use of "space" words to indicate direction, placement, and size. Of Lamia's palace, he says:

About the halls, and to and from the doors,  
There was a noise of wings, till in short space  
The glowing banquet-room shone with wide-arched grace.  
A haunting music, sole perhaps and lone  
Supportress of the faery-roof, made moan  
Throughout, as fearful the whole charm might fade.  
Fresh carved cedar, mimicking a glade  
Of palm and plantain, met from either side,  
High in the midst, in honour of the bride—  
Two palms and then two plantains, and so on,  
From either side their stems branch'd one to one  
All down the aisled place; and beneath all  
There ran a stream of lamps straight on from wall to wall.  
So canopied, lay an untasted feast  
Teeming with odours.  

(11. 119-33)

Much of the passage depends on visual awareness (halls,
doors, various plants) and light; sounds are suggested ("noise," "music," "moan"); smell is implicit in the "fresh carved cedar" and explicit as a wholly defining quality in "teeming with odours" (my italics); taste is, however, only vaguely suggested in the "untasted feast"; and touch seems absent, perhaps to lend an air of unreality to this fairy palace. Unlike the previous passage, however, this one uses the traits of pictorial description; that is, it orients its elements in a space. Directions like "either side," "high," "beneath," "from wall to wall," among others complete a picture, a total space, which can be objectively contemplated as well as sensuously felt. More often than not, though, Keats's descriptions lack the "space" words which aid the reader's visual apprehension of the total space. We must feel, hear, smell, and taste the space, and not distance it by blocking it in parallels, perpendiculars, foregrounds, backgrounds, heights, and depths.

"Space" words aid in a visual understanding of space. Sometimes Keats defines space without even appealing to our visual sense or by de-emphasizing its visual qualities. I have already commented on Keats's emphasis on the quality of the air and his use of the suffocation image in defining space; he uses other means as well. For example, in the fifth stanza of the "Ode to a Nightingale," Keats imagines himself in a "forest
dim" (l. 20), robbed of his sense of sight, yet fully aware of the visually undefined space, implicit in the phrase "embalmed darkness." The size of the space is undetermined, yet the "experience" of the space is conveyed through senses other than sight. The flora he cannot see is imagined through smells (the "soft incense" and the "embalmed" air); taste, as well as a suggestion of smell inheres in the phrase "dewy wine"; and the sense of the forest is conveyed throughout by a knowledge of its sounds: Keats mentions explicitly that it is the "murmurous haunt of flies" while the song of the nightingale resonates throughout the entire poem. At the beginning of the poem, Keats imagined the nightingale singing among "shadows numberless" in "some melodious plot" (ll. 8-9); later he is near that shadowy melodious plot and says "Darkling I listen." It matters little that Keats anticipates the actual events of the forest, that is, that the flies will be in the forest in the summer or that the muskrose is only "coming," not an actuality. What is important is Keats's subjective and imaginative creation; had his sight functioned, the "viewless wings of poetry" (l. 33) might have been thwarted by a too objective sense of the forest.

Occasionally, Keats relies on senses other than sight largely because a pictorial description would have been difficult or inadequate. The ode "Bards of Passion
and of Mirth" describes the heaven of the bards with emphasis on olfactory and auditory sensation; its visual qualities are relatively undefined. The bards commune

With the noise of fountains wond'rous,
And the parle of voices thund'rous;
With the whisper of heaven's trees
And one another . . .

(11. 7-10),

and hear the nightingale singing. They are seated "on Elysian lawns. . . /

Underneath large blue-bells tented,
Where the daisies are rose-scented,
And the rose herself has got
Perfume which on earth is not . . . .

(11. 13-16)

We know that this immortal realm has fountains, trees, lawns, and various flowers, but the visual qualities of these particulars are absent from the description. Perhaps, too, Keats feels he can more convincingly convey a sense of Elysian space by de-emphasizing the visual, which usually defines beauty and perfection, and by focussing on another kind of sensual awareness.

When the visual apprehension of a scene is de-emphasized, it is usually through sound that Keats creates space. One of the changes (even though only in a simile) that Keats made in Hyperion illustrates how an emphasis on sound, with the near-exclusion of visual imagery, can give a sense of space. The original lines read:
As when, upon a tranced summer-night,
Those green-rob'd senators of mighty woods,
Tall oaks, branch-charmed by the earnest stars,
Dream, and so dream all night without a stir,
Save from one gradual solitary gust
Which comes upon the silence, and dies off,
As if the ebbing air had but one wave;
So came these words and went . . . .

In The Fall of Hyperion, they read:

As when, upon a tranced summer-night,
Forests, branch-charmed by the earnest stars,
Dream, and so dream all night, without a noise,
Save from one gradual solitary gust,
Swelling upon the silence; dying off;
As if the ebbing air had but one wave;
So came these words . . . .

Since the point of the simile is to describe the sound of Thea's words, Keats's later version is revised to highlight an auditory awareness of the forest. Two changes accomplish this. First, he changed "green-rob'd senators" from a singular visual image to the more abstract, less visual "forests." Then the kinesthetic suggestion in "stir" is changed to "noise." What results is a passage stripped of almost all sensual awareness except that of sound. Although it is only a simile, it manages to enhance the description of the sound of Thea's voice and evoke a sense of space as well.

In the second book of Endymion, Keats uses auditory imagery in a striking way to create a sense of space and distance. Endymion, meditating on his travels, has space transformed before his eyes and ears:
Hereupon
He kept an anxious ear. The humming tone
Came louder, and behold, there as he lay,
On either side outgush'd, with misty spray,
A copious spring; and both together dash'd
Swift, mad, fantastic round the rocks, and lash'd
Among the conchs and shells of the lofty grot,
Leaving a trickling dew. At last they shot
Down from the ceiling's height, 'pouring a noise
As of some breathless racers whose hopes poize
Upon the last few steps, and with spent force
Along the ground they took a winding course.
(II.915-26)

While the passage depends in part on a visual understanding
of particulars of nature—springs, rocks, and grottoes,
and while space is in part conveyed visually through
phrases like "on either side" and "down from the ceiling's
height," it is sound, its resonance and its force, that
defines this space which seems to encompass Endymion.

Thus far, I have discussed primarily Keats's
spatial awareness which derives from what psychologists
call "distance receptors," that is, the eyes, ears, and
nose (in that order, determined by the distance each
sense can perceive). It is readily obvious that Keats
creates visual, auditory, and olfactory space. However,
while not so obvious, "immediate receptors"—the skin
and muscles—also play an important role in Keats's
perception and creation of space, for tactile and thermal
space, though often inseparable from visual space, appear
regularly in Keats's descriptions. The importance to
Keats of immediate spatial apprehension should not be
surprising to us given his emphasis on concrete
particulars and given his instinctive multi-sensuous response to space.

Keats was certainly aware of tactile and thermal space. Mountains are described in part in terms of their coldness ("... All felt on arising into the cold air, that same elevation, which a cold bath gives one ... " [Letters, I, 307]), and shady walks, dewy grasses, and cool breezes recur in the descriptions in his letters. And when he creates space in the poetry he hopes, too, to convey a sense of space through its tactile or thermal qualities. When he says in a letter to the George Keatses that he thinks "The Eve of St. Mark" "will give you the sensation of walking about an old county Town in a coolish evening" (Letters, II, 201), he seems to emphasize tactile and thermal qualities of space. Similarly, Keats's description of his impulse to write "To Autumn" depends largely on tactile and thermal sensations:

How beautiful the season is now--How fine the air. A temperate sharpness about it. Really, without joking, chaste weather--Dian skies--I never lik'd stubble fields so much as now--Aye better than the chilly green of the spring. Somehow a stubble plain looks warm--in the same way that some pictures look warm--this struck me so much in my sunday's walk that I composed upon it.

(Letters, II, 167)

He intended to convey a sense of autumn, both as a time and a place, through a re-creation of the pervasive sense
of warmth that he felt, and the repetition of "stubble," which has tactile as well as visual suggestions, is an important part of his awareness of autumn.

Tactile qualities are easily overlooked when analyzing Keats's creation of space. The following example of tactile space is fairly obvious:

Instead of thrones, hard flint they sat upon,
Couches of rugged stone, and slaty ridge
Stubborn'd with iron. (Hyperion, II.15-17)

But often the tactile enters into a description in more subtle ways. While the underground region of the second book of Endymion may seem to be a largely visual space, throughout the descriptions, subtle tactile suggestions occur. When the voice calls Endymion to descend to the deep, it says:

'Descend,
Young mountaineer! descend where alleys bend
Into the sparry hollows of the world!
Oft hast thou seen bolts of the thunder hurl'd
As from thy threshold; day by day hast been
A little lower than the chilly sheen
Of icy pinnacles, and dipp'dst thine arms
Into the deadening ether that still charms
Their marble being; now, as deep profound
As those are high, descend!' (II.202-11)

While "sparry" is primarily a visual image, it has tactile suggestions of angular hardness; the "chilly sheen of icy pinnacles" implies tactile and thermal qualities; "deadening ether," though difficult to comprehend, is meant to be tactile since its touch on the skin is
mentioned. "Marble" may even suggest tactile qualities; it does in a later passage when Keats refers to the "marble floor's cold thrill" (II.338). What I am suggesting is that geological, sculptural, and architectural space in Keats's poetry is often experienced through tactile qualities as well as visual. When a vaulted grotto is "o'er studded with a thousand, thousand pearls, / And crimson mouthed shells with stubborn curls" (Endymion II.879-80), when an arbour is "overwove / By many a summer's silent fingering" (Endymion I.431-32), or when Lamia's palace, "with fretted splendour" is decorated with large "tree-stems," "jasper pannels," and then "burst[ing] / Forth creeping imagery of slighter trees / . . . with the larger wove in small intricacies" (Lamia I.139-41; all italics mine), we are reminded of hardness, smoothness, angularity, curves, ridges, or textures—all qualities which can be touched as well as seen. If the shells were only crimson, the walls of the grotto would not evoke tactile sensations, but in this passage, as well as the others mentioned above, Keats describes space in a way to suggest its immediate reality; space becomes dimensional not only through "space" words such as "up" and "down," but through words like "fretted" and "wove"—and it becomes dimensional in a much more personal and experiential way because touch is a more immediate sensation than sight.
Space is also experienced and created in thermal terms. Temperature had a great deal to do with how Keats experienced space, as the passages from his letters quoted earlier demonstrate. Thermal space plays a role in Keats's poetry as well. One has only to think of the opening of *The Eve of St. Agnes* to be reminded of how space is defined in terms of temperature. Although the chapel is realized in visual terms, the ambience of the chapel is the pervasive sense of chill it evokes. For example, "The sculptur'd dead" (1. 14), a striking visual image, is much less important to the mood Keats wishes to convey than the fact that they "seem to freeze" (1. 14). Furthermore, in terms of the theme of the poem, it is important to define space by its thermal qualities, that is, in order to contrast the cold, ordinary, mortal world with the warm, sensuous, dream-like world created by love.112 While there are few examples in Keats's poetry of space which is defined completely in terms of its thermal qualities, many of his descriptions include this immediate awareness of space. Cool breezes, cool beds of moss or leaves, cool or shady forests, and warm suns recur,113 often to give a fuller and more directly sensuous awareness of space.

It is, then, no wonder that the "old Stager in the picturesque" came to realize that he did in fact dislike it. In actuality, Keats was never a poet of the
picturesque. His imagination, his multi-sensuous awareness, his desire for a direct and close relationship with the externals of nature, prevented him from objectively duplicating a visual perception of natural space. Edward T. Hall has said that "man's sense of space is closely related to his sense of self, which is in an intimate transaction with his environment." It can also be said that a poet's creation of space is closely related to his sense of self. In Keats's case, we are fortunate that his inner impulses overcame the external forces of the picturesque tradition.

Symbolic Space in Keats's Poetry

The way a poet uses space can provide an important symbolic referent to his world view; the ways that spatiality and the spatial opposites, constriction and infinity, appear, albeit unconsciously in his poetry, can illuminate a poet's larger concerns. Compared to the other Romantic poets, Keats is not a poet of space. There is a striking absence of infinite space in his poetry. In spite of the fact that he states in the "Pleasure thermometer" passage of Endymion that a supreme goal of man and his final happiness resides in being "free of space" (I.780)--and presumably he means having the freedom of space or transcending the mortal limitations
of space, he never illustrates the achievement of this goal in quite the ways we expect it or in the ways other Romantic poets do. For example, there are no mountain top epiphanies nor extended flights in cosmic space in Keats’s poetry. Not only is infinite space apparently missing in his poetry, but so too is any essential concern with spatial constriction. While claustrofobia is a means of defining the state of the fallen Titans, Keats does not often use extended descriptions of claustrofobia as a means of symbolizing a negative state of being. One has only to imagine, for example, how Byron might have used space to develop the knight-at-arms’s state in “La Belle Dame sans Merci”; even Wordsworth would have had the knight more obviously fixated to the spot than Keats does. While space may not operate as a fully realized symbol in Keats’s poetry, however, it or even its absence does illuminate his themes in an indirect way.

An understanding of Keats’s use of space is complicated additionally by his changing attitudes—not his attitudes toward space, but his attitudes toward poetry and the imagination, which are sometimes developed with suggestive spatial metaphors. Typically in Keats criticism we hear, for example, of Keats’s shifting allegiances toward the Ideal and the Real leading finally to a condemnation of the ideal vision of life as being escapist and a corresponding realization that poetry must
deal with the real and with mortal experience. If this analysis is true, we might then expect a change in the kinds of space Keats depicts; we might expect, for example, that space in the earlier poetry would be visionary, created, less objective or "real" than space in the later poetry. But such is not the case. Space in The Fall of Hyperion is no more "real" than in Endymion and the similarity is not merely to be accounted for in the mythological form of the poems, for there is no clear shift in the shorter poems either. In fact, several of the poems of 1819 are singularly non-spatial; while we might expect in the later poetry something approaching clearly delineated objective or real space in a somewhat Wordsworthian manner, instead space in any obvious way is simply not relevant.

With these cautions in mind, I would like to suggest nonetheless a way in which Keats's poetic and thematic concerns are roughly paralleled by his use of space. The dichotomy which parallels Keats's shift in interest from the ideal to the real is not one of visionary space as opposed to "real" space, but is rather spatiality as opposed to non-spatiality. Oswald Spengler's The Decline of the West sets up the latter categories in a way which bears on Keats's poetry. Spengler characterizes cultures in part by their attitudes toward and concerns with space. He characterizes the western soul as being
obsessed with space. He says:

If, in fine, we look at it all together—the expansion of the Copernican world-picture into that aspect of stellar space that we possess to-day; the development of Columbus's discovery into a worldwide command of the earth's surface by the West; the perspective of oil-painting and of tragedy-scene; the sublimed home-feeling; the passion of our Civilization for swift transit, the conquest of the air, the exploration of the Polar regions and the climbing of almost impossible mountain-peaks—we see, emerging everywhere the prime-symbol of the Faustian soul, Limitless space.116

In contrast to the western (or Faustian) concern with the distant, the infinite, and the vast, is the classical (or Apollinian) interest in "the material, the optically definite, the comprehensible, the immediately present."117 While the vault of heaven defined the limits of the classical world-picture, infinite space is the Faustian opposite. Spengler sees the telescope as a characteristic Faustian discovery because it penetrates "into spaces hidden from the naked eye and inaccessible to the will-to-power" and because it "widens the universe that we possess."118 Spengler, connecting will and space-feeling, contrasts these Faustian attributes with classical man's will-lessness and lack of "directional energy."119 While Spengler's analyses are sometimes questionable, the dichotomies he sets up are helpful in differentiating the changes in Keats's use of space.

Although Keats's visionary imagination is never as Faustian as Byron's or Shelley's, in the early poetry
particularly, space seems to be an important metaphor to
describe the exercise of the imagination. An early poem
"The Poet" makes the conjunction between flights in
space and the activity of the imagination:

At morn, at noon, at Eve, and Middle Night  
He passes forth into the charmed air,  
With talisman to call up spirits rare  
From plant, cave, rock, and fountain.--To his sight  
The husk of natural objects opens quite  
To the core; and every secret essence there  
Reveals the elements of good and fair;  
Making him see, where Learning hath no light.  
Sometimes above the gross and palpable things  
Of this diurnal sphere, his spirit flies  
On awful wing; and with its destined skies  
Holds premature and mystic communings;  
Till such unearthly intercourses shed  
A visible halo round his mortal head.

While the poet is not divorced from the real, material
world, and while he does gain wisdom from the earthly,
it is not his relationship with the diurnal sphere, but
with the skies which confers a divinity on him. Cosmic
space is probably only a metaphor here, not a neo-platonic
realm, but it is a necessary metaphor to elucidate the
functions of the imagination. While the octet develops
the idea that the poet penetrates to the essence of
material reality, the sestet emphasizes that at times his
imagination transcends the restrictions of matter and
space, and reaches the awful and sacred realm of visions.
The metaphor of flights in space is not, of course,
original with Keats, but its recurrence, particularly in
the early poetry, makes it an important metaphor. What
this visionary world, symbolized by cosmic space, contains in concrete terms is always indefinite, but it is clear that flights to this world transfigure the poet, confer a power on him, and give him an extra-temporal, extra-spatial awareness.

Keats often thinks in terms of two worlds, one human, mortal, and limited, one supernatural and divine. The former approximates the natural world as we know it, while the other, sometimes symbolized by cosmic space, is not governed by ordinary time and space. There are bars between the two worlds, but not impassable bars. Endymion seems to think he breaks the bars when he says:

I do think the bars
That kept my spirit in are burst—that I
Am sailing with thee through the dizzy sky!
How beautiful thou art! The world how deep!
How tremulous-dazzlingly the wheels sweep
Around their axle! Then these gleaming reins,
How lithe!

(Endymion II.185-91)

And the poet also can, as Keats conceives him in his early poetry. Although Keats does not see himself as "a glorious denizen / Of thy [Poesy's] wide heaven" ("Sleep and Poetry," 11. 48-49), the charioteer is such a denizen (11. 125-62). And just as the poet in "The Poet" was not alienated from the natural world, so too the poet-charioteer descends to etherealize the ordinary world. He operates as a type of mesocosm or a mediator between worlds, casting a divine glow on material reality.
The light image in the description of the charioteer has an important function, for through it Keats seems to be saying that the light of heaven (and the light of Apollo, God of poetry) descends with the charioteer, just as the visionary imagination can transfigure the world. The important effect of the transforming imagination is emphasized when Keats says, after the vision has fled, that "a sense of real things comes doubly strong / And like a muddy stream, would bear along / [His] soul to nothingness" (ll. 157-59). But the mere vision of the charioteer and the possibilities that the visionary imagination has will sustain him.

Although the flight through space is the most common Faustian metaphor in Keats's poetry, occasionally Keats's space-feeling is illustrated in other ways. For example, in "On first looking into Chapman's Homer," Keats imagines himself as staring first into space and then into the sea—both symbols of immensity. He stands; he does not soar in space, but the sense of inspiration and awe, symbolized by these vast areas, is similar to the feeling that flights through space provide.122 The sonnet "To J. R." is Faustian in its attitude toward both time and space; while the emphasis in the sonnet is on his desire to overcome the limits of time, this desire implies a corresponding spatial freedom. He says:
So could we live long life in little space,
So time itself would be annihilate,
So a day's journey in oblivious haze
To serve our joys would lengthen and dilate.
O to arrive each Monday morn from Indi!
To land each Tuesday from the rich Levant!
("To J. R.," ll. 5-10)

The expansion of time would make distance relative. Just as the charioteer moved quickly, so too would Keats seem to if time were annihilated. The distance to India or the Levant would be immaterial. The most extreme version of this theory would allow him to be everywhere at the same time, but in a pre-aeronautic age, a one-day's journey to the east would have seemed striking enough.

As I have suggested earlier, it is primarily Keats's early poems which can be characterized as Faustian in their space-feeling. The change in Keats's use of space, it seems to me, is obvious in the third book of Hyperion where he describes the birth pangs of the new poet-God Apollo. Although the book is not completed, we might expect the assumption of godhood and the "knowledge enormous" (III.113) he gains to involve spatial symbolism. The contrast in Keats's works is evident when considering that Endymion's quest involves vast space and that earlier poet-figures have some command of cosmic space. Tradition even demands that when special knowledge is revealed, heights or some kind of horizontal vastness will accompany the experience. Pageants (that is, linear space) are common, as are mountain-top visions. In such
a Miltonic poem as Hyperion, we might expect Mnemosyne to reveal her wisdom in a Miltonic way. The following passage from Paradise Lost, where Adam receives a vision of temporal history in space, makes the point:

So both ascend
In the Visions of God: It was a Hill
Of paradise the highest, from whose top
The Hemisphere of Earth in clearest Ken
Stretcht out to the amplest reach of prospect lay.

(Paradise Lost XI.376-80)

The contrasts between Apollo's experience and the mountain-top revelations of Wordsworth in The Prelude and the flights in space in Queen Mab and Cain are obvious. Apollo merely looks into Mnemosyne's silent face where he reads "a wondrous lesson" (III.112) and then the events of history, briefly described, "Pour into the wide hollows of [his] brain" (III.117).

The change in Keats's use of space is no more precisely chronological and absolutely consistent than his allegiances to the real or the ideal, but I suspect the absence of space can often be explained by Keats's rejection or attempted rejection of the Faustian longings which space often symbolizes. Several crucial intermediate poems seem to indicate Keats's rejection of the Faustian mode. In his epistle "To J. H. Reynolds, Esq.," a "crisis statement" in this respect, the following passage is especially important:

O that our dreamings all of sleep or wake
Would all their colours from the Sunset take.
From something of material sublime,
Rather than shadow our own Soul's daytime
In the dark void of Night.

Things cannot to the will
Be settled, but they tease us out of thought.
Or is it that Imagination brought
Beyond its proper bound, yet still confined,—
Lost in a sort of Purgatory blind,
Cannot refer to any standard law
Of either earth or heaven?—It is a flaw
In happiness to see beyond our bourn—
It forces us in Summer skies to mourn;
It spoils the singing of the Nightingale.

(11. 67-71; 76-85)

In the first several lines, the word "void," a rare one in Keats's vocabulary, is critical. What in earlier poems might have been a sublime visionary spaciousness has become a vast, empty, undifferentiated nothing. While the poet, just as Keats conceived of him in "The Poet," should still penetrate the magic-like essence of the real world ("the material sublime" and the "sunset" rather than harsh daylight reality), his visionary flights are now envisioned as fearful, nightmarish. Willful (or Faustian) striving is condemned in the next lines; and in the last lines Keats recognizes that boundaries exist to mortal man's experience and knowledge, a fact unrecognized when Keats imagined the charioteer-poet's activity. Keats's concept of the imagination in this passage is much more Apollinian than Faustian, for he understands that the visionary imagination can divorce man from this world yet without providing the "premature and mystic communings" with his "destined skies" ("The Poet,"
11. 12 and 11). Instead, the visionary poet would be visionless, lost in a "Purgatory blind," or a "dark void" created by his own impossible and unfulfilled Faustian longings. Later in the poem, a spatial metaphor again makes the same point: "moods of [his] mind" (l. 106), when he "should have been most happy" (l. 93), made him see "Too far into the sea" (l. 94) to "the core / Of an eternal fierce destruction" (ll. 96-97). Vast space has taken on a sinister meaning, serving as a metaphor to describe the perverse creations of the Faustian, visionary imagination.

Something of the same fear of the visionary imagination informs two other poems, "God of the Meridian" and "Lines written in the Highlands after a visit to Burns's country." In the former Keats describes the "terrible division" (l. 6) he feels when his soul or imagination soars, leaving his "body earthward press'd" (l. 4). What results is a "gulph austere / To be fill'd with worldly fear" (ll. 7-8). The "gulph" operates symbolically in much the same way as the "void" or "Purgatory blind" in the preceding poem—both poems use a spatial metaphor to indicate a negative state of being. The difference is that in the preceding poem, the "void" or "Purgatory blind" indicated the failure of the visionary imagination, while in this poem the visionary imagination does attain its goal with a resulting
schizophrenia in the poet. But in "God of the Meridian" even the activity of the visionary imagination is frightful, for Keats sees it in an "airy maze" (1. 12; my italics) and it is born aloft as if it is a child in eagle's claws, seeing sights it "scarce can bear" (1. 19). At the end of the poem, Keats asks to have the visionary imagination tempered with "staid Philosophy" (1. 22) so he can see less alarmed the "bowers" of poetry. What Keats asks is that the imagination be more earthbound; this desire is represented through spatial symbolism: Faustian space is replaced by "bowers," implying enclosed, protected, unmaze-like, bounded space.

In "Lines written in the Highlands after a visit to Burns's country," space is much more literal than in the poems I have discussed above at the same time that it operates symbolically. In this poem, Keats does not deny the visionary imagination for it can allow one a sometimes necessary escape from "the bourn of care" (1. 29), yet the escape is not willed (it happens "unaware" [1. 30]) and is therefore less Faustian; furthermore, it should be brief and not too far-reaching in its visionary flights ("scanty the hour and few the steps" [11. 29, 31]), for otherwise return would be barred and man would "forget his mortal way" (1. 32) and all the real-life joys of this life. In the last lines of the poem, Keats underlines these points by using two spatial symbols: mountains and
vast horizontal space. He says:

Yet be his anchor e'er so fast, room is there
for a prayer
That man may never lose his mind on mountains
black and bare;
That he may stray league after league some great
birthplace to find
And keep his vision clear from speck, his inward
sight unblind.
(11. 45-48)

Keats realizes the dangers of the unfettered visionary imagination in this passage and realizes that certain spatial realities catalyze the mind’s visionary activities. "Mountains black and bare" and "silent plain[s]" (1. 1), over which one strays "league after league," are in part cause, while the "void," "Purgatory blind," and "gulph" in the preceding poems, were the effects. But this may be an unimportant distinction since in these cases Faustian space symbols are associated with the visionary imagination and this kind of space-feeling is distrusted, or rejected, just as the visionary imagination is.

If Keats fears the Faustian imagination—and the Faustian space which often symbolizes it, then an obvious alternative would be to relocate the imagination exclusively in the real world. Corresponding to this relocation of the imagination, we might expect, given Spengler’s theories, that Apollinian non-spatial awareness would be the result. The dichotomies in Keats are not, of course, clear-cut, but several poems late in Keats's poetic life do tend toward non-spatiality. The
"Ode on a Grecian Urn," for example, is utterly unconcerned with space; the urn simply exists in a different realm of being—a realm of time and space totally unassociated with human life. Space is simply unimportant in Keats's development of the poem or in its major issues. "To Autumn" displays the same lack of concern with space; it fulfills Spengler's definition of the Apollinian, for its interest lies in "the material, the optically definite, the comprehensible, the immediately present." Although clouds and stubble-plains are mentioned, these are only parts of the concrete details in the poem and do not contribute to any space-feeling in the poem. In "To Autumn" the commitment to the real is a _fait accompli_; in Keats's last poem, "Bright Star," the commitment, though perhaps equally sure, is set up in terms of the earlier spatial dichotomies. The star in the octet is characterized by its Faustian distance from ordinary life—it is "hung aloft" watching the vast space beneath it. Yet in the sestet, Keats opts for the Apollinian mode, in terms of both time and space. "Steadfast," "still unchangeable," and "for ever" characterize the Apollinian time sense, unconcerned with past or future, just as "steadfast . . . / Pillow'd upon my fair love's ripening breast" characterizes the lack of concern for spatial limits or distances. The immediately present, the real, abstracted from any spatial awareness, is all-important.
It is impossible to say what directions Keats's imagination might have taken had he lived to write more poems, but if one accepts Keats's own theories of progress, it is reasonable, I think, to assume that he would have thoroughly accepted the boundaries of human limitation; and space, rather than being a symbol for Faustian desire, would have become only another concrete particular to enrich his poetry.
FOOTNOTES

1John Keats, The Poetical Works of John Keats, ed. H. W. Garrod (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958). All references to Keats's poetry are from this edition and will be identified by title and line citations in the text only.

2This generalization is commonplace. Typical are Aileen Ward's statement, "Keats's poems in general have a more direct relation to his life than the work of most poets" (John Keats: The Making of a Poet [1963; rpt. New York: The Viking Press, 1967], p. 39), and Bernard Blackstone's comment that Keats's life was "allegorical" and "closely integrated with his art" (The Consecrated Urn [London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1959], p. 217).

3See also The Letters of John Keats, 1814-1821, ed. Hyder Edward Rollins (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1958), II, 52; there Keats says "the City or any place very confined would soon turn [him] pale and thin . . . ." All further quotations from the Keats letters are from this edition and will be identified by volume and page number in the text only.

4See also Letters, II, 156.

5See Letters, II, 351, 286, 270, and 263.


8In Letters, II, 254, Keats explains that "so violent a rush of blood came to [his] Lungs that [he] felt nearly suffocated." He had recurrent nightmares of suffocation and commented that listening to the Italian tenor Farinelli's holding of a note almost indefinitely would be as painful as waiting for a diver to surface after he had disappeared in the depths of the sea (Ward, The Making of a Poet, pp. 361-62). And his letters in August and September of 1820 are filled with references.

9 The date when Keats contracted tuberculosis and the type he had has been a subject of controversy. Walter Jackson Bate, in John Keats (1963; rpt. New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), pp. 614-16, after summarizing the arguments, concludes that Keats probably caught tuberculosis of the lungs before December 1, 1818, and that it began moving into an active stage by early September, 1819. But Latuner quotes L. J. Moorman’s conjecture that Keats “had tuberculosis with unusual inertia for a period of years before it was suspected” (Nature in Keats’s Poetry, p. 19). Several of Keats’s letters written before his tuberculosis became evident contain suggestions of suffocation. They include the letter to Woodhouse in which he says the “identity of every one in the room begins to press upon me” (Letters, I, 387), the letter to Dilke in which Keats says Tom’s “identity presses upon me so all day that I am obliged to go out” (Letters, I, 369), and the letter to the George Keatses in which he says of Fanny, “her character is not formed; her identity does not press upon me as yours does” (Letters, I, 392). To the list could be added two other letters to the George Keatses with similar comments (Letters, II, 5 and 77).

10 Writing to John Taylor in September, 1819, Keats obsessively devotes more than half a letter to descriptions of and speculations about air. He says, for example: "... leading an inactive life as you did was breathing poison; you will find the country air do more for you than you expect. But it must be proper country air; you must choose a spot. What sort of a place is Retford? You should live in a dry, gravelly, barren, elevated country open to the currents of air, and such a place is generally furnish'd with the finest springs--The neighbourhood of a rich inclosed fulsome manured arrable Land--especially in a valley and almost as bad on a flat, would be almost as bad as the smoke of fleetstreet. Such a place as this was shanklin only open to the south east and surrounded by hills in every other direction--From this south east came the damps from the sea which having no egress the air would for days together take on an unhealthy idiosyncrasy altogether enervating and weakening as a city Smoke--I felt it very much--Since I have been at Winchester I have been improving in health--it is not so confined--and there is on one side of the city a dry chalky down where the air is worth six pence a pint. So if you do not get better
at Retford do not impute it to your own weakness before you have well considered the nature of the air and soil—especially as Autumn is encroaching; for the autumn fogs over a rich land is like the steam from cabbage water" (Letters, II, 155-56).


12 Many of these references to breath or to smothering, though, can not be considered as defining space; some are merely metaphors, such as to smother ambition in "To my Brother George" (1. 110) or "smother'd sight" (an unusual synesthesia) in Endymion I.901.

13 The oven image in line 20 may be important here. Latuner, Nature in Keats's Poetry, pp. 10-20, attributes Keats's sensitivity to temperature to the presence of the latent tubercle bacilli in him. The disease apparently causes raised temperatures and perspiration and therefore a longing for coolness; at the same time, Keats often complains of cold weather and chills, a paradox perfectly consistent with feverishness. Whether or not Keats had tuberculosis at this time is not the point; the fact remains that, whatever the cause, Keats was extraordinarily sensitive to temperatures and qualities of the air.

14 See the section below on Milton's influence and especially Keats's comment on the sense of suffocation in Paradise Lost IX.179-91. In his "Notes on Milton's Paradise Lost" (in The Poetical Works and Other Writings of John Keats, ed. H. Buxton Forman [London: Reeves and Turner, 1883], III, 26), Keats also says that "we breathe more freely" once heaven is described.

15 See especially Endymion II.768, III.460, and Hyperion I.201.

16 Charles I. Patterson, Jr., The Daemonic in the Poetry of John Keats (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1970), pp. 15-16, who is primarily interested in what he calls the daemonic experience, makes interesting distinctions between it and mystical and visionary experiences. The daemonic experience, as he defines it, is vivid, sensory, and detailed, in contrast to the mystical experience which is indescribable and in which the mind is not usually focussed on specific concrete objects but toward pure being; and in contrast to the visionary experience which is not usually present to the
senses but is apart from fact and phenomena.


22 A very brief description of an airy flight does occur in *Endymion* II.185-90.


26 Ibid., p. 103. Whatever the cause, Huxley's evidence for the recurrence of certain intensely significant objects in the literature of various cultures is striking as is the fact that both flowers and jewels occurred significantly in his own experience. In *The Doors of Perception*, he describes the way his garden looked during his experience: "Drooping in green parabolas from the hedge, the ivy fronds shone with a
kind of glassy, jade-like radiance. A moment later a clump of Red Hot Pokers, in full bloom, had exploded into my field of vision. So passionately alive that they seemed to be standing on the very brink of utterance, the flowers strained upwards into the blue. . . . I looked down at the leaves and discovered a cavernous intricacy of the most delicate green lights and shadows, pulsing with undecipherable mystery" (p. 59). And here is the way his library appeared when he was under the influence of mescaline: "Red books, like rubies; emerald books; books bound in white jade; books of agate; of aquamarine; of yellow topaz; lapis lazuli books whose color was so intense, so intrinsically meaningful, that they seemed to be on the point of leaving the shelves to thrust themselves more insistently on my attention" (The Doors of Perception, p. 19). The similarity with some of Keats's descriptions is striking.

27 See also "I stood tip-toe upon a little hill," 11. 47-56.

28 Perkins, The Quest for Permanence, pp. 207-8, commenting on the value of intensity to Keats, contrasts his views with those of Wordsworth and Shakespeare, for whom "man's most vital and intense experiences are construed as 'fallings from us, vanishings,' moments in other words, when there is a blank withdrawal of sensory stimuli, a consciousness without content except of the 'sentiment of Being.'" Keats's intensity is focussed on some external object or event. Keats's trances, as a kind of intense experience, demonstrate this same interest in the concrete.


30 Clarke's school did teach science, which was not in modern public schools; see Ward, The Making of a Poet, p. 8.

31 Bate, John Keats, p. 88; see also p. 26. Bate also explains that Bonnycastle's book contains many excerpts from poems, particularly from Paradise Lost.

32 Richard Harter Fogle, in The Imagery of Keats and Shelley: A Comparative Study (1949; rpt. Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1962), pp. 39-40, has commented on these lines in "I stood tip-toe upon a little hill," concluding that "the sky is not to [Keats] an infinite space comprising within itself many planes, but 'blue fields' . . . ."
33 For an opposite view, see Bernard Blackstone, The Consecrated Urn, in which he claims that "the sky is the void, 'universal space' in Keats's own later phrase [from Hyperion I.307], the stainless and unfathomable eternity--infinity from which all manifestations proceed and to which they return" (p. 44). The passage in Hyperion (I.305 ff.) to which Blackstone obliquely refers does suggest that space represents an eternal principle and potentiality. As such, it should be infinite, but Keats's metaphors for outer space seem to suggest limitation. Blackstone, over-reading the early poems I think, comments on "the insistence in these poems [those of 1817] on the receptacle, the inverted bowl of the unclouded sky with its connotation of the void" (p. 96). He claims the sky, as bowl and void, represents the "unmitigably other, as eternity; and as the matrix of forms, that which itself remains void yet in which there is a coming-to-be." See also The Lost Travellers: A Romantic Theme with Variations (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1962), where again Blackstone stresses the notion that Keats had a "feeling for the emptiness of space, the Newtonian void," claiming that Keats's universe is quite different from "Milton's tidy universe" (p. 282).

34 See the notes on pp. 449-50 of de Selincourt's edition for details.

35 De Selincourt, p. 450.

36 Keats does mention sunspots ("bright spots that move about the sun") in "To my Brother George," l. 40, and "Saturn's ring" and "Galaxy" in "To Charles Cowden Clarke," ll. 67 and 5 respectively.

37 Other than Endymion, the rites of The Eve of St. Agnes are watched over by the moon, and it is praised in a long passage in "I stood tip-toe upon a little hill" as, among other things, a "maker of sweet poets" (ll. 113-26); Walter H. Evert, in Aesthetic and Myth in the Poetry of Keats (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), pp. 91-92, also cites "To Lord Byron," "To Hope," "Calidore. A Fragment," and "To my Brother George" as poems which depict Keats's sensitivity to the moon and its light. See also Colvin, John Keats, pp. 166-67, for evidence of Keats's fondness for the moon.

38 The most obvious example of the importance of stars is the sonnet, "Bright Star." Porphyro, at the climax of The Eve of St. Agnes, is described as "Ethereal, flush'd, and like a throbbing star / Seen mid the sapphire heaven's deep repose" (xxxvi.318-19). Removed from
process ("beyond a mortal man"), he is imaged as an eternal star.


40 In one letter, Keats refers to fossils (Letters, I, 166) and his reading of and allusions to Buffon's Natural History occur in another (Letters, I, 255); see also Letters, I, 255, n. 6.

41 H. W. Piper, The Active Universe (London: Athlone Press, 1962), p. 187, quotes this passage and explains that Book III of Endymion is "the only book dealing with historic time as opposed to ideal." He believes that Keats was acquainted with palaeontology, suggesting even a knowledge of Cuvier.

42 De Selincourt, p. 459, n. 237, summarizes Keats's attitudes to science, saying: "If Keats had been writing a defence of poetry, he would not have admitted for a moment that science had power to affect the things of the imagination; he would have been the first to insist, to borrow the words of Leigh Hunt, that 'there will be a poetry of the imagination as long as the first causes of things remain a mystery!'" Keats's attitude toward Newton, as recorded by R. B. Haydon, also indicates how he believed scientific fact destroyed the mystery of the world; for him Newton "had destroyed all the poetry of the rainbow by reducing it to the prismatic colours" (quoted in Bostetter, The Romantic Ventriloquists, p. 320, n. 23).


His interest in travelogues too probably has this same origin.


Colvin, John Keats, p. 175.

Jack, Mirror of Art, p. 119, says that "The Faerie Queene made it inevitable that Keats should associate poetry with classical mythology, as with fairy land." It should be noted that many characteristics of the romances and of Elizabethan works appealed to him—among them, the myth, the chivalric element, the verbal qualities.

Colvin, John Keats, p. 20, writes: "... Charles Brown, Keats's most intimate companion during the two last years of his life, states positively that it was to the inspiration of the Faerie Queene that his first notion of attempting to write was due. 'Though born to be a poet, he was ignorant of his birthright until he had completed his eighteenth year. It was the Faerie Queene that awakened his genius. In Spenser's fairy-land he was enchanted, breathed in a new world, and became another being ...'"

Quoted from Finney, Evolution, I, 27. The date when Keats read Spenser has been disputed. For a discussion, see Finney, Evolution, I, 27.

By emphasizing Spenser's influence in this section, I do not mean to deny the influence of other writers of romance (Tasso, for example) whom Keats had also read.
Many of the generalizations I make about Spenser's influence are similarly true of their influence. By the time Keats wrote *Endymion*, he had read eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century (particularly Leigh Hunt) imitators of Spenser as well.

52 See "Sleep and Poetry," ll. 162-67, for similar praise of earlier poets. The dichotomy between eagles and owls, Joan Grundy explains, symbolizes the visionary powers as opposed to would-be teaching and moralizing; see her "Keats and the Elizabethans," p. 9.


54 Frye defines the world of Faerie, a mythical world, as "not a different place from the ordinary world, but the same world in which the moral and imaginative realization of a higher level of experience takes place" (Ibid., p. 130).

55 Frye compares Keats's water-world with the Bower of Bliss since words like "bower" and "bliss" recur. The difference is that we are introduced to this world, he says, after the bliss is gone (Ibid., p. 139).

56 The third level, the ordinary world, is absent in literal terms from *Endymion*; as in *The Faerie Queene*, it is present only in allegorical terms.

57 I have not found any similar statement in Spenser's poetry. His heavenly state seems to be conceived in terms of timelessness rather than spacelessness. See the *Mutabilitie* Cantos, for example.

58 The contrast with Byron is obvious here. Byron's travellers are usually guilt-ridden exiles, often compulsive wanderers--Cains, Ishmaels, Wandering Jews. Often the journey is goalless or, if it has a goal, it is not achieved.

59 This was apparently Shelley's opinion too since he found *Endymion* hard to get through and the "treasures poured forth with indistinct profusion" (*The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. Frederick L. Jones [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964], II, 117 and 221).

60 Keats's "Shakespearolatry," as Bate, in *John Keats*, p. 157, calls it, is well-documented in various biographies,
source studies, and in Keats's own letters. Although Keats had read *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* and *The Tempest* as early as 1813, his serious study of Shakespeare began in 1818 and continued until the end of his life.

61 See Finney, *Evolution*, I, 237-38. Keats met Hazlitt at Hunt's cottage in the fall of 1816, but was never intimate with him. "By March 1817 he had begun to accept Hazlitt as an authority in literary matters." He owned a copy of Hazlitt's *Characters of Shakespear's Plays*, which he read, marked, and annotated. Bate, *John Keats*, p. 259, adds that Keats missed only one of Hazlitt's lectures on the English poets, the lecture on Chaucer and Spenser.

62 Caroline Spurgeon reproduces Keats's notes and underlinings in *The Tempest*, *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, *Measure for Measure*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Troilus and Cressida*, in her *Keats's Shakespeare*.

63 See Spurgeon, *Keats's Shakespeare*, pp. 7-8, for details.

64 Ibid., p. 15. Also see Spurgeon's list of parallel passages listing likenesses between *Endymion* and *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* and *The Tempest* (pp. 55-65).

65 Ibid., pp. 29-30.

66 Ibid., p. 30 and plate 6.

67 *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* II.1.175. This and further references to Shakespeare's plays are from *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, ed. Hardin Craig (Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1951).


69 The review has been commonly attributed to Keats, but Leonidas Jones (K-SJ, III [1954], 55-65) has argued that it was written by Reynolds. Walter Jackson Bate, *John Keats*, p. 236, agrees with Jones.

70 Quoted from Forman, *Poetical Works*, III, 7-8.

71 Ibid., p. 7. Keats's concept of the imagination was also indebted to Hazlitt. Claude Finney, *Evolution*, I, 239, writes: "His [Keats's] conception of poetry [at the time of writing *Endymion*] was very similar to that which Hazlitt expressed in an essay On Poetical Versatility in *The Round Table*: 'Poetry dwells in a
perpetual Utopia of its own.... It cannot be "constrained by mastery." It has the range of the universe; it traverses the empyreum, and looks down on nature from a higher sphere. When it lights upon the earth, it loses some of its dignity and its use. Its strength is in its wings; its element the air.... Poets live in an ideal world, where they make every thing out according to their wishes and fancies. They either find things delightful, or make them so. They feign the beautiful and grand out of their own minds, and imagine all things to be, not what they are, but what they ought to be. They are naturally inventors, creators of truth, of love and beauty...."

72 A Midsummer-Night's Dream V.i.12-17.
73 See Finney, Evolution, I, 163-65.
74 Quoted from Finney, Evolution, I, 25.
75 King Lear IV.vi.11-24.
76 See the epistle "To Charles Cowden Clarke."

77 Finney, Evolution, I, 336-37, explains that in the first part of 1817, Keats read Milton with Haydon and in September 1817 at the persuasion of Bailey he began a serious study of Milton. In December 1817 and January and February of 1818, he read Milton with Dilke. The introduction of Book IV of Endymion shows particularly the influence of his recent reading of Paradise Lost. It should be mentioned that de Selincourt believes that Milton's influence, particularly that of his early poems, is as marked as that of Spenser (p. 388), and says that Milton's influence is far more general than is usually supposed (p. 448). He also says that Keats borrowed more from Comus than from any other poem of the same length (p. 608). Although he does not say so in these comments, de Selincourt is often primarily interested in verbal reminiscences.

78 I have not discussed the influence of Dante. Several of the suggestions I make about Milton's influence on Keats's space-consciousness are applicable to Dante's influence. Robert Gittings, in The Mask of Keats (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1956), pp. 5-44, is most informative about Dante's influence. He also includes two appendices, one on Keats's markings in his copy of the Inferno and one of passages in Keats's poetry influenced by his reading of the Inferno.

Ibid., p. 24.


Ibid., pp. 29-30. Confinement, particularly confining air, always struck Keats. See my earlier comments on this subject. I do not think it is too far-fetched to suggest that Keats remembered these lines from Paradise Lost when describing both Saturn at the beginning of Book I of Hyperion and the fallen Titans in Book II.


Keats had, of course, seen Fingal's Cave during the summer of 1818 before writing Hyperion, but it is probably Milton who is the dominant source for Keats's interest in depths as a poetic symbol.


References to sculpture do occur in Keats's works prior to the dominant influence of Milton. Examples include Endymion I.315-19 and II.261-62 as well as his poem on the Elgin Marbles. What I am primarily interested in here, however, is the "sculptural" technique of "stationing." Ian Jack, in Keats and the Mirror of Art, pp. 141-42, also locates Keats's interest in stationing in his knowledge of Henry Fuseli's dictum that important figures in paintings should be placed in impressive attitudes.

Langer, Feeling and Form, pp. 88 and 91.

See also the two examples of pictorial description quoted from Endymion in my discussion of Spenser.

This extreme focusing on Glaucus without indicating the space around him may be a way of indicating his isolation and subjective withdrawal into self.

Ian Jack casts further light on this passage by discussing the reference to Memnon; see his Keats and the Mirror of Art, pp. 167-70.

Two weeks earlier he had mentioned to Fanny Brawne
the "parties about here [Shanklin] who come hunting after the picturesque like beagles. It is astonishing how they raven down scenery like children do sweetmeats" (Letters, II, 130); and later in a letter to her he added, "I am getting a great dislike of the picturesque" (Letters, II, 142).

92 See, for example, his description of Shanklin on the Isle of Wight and Carisbrooke Castle, "Ruins" he thought unsurpassed (Letters, I, 130-31, and II, 125), or his sonnet "To my Brother George," which details the "wonders" he had seen one day at Margate, or his "doggrel" poem on the sights of Teignmouth (Letters, II, 249-50).

93 See also the sonnet "O Solitude! if I must with thee dwell" where Keats also mentions a prospect or a "steep," "Nature's observatory" and the epistle "To my Brother George," l. 123 ff., where a full-drawn prospect is presented.

94 Keats's awareness of the necessity of a ruin in a picturesque scene is stated explicitly in "To George Felton Mathew": "There must be too a ruin dark, and gloomy, / To say 'joy not too much in all that's bloomy'" (11. 51-52).

95 Ian Jack says that "To Autumn" "could not have been written before the development of English landscape painting in the later eighteenth century" (Keats and the Mirror of Art, p. 232). This seems to me to be an incredible "reduction" of that poem.


98 Keats's impulse in the letters is to mythclogize space: Fingals Cave was built by the Giants rebelling against Jove (Letters, I, 348); Ben Nevis, on the one hand, a magnificent mountain with "tremendous" chasms, is on the other mythologized (or domesticated) as a crotchety old man who carries on a dialogue with the fat mountain-climber, Mrs. Cameron (Letters, I, 354-57).

"picturesqueness" and notes that William Gilpin, a popularizer of the picturesque tradition, commended lichens and moss to the poet's attention. However, the features usually celebrated in picturesque descriptions were of the large variety—mountains, waterfalls, caverns, chasms, and prospects.

Keats's comment that "unless it [the picturesque scene] be something very large and overpowering I cannot receive any extraordinary relish" (Letters, II, 135) does not really contradict Brown's judgment. Brown, after all, faults prospects in part because they give one a "bird's-eye view" and make the vast particulars of nature, like mountains, seem "insignificant."


J. M. Newton, in "A Speculation about Landscape," Cambridge Quarterly, 4 (1969), 276, makes this point and adds: "He hasn't the energy or variety of interest to enjoy a more distant view of anything, and thus a more complete one." R. H. Fogle, in The Imagery of Keats and Shelley, p. 37, makes a similar point: "Keats is minute in observation, with an eye to every particular of every object; Shelley, usually working on a panoramic scale, generalizes and reduces, in order that the details of his scenes may fit within the unity of the whole."

Another important reason, not germane to my topic, is that Keats found himself increasingly more interested in human nature than in nature. Of the northern tour, he says to Tom: "... there was as fine a row of boys & girls as you ever saw, some beautiful faces, & one exquisite mouth. I never felt so near the glory of Patriotism, the glory of making by any means a country happier. This is what I like better than scenery. I fear our continued moving from place to place, will prevent our becoming learned in village affairs; we are mere creatures of Rivers, Lakes, & mountains" (Letters, I, 307-8).

Blackstone, The Consecrated Urn, p. 343, goes so far as to say that Keats's "kind of perception" is unique, calling it "total attention." He says, "Keats is alive, in the moment of perception, to the whole of what is going on within his field of awareness; he throws round the event, whatever it may be, a multi-sensual net." Blackstone's use of the word "perception" is misleading since much of what appears in Keats's poetry is not perceived in any literal sense of the word, but rather imagined. In addition, Keats's "field of
awareness" is often quite limited, that is, so narrowly focussed that the concrete particulars being described cancel out the broader "field." Nonetheless, Blackstone and many other critics are right when they comment on the variety and copiousness of sensuous impressions in Keats's works.

Northrop Frye's explanation of the importance of taste is interesting. He says that taste is an essential part of "communion-poetry," that taste completes "the sense of identity-with. . . . all five senses have their place in a poetry of identity . . . ." (A Study of English Romanticism, p. 152). Blackstone, in The Consecrated Urn, pp. 377-78, makes a similar point when commenting on a passage in one of Keats's letters (to Dilke, September 22, 1819). To enjoy taste, he claims, makes eating a "communion," not a "rape," and affirms the "wholeness of the human four-fold, of the holiness of all the senses . . . . The gates of perception are cleansed, as with Blake, by an 'improvement of sensual enjoyment.'"

While Fogle, in The Imagery of Keats and Shelley, p. 37, says that 40.1% of the images in Keats are visual (such a specific tabulation must be suspect), I believe that many other poets rely on images of sight to a much greater degree than Keats does. Accepting Fogle's statistics, we must realize that 59.9% of the images in Keats's poetry appeal to other senses. That seems to me to be a fairly large percentage of non-visual images.

E. C. Pettet's discussion of sound imagery is interesting in this context; see his On the Poetry of Keats, p. 73 ff.

See de Selincourt's notes, pp. 487-98, for an explanation of the genesis of the first version.

I have tried to heed Fogle's warning, in The Imagery of Keats and Shelley, p. 27, that the "sensory content of images is frequently not simple but complex," since a single image may contain two or more sensory implications. Fogle demonstrates his point with Keats's phrase, "Begirt with ministring looks . . . ." (Endymion I.149-50); the image "begirt," he admits, is both tactile and visual, and adds, "it is a nice question which aspect should be emphasized." Edward T. Hall, in The Hidden Dimension (1966; rpt. New York: Doubleday and Co., 1969), p. 60, explains that "touch and visual spatial experiences are so interwoven that the two cannot be separated."

"Sparry" is an interesting word in this passage.
A spar is a pole, in nautical terms a mast or part of the rigging of a ship. Spar also is a non-metallic mineral, such as feldspar. "Sparry hollows" could easily be both hollows with stalagmites and hollows made of non-metallic minerals.

111 See Hall, The Hidden Dimension, pp. 60-63, for a discussion of tactile space and the implications it has for modern life.

112 Endymion's response to the lonely sea world is also instructive:

> What lonely death am I to die
> In this cold region! Will he let me freeze,
> And float my brittle limbs o'er polar seas?
> Or will he touch me with his searing hand,
> And leave a black memorial on the sand?
> Or tear me piece-meal with a bony saw,
> And keep me as a chosen food to draw
> His magian fish through hated fire and flame?
> O misery of hell!

(III.258-66)

113 See Fogle, The Imagery of Keats and Shelley, pp. 66-79, and E. C. Pettet, On the Poetry of Keats, pp. 70-72, for specific examples of thermal imagery. A thermal image does not, of course, always define space.


115 R. W. Stallman's "Keats the Apollinian: The Time-and-Space Logic of his Poems as Paintings" (UTQ, 16 [1947], 143-56), provided the initial impetus for the following discussion. His article is almost entirely concerned with time, not space, however, and my discussion is finally quite different from his.


117 Ibid., p. 176. Spengler adds that classical humanity had no word for and therefore no idea about space. See also the following: "Thus, inevitably, the Classical became by degrees the Culture of the small. The Apollinian soul had tried to tie down the meaning of things—become by means of the principle of visible limits; its taboo was focused upon the immediately-present and proximate alien. What was far away, invisible, was ipso facto 'not there.' The Greek and the Roman alike sacrificed to the gods of the place in which he happened
to stay or reside; all other deities were outside the range of vision. Just as the Greek tongue—again and again we shall note the mighty symbolism of such language-phenomena—possessed no word for space, so the Greek himself was destitute of our feeling of landscape, horizons, outlooks, distances, clouds, and of the idea of the far-spread fatherland embracing the great nation. Home, for Classical man, is what he can see from the citadel of his native town and no more. All that lay beyond the visual range of this political atom was alien, and hostile to boot; beyond that narrow range, fear set in at once, and hence the appalling bitterness with which these petty towns strove to destroy one another. The Polis is the smallest of all conceivable state-forms, and its policy is frankly short-range, therein differing in the extreme from our own cabinet-diplomacy which is the policy of the unlimited. Similarly, the Classical temple, which can be taken in in one glance, is the smallest of all first-rate architectural forms. Classical geometry from Archytas to Euclid—like the school geometry of to-day which is still dominated by it—concerned itself with small, manageable figures and bodies, and therefore remained unaware of the difficulties that arise in establishing figures of astronomical dimensions, which in many cases are not amenable to Euclidean geometry . . . . The Classical mind as unquestioningly devoted and limited itself to the study of the small and the near as ours has to that of the infinite and ultra-visual" (Ibid., pp. 83-84).

118 Ibid., p. 330.
119 Ibid., p. 308.
120 Blackstone, in The Consecrated Urn, p. 76, says this poem is dated 1815/16 in the Woodhouse Manuscript. See also Garrod, Poetical Works, p. 528, for another version of the sestet.
121 The charioteer is an interesting figure for the poet, not only because he flies through space but because of the method by which he does it. If his movement on earth is typical of his activity, we can assume his flights through space are swift. In contrast to the more usual leisurely pace in Keats's poetry, this description is fast-paced. "And now" repeated four times, "soon appear" and words and phrases like "numerous trampings quiver lightly," "wheel downward," "flit onward," "streamy manes," in combination with the abruptness of the charioteer's departure all combine to emphasize his quick motion. The charioteer, though in the earthly
realm, seems not to be confined by space, for as motion increases a sense of spatial restriction decreases. The imagination in its metaphoric flights through space epitomizes freedom and adventure as well as divine insight.

122 Perkins, in *The Quest for Permanence*, pp. 259-66, comments on this stance in Keats's poetry with reference to both "On first looking into Chapman's Homer" and *Endymion* II.161-63. He sees this stance as representing an inability "to leave the earth behind in an unreserved commitment to vision." But he adds that "only the visionary dares even to look out to sea." His analysis is consistent with my initial point—that Keats's imagination is not so Faustian as those of his Romantic peers.


125 Spengler, *The Decline of the West*, I, 176.
CONCLUSION

Although this study ends with an analysis of Keats's space-consciousness, it could properly be extended to include many other writers, indeed even painters, those as diverse as the "Romantic" Piranesi and Fuseli and the more modern, scientific M. C. Escher. While space is naturally embodied in the painter's art, we have seen how it is also an integral part of Romantic poetry and serves as one means of defining the Romantic imagination and its powers. The Romantic age, strictly considered, should include only those writers in the early nineteenth century. But the Romantic age also signals an important shift in sensibility, a shift in the definitions of the role of the poet and imagination; these new attitudes, while we define them as Romantic, lived on in Victorian writers, who adapted and rejected them in a variety of ways, and live on today, in spite of Hulme, Eliot, and company, to confirm Spengler's recognition that modern Western man is essentially Faustian. Thus, the study of Romantic space-consciousness in many ways might be considered a study in modern space-consciousness as
well. I would like to speculate about the possible directions a study of Romantic space-consciousness, broadly defined, might go.

DeQuincey would be a good starting point. Echoing Wordsworth's surprisingly modern definition of urban space, DeQuincey sees London as "sole, dark, infinite--brooding over the whole capacities of [his] heart"; London is an "unfathomed abyss" "expanding her visionary gates to receive [him], like some dreadful mouth of Acheron." Although the city is "terrific" and represents a variety of infinitudes, it is also crowded with "evanescent images of . . . flying feet" (Part I, Confessions of an English Opium-Eater). The city--and the infinity it represents--can be overpowering, especially when the imagination creates of apparent boundlessness a new world, mythologized and filled with potent mesocosmic symbols--gates of Hell, and peopled with demonic figures. While DeQuincey's London parallels Wordsworth's it is also not unlike Dickens's London, alive with inanimate demonic objects and filled with inanimate sleep-walking people. Nor is DeQuincey's view unlike the modern attitude toward urban space and the modern obsession both with size and with crowding, and aware of the almost autonomous powers of space to affect its inhabitants.

To a Romantic imagination, space--urban, natural,
or cosmic, is rarely empirical, objectively understood space, for the subjective response imposes itself on the concrete reality, making of it a new and mythical world. The power of the spatial imagination DeQuincey admired in Shakespeare when he defended the knocking at the gate in Macbeth; in that play DeQuincey believes Shakespeare's imagination had created a new world for the murderers to inhabit, a "world of devils,"
"insulated--cut off by an immeasurable gulf from the ordinary tide and succession of human affairs--locked up and sequestered in some deep recess." Like London, this world (or DeQuincey's interpretation of it) is not in actuality cut off from the real world and is no more a "deep recess" than London is an "unfathomed abyss." While the more scientific "Literature of Knowledge" (to use DeQuincey's distinction) may be concerned with objective space, the "Literature of Power" can create a hell. But just as the "Literature of Power" can create a hell, so too it can be "a step ascending as upon a Jacob's ladder from earth to mysterious altitudes above earth"; as DeQuincey says, defining Milton's power, it can lead one in "an ascending movement into another element where earth if forgotten" (Literature of Knowledge and Literature of Power).

In DeQuincey, dreams have powers similar to those of the powerful and sublime imagination. They conduct
one to another world, often an intensely spatial world, one where "the Sense of space, and in the end the sense of time [are] both powerfully affected," one where "buildings, landscapes, &c., [are] exhibited in proportions so vast as the bodily eye is not fitted to receive," one where "space swell[s], and [is] amplified to an extent of unutterable and self-repeating infinity," and one where an imaginary Piranesi is repeatedly viewed in his dream on repeating ever-extending staircases (Part III, Confessions of an English Opium-Eater). This is the underside of Romantic space-consciousness; internal spaciousness leads to external spaciousness, in DeQuincey's case, to a frightening awareness of infinity which parallels the infinite imagination, evoked in the dream.

A more positive view of the correlation between internal and external infinities is explained in DeQuincey's "System of the Heaven as Revealed by Lord Rosse's Telescopes":

Great is the mystery of Space, greater is the mystery of Time. Either mystery grows upon man as man himself grows; and either seems to be a function of the godlike which is in man. In reality, the depths and the heights which are in man, the depths by which he searches, the heights by which he aspires, are but projected and made objective externally in the three dimensions of space which are outside of him. He trembles at the abyss into which his bodily eyes look down, or look up; not knowing that abyss to be, not always consciously suspecting it to be, but by an instinct written in his prophetic heart
feeling it to be, boding it to be, fearing it to be, and sometimes hoping it to be, the mirror to a mightier abyss that will one day be expanded in himself.

The experience of outer space, of its mysteries and depths, parallels the Romantic spatial imagination at its most optimistic.

Less obviously struck by the mysteries of cosmic space, Victorian poets in a variety of ways, provide ample material for a study of Romantic space-consciousness. For example, we can see, by ignoring the social implications of the last stanzas of The Palace of Art, that Tennyson recognized the powers of the imagination to create a world of its own, to encompass all space in its creations; for in that poem all the elements of the external world are included in the palace of art, yet they are removed from the flux and impurity of the ordinary world. No less than Shelley's cave in Prometheus Unbound, this world is apart, mimicking heaven. While Tennyson's condemnation of this kind of "Godlike isolation" is almost unqualified, nonetheless he was aware of the quasi-eternal, quasi-infinite world of the imagination, a world he defined less critically in "The Hesperides." In addition, the force of symbolic heights is evident in poems like "The Lady of Shalott" and The Palace of Art, quest-like voyages and travels recur in his poems, and mesocosmic islands focus his dreams of perfection. As we have seen, all these spatial
symbols have potent force for the Romantic imagination.

Arnold's imagination, too, was powerfully spatial. An elaborate and fairly consistent spatial symbolism pervades his poetry. His infinite and eternal realm—mountain tops or calm stars—is inhabited by the Sage figures who live aloft removed from flux and process; boundless deserts, burning plains, ocean wastes are tracked by Byron-like Madmen; the ocean provides a compelling analogy for his view of life in a poem like "Human Life"; and the heights and depths of Etna serve as a fitting symbol and setting for the titanic Empedocles whose "soul glows to meet" the sea of fire in the volcano's depths. If there are no highly defined cosmic realms in Arnold's poetry, no Cain-like voyagers nor spirits' travels as in Prometheus Unbound, there is a powerful mythologizing of the natural world in a poem like "The Scholar-Gipsy" as well as the mythical axis mundi of Etna's crater in Empedocles on Etna; and there is a beautifully realized undersea realm in "The Forsaken Merman" which only in length is diminished by comparison with the submarine world of Endymion. Although Arnold and Tennyson are no Romantics in terms of strict literary history and although they differ in striking ways from the Romantics, the space-consciousness of their Romantic predecessors exerted a strong influence on their depictions of space, on their ability to create their
own imagined and symbolic worlds, and on the kinds of spatial symbols and polarities which define their themes.

Although many modern examples of Romantic space-consciousness could perhaps be cited, the literary sub-classes of science-fiction and utopian fiction might provide a most illuminating place to start an investigation. Both classes of fiction commonly create new worlds, removed in space and time from the writer's own. Subterranean, submarine, and cosmic worlds, often inhabited by ideal men who have attained their utmost Faustian desires, are common in science-fiction. Like the disembodied spirits of *Prometheus Unbound*, they may inhabit all space, traverse space in such a way as to make it irrelevant, and understand all the mysteries of the infinite cosmic worlds or the boundless depths of subterranean or submarine worlds. The creators of such fiction, though perhaps lacking in formal talent (and respectability) recognize no less than the Romantic poets that the mind can create its own place; the almost daily advances of modern science in addition make the modern Romantic particularly Faustian in his spatial concepts. The modern imagination has come to believe that almost nothing is impossible. If a realistic modern reader is disinclined to take Wordsworth's mythologizing of nature seriously, he may recognize
nonetheless that the mind's abilities to create a more perfect world—in some other sphere—are not so limited. The difference is in the location, not the attitude.

Modern utopian writers are similar to authors of science-fiction in that they too create new worlds, more recently worlds removed in time rather than space. Like writers of science-fiction and like several of the Romantic poets, they too are haunted by the potentials of science. Keats to the contrary notwithstanding, science and imagination go hand in hand for as modern man learns more about his world and the cosmos, he comes to believe that the powers of mind are unlimited. But utopian writers (or specifically dystopian writers) also recognize that the mind, in conjunction with the sinister powers of science can create a hell. A brave new world may be a new world, a created world, but it is a prison, not a world where the infinite powers of mind are exercised. The mind, with the potential of creating a "Heav'n of Hell," can equally create a "Hell of Heav'n." Brave New World should remind us, however, of Huxley's The Doors of Perception and his utopia, The Island, both of which advocate the use of mind-expanding drugs. If the modern imagination lacks the power to create a new world or to see the infinite naturally, then the prophet of the drug-culture would have one expand the horizons of the mind chemically.
We have yet to see any profound results in modern literature from such chemical stimuli, but again the impulse to awaken the infinite in the mind is typically Romantic. The modern man, no less than the poets of the early nineteenth century, often desires to create a new and better world, to escape the confines of earthly space, and to inhabit vast unlimited space. The Romantic imagination is a means to these goals.
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