

To Strive, to Seek, to Find:
The Image of Intellectual Quest in Victorian Literature

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July 2000

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Acknowledgements

A debt of appreciation is due to my late husband, Charles, and to my family and friends who in so many ways have always encouraged me in this project. I should like to express my gratitude to the Sidney Jones Library Staff for their kindness and their help in searching for texts, and also to Barbara Smith, a stalwart member of the English Department Office Staff, whose interest and patience – apparent during the many years she has looked after me – has been most noticeable during her recent typing of my thesis for presentation. My special gratitude, however, I must express to Brian Nellist, my supervisor, for his guidance, his helpful encouragement and his enthusiastic attitude towards my work; an enthusiasm which helped to support me through the difficult times.

Finally, I dedicate this work to my late husband Charles, and to our children – Sarah, Timothy, Jeremy and Daniel.

Preface

When, ten years ago now, I studied the literature of the Victorian period, or more accurately periods, in more detail than I had done before, in the part-time MA course in the subject, I was struck by the extraordinary diversity of Victorian ideas and values. This is, I know, a common enough experience but I was also impressed by the sense that very often the thinking was, for all the conviction with which it was uttered, a deliberate mental adventure, that there was a delight in the sense of taking on and fighting against a surrounding sense of confusion. Even when there was no explicit admiration for medieval culture being openly expressed, the trial metaphor often seemed to be that of the knight-errant, the daring mind engaged in the risky business of taking its destiny in its own hands and journeying out to find its appointed task. The subject was often inward or intellectual but the way in which it was discussed invoked a sense of vigorous activity and physical struggle. It was this union of inner and outer, of idea and Romance motifs which drew me to the notion of the quest and its varied import in the period.

The subject is vast and demanded selection because I did not want it to become a general survey of the idea in the period, even had my knowledge made such an ambition feasible. Close study of particular texts to show the intricate development of the metaphor of the destined journey seemed the most accurate route. The poems by the three greatest Victorian poets, writing in the full strength of their powers, seemed self-selecting. When it came to the problem of how a writer would present his own life as intellectual quest I chose Newman and Ruskin because they seemed to be following different patterns for the life-journey. The increasing crisis of later Victorian thought led me to choose three contrasted novels from that period to look at a range of responses

to the threatened sense of purpose, the quest subjected to ironic scrutiny. Conrad's 'Heart of Darkness' was too evidently relevant to be omitted since even though its date of book-publication was 1902 it was serialised within the period in 1899. It might have made an end point, a natural conclusion to the thesis but, in a period when exploration was so important and when it was to such entry into 'unknown lands' that Conrad alludes, the study could not be in any sense complete without some attention to the actual quests of men opening up the world to European attention. Darwin and Speke by their contrasted intentions show the polarities between which the quester moves, the mental act of understanding and the physical act of daring and adventure.

The thesis has been written over a long period with several unavoidable suspensions of study. I am conscious that the texts I have used have been often miscellaneous and that they have subsequently been replaced by more modern and scholarly editions. Circumstances have made it necessary to confine myself to the resources of the Sydney Jones and the Harold Cohen Libraries and I am grateful to the courtesy and helpfulness of their staff when books I used years ago have been subsequently mislaid or have gone missing.

Introduction

As a story structure, the quest formula has always been used to reflect the fundamental crisis of the human condition.¹ It is able to provide the heroic figures who embody aspirations and sufferings universally recognised. The narrative drive of the quest, the physical experience of the 'journey', with its attendant challenges and reversals, can also become, as in *The Faerie Queene* a metaphor for intellectual quest. Mental and physical qualities become metaphorically interchangeable.

The idea of a relationship between the physical quest and internal, intellectual struggle is clearly articulated, for example, in a text that has usually been taken to define attitudes in the early Italian Renaissance. Petrarch presents a physical journey, his ascent of Mont Ventoux, as an analogy for his spiritual progress. He records that as he rested between several disappointingly unsuccessful attempts to gain the summit of the mountain, he suddenly 'leaped in my winged thoughts from things corporeal to what is incorporeal' and then addressed himself as follows:

'What you have so often experienced today while climbing the mountain happens to you, you must know, and to many others who are making their way toward the blessed life. This is not easily understood by us men, because the motions of the body lie open, while those of the mind are invisible and hidden. The life we call blessed is located on a high peak. "A narrow way" [Matt. 7:14, Sermon on the Mount] they say, leads up to it. Many hilltops intervene, and we must proceed "from virtue to virtue" with exalted steps. On the highest summit is set the end of all, the goal toward which our pilgrimage is directed. (. . .) Would that I might achieve with my mind the journey for which I am longing day and night as I achieved with the feet of my body my journey today after overcoming all obstacles. (. . .) I will not speak of what is still left undone, for I am not

yet in port that I might think in security of the
storms I have had to endure.’²

Petrarch’s metaphoric sea-voyage image, ‘I am not yet in port that I might think in serenity of the storms I have had to endure’ is not a cry of despair for the lack of a meaningful goal, but is a description of his continuing exploration of the nature of his own being and his confidence that under God the purpose of life can be known. When he finally reaches the summit of his mountain climb, Petrarch recounts how he opened his volume of Augustine’s Confessions, and where his eyes first alighted he read:

And men go to admire the high mountains, the vast floods of the sea, the huge streams of the rivers, the circumferences of the ocean, and the revolutions of the stars – and desert themselves (*Renaissance Philosophy of Man*, p.44).

Augustine’s words lead Petrarch to consider that the primary thing is knowledge of ourselves. Yet in their intellectual search for truth, men go in pursuit of knowledge to other countries and neglect the country which is their own mind. They ‘look without for what can be found within’ (p.45). Petrarch confesses that St. Augustine’s words ‘stunned’ him and he recounts how he:

Closed the book, angry with myself that I still admired earthly things. Long since I ought to have learned, even from pagan philosophers, that ‘nothing is admirable besides the mind; compared to its greatness nothing is great’ (*Renaissance Philosophy of Man*, p.44).

For Petrarch, of the twin versions of the quest, material and spiritual, undoubtedly the spiritual is the more important. But for a later Renaissance writer like Bacon, the introspective voyage towards the divine is unknowable and has been the

object of too much ink spent in vain. The physical journey properly demands our attention because it at least produces definable results and a more certain knowledge.

The voyage metaphors of Francis Bacon are discussed and analysed by Philip Edwards in his book *Sea-Mark: The Metaphorical Voyage, Spenser to Milton*. Edwards states 'A voyage is a journey somewhere, (. . .) Navigation has to do with the control of one's life, with the direction in which one is heading, or believes one is heading'.³ In his study of Bacon's use of the voyage metaphor he claims, 'In his writings, Francis Bacon was constantly associating the progress of knowledge with voyaging' (*Sea-Mark*, p.151). Hence, book-writing itself becomes a quest: 'The effort to liberate mankind, through the medium of his writings, was itself seen as a voyage' (*Sea-Mark*, p.152). In the 1605 *Advancement of Learning* Bacon had described the initial coasting voyage 'as in itself a round-the-world voyage':

Thus have I made as it were a small Globe of the Intellectual world, as truly and faithfully as I coulde discover, with a note and description of those parts which seeme to mee, not constantly occupate, or not well converted by the labour of Man. (BkII (iii p.490), in *Sea-Mark*, p.153).

Edwards reasons that 'the voyage as an image of the quest for new knowledge is shown admirably in his [Bacon's] use of the word "discovery"' (*Sea-Mark*, p.158). He claims Bacon's use of the word "Discovery" in respect of the workings of nature is a metaphor imported from voyages of discovery' (*Sea-Mark*, p.160). And he refers to what he believes is Bacon's first use of the word "discovery" in the intellectual or scientific sense' in his work, *Valerius Terminus: Of The Interpretation of Nature*, claiming that 'it occurs in the context of voyaging and exploration' (*Sea-Mark*, p.161). He quotes Bacon's words:

The true end, scope, or office of knowledge. . . I have set downe to consist not in anie plausible, delectable, reverend, or admired discourse, . . . but in effecting and workinge, and in discovery of particulers not revealed before for the better indowment and helpe of mans life (*Valerius Terminus*, in *Sea-Mark*, p.161).

It is a definition of 'discovery' which is 'the finding out of what is unknown, for the benefit of mankind' (*Sea-Mark*, p.161), to advance human knowledge. And the basic meaning, for Bacon of 'to find out', 'to discover', 'was to remove the covering of ignorance, and reveal the secrets of God' (*Sea-Mark*, p.159).

Bacon's confidence about the value of the physical journey, which includes the mental results of practical discovery, could also be read, however, as a doubt about the capacity of the mind of its own accord to find out its ultimate objectives. He keeps that anxiety quiet by an appeal to a religious belief that is largely Calvinistic in its separation of the realm of grace from that of nature. His mind is at least as sceptical as it is scientifically confident, as in his famous analysis of the idols of the mind in the *Novum Organum*. It is that scepticism about the functioning of the mind in itself which is eventually to produce the apparently very different model of its activity offered by the philosopher David Hume. According to Hume, the basis of all ethics is an emotional feeling, an emotional response. Literature, the reading of poetry, myth, including the quest, can affect behaviour and have an influence on belief systems but not on the Baconian sciences

What is distinctive about the major Victorian uses of the idea of the journey of discovery is that they characteristically place the emphasis where Petrarch did, on the need for interior exploration, for some end for life itself which would lie beyond the

physical difficulty of climbing a mountain or crossing an unknown sea. Yet they do so with all the scepticism about the certainty of the result, with as much of a sense of the mind's delusions as Bacon or Hume possessed. Though they want to use the image of the quest, as metaphor that is, the analogy comes undone, since the idea not only of destination but of an agreed road itself often is at the same time being denied.

In *Short Studies on Great Subjects*, for example, James Anthony Froude, in the essay he entitled 'Representative Men', writes also of a journey, a journey through life:

In setting out on our journey through life, we are like strangers set to find their way across a difficult and entangled country. It is not enough for us to know that others have set out as we set out, that others have faced the lions in the path and overcome them, and have arrived at the journey's end. Such a knowledge may give us heart – but the help it gives us is nothing beyond teaching us that the difficulties are not insuperable. It is the 'track' which these others, these pioneers of godliness, have beaten in, that we cry to have shown us, not a mythic 'Pilgrims Progress', but a real path trodden by real men.⁴

Froude cries out for guidance in an age where the saints 'are no longer any service to us,' as they once were to the Renaissance Petrarch, 'we must walk in their spirit, but not along their road' (*Short Studies*, p.482). He expresses his sense of the need for intellectual and moral direction at a time when men no longer know who they are, or what they are, because all direction has gone; 'no pattern great men, no biographies, no history, which are of any real service to us' (*Short Studies*, p.482). The situation, claims Froude, 'is the remarkable characteristic of the present-time, as far as we know – a new phenomenon since history began to be written' (*Short Studies*, p.482). None of the old certainties now stand firm.

The history of thought from 1830 onwards, religious thought in particular, is a history of successive blows. Froude was speaking for all his contemporaries, for men like Carlyle, Kingsley and Arnold, when late in life he remembered the 1840's:

Thus all round us the intellectual lightships had broken from their moorings, and it was then a new and trying experience. The present generation which has grown up in an open spiritual ocean, which has got used to it and has learned to swim for itself, will never know what it was to find the lights all drifting, the compasses all awry, nothing left to steer by except the stars.⁵

Froude's navigation images are associated with the difficulties of voyaging – 'lightships breaking from their moorings, lights all drifting, compasses all awry', and convey his sense of human helplessness, the intellectual confusion, which developed when the old dogma and the old creed no longer stood firm. For when what had claimed to be absolute truth had been rejected, the intellectual search for standards troubled many minds, who had nothing left 'to steer by'.

The immediate contrast would be with the intellectual world of Classical antiquity:

In the mythology of the ancient world we frequently hear of land, air and sea routes which traverse the whole of creation (. . .). It would seem that the universe possessed a whole network of routes so that we could travel to any part of it with more ease than is today advertised by our travel brochures (. . .). It is a world in which above all man is never alone, because there are roads along which he may travel to meet the meaning which is seeking him out.⁶

According to this account, in the mythology of the ancient world, 'meaning' is not passively waiting to be 'discovered', or 'revealed', but is, itself, actively participating in the 'seeking', the search. Meaning is also a quester.

Behind Froude stands the mentor whose biography he was to write, Thomas Carlyle, and it is he who, more than any other single writer, defined for his age the intellectual life as a journey and defined its needs and hazards for his contemporaries. Carlyle's metaphorical language for 'revelation' is not 'discovery' but 'seeing' – seeing that Nature, which includes man, is the 'Living Garment of God'.⁷ Carlyle attempted to form the general outlook of the nineteenth century and his is the prophetic voice announcing its mission to be relentlessly engaged in the activity of truth-seeking and truth-creating. His aim was to imbue in society a post-Christian spirituality, to reveal the unseen, inner spirit, beneath the perceived outer reality of form. It is this revelation which Carlyle's quester, Teufelsdröckh, makes on his intellectual journey in *Sartor Resartus*. J.A. Froude praises Carlyle's writings for its power of discovery:

dogma and tradition had melted like a mist, and the awful central fact [of God's reality and the moral law] burnt clear once more in the midst of heaven (Froude, *Carlyle*, I, p.293).

Carlyle's writing had 'melted' the rigid forms of 'dogma and tradition' for Froude. And for himself, and for thousands of other young Englishmen, Carlyle's vision was like the sound of 'five hundred trumpets in their ears' (Froude: *Carlyle*, I, p.292). Carlyle's imagination had dissolved and diffused old theory, in order to recreate, and it had revealed, 'discovered', the old certainties still standing firm, in the 'inner spirit' of the thing.

It is in the 'poetic' moments in *Sartor* however, when articulation offers itself as a form of the inarticulable, that Carlyle is at his most convincing. For then he seems to communicate a deeper truth of feeling than he is able to communicate through his prophetic voice. Yet he was trying to assert, albeit in a different form, what believers had asserted down the centuries. Unless man believed he 'saw' God immanent in Nature, he could not believe God was in himself too, and he would, therefore, be left without belief and without its attendant way of life. Carlyle struggled to create a form which was not dead, as he struggled to discover a metaphorical language which would help him to move forward from the stasis of his analytical 'Centre of Indifference'. He wanted a form which he could sustain in the nineteenth century as a linear quest, though *Sartor Resartus* still shows the sheer difficulty of the task, without either the formal, horizontal structure of guidance to Bunyan's Celestial City, or the formal, vertical structure of Dante's 'Paradiso', without, that is, Petrarch's belief that to the mind the material world is metaphor indicating the greater certainty of the divine.

Carlyle clearly did not wish to go forward to a Baconian science, which in his view, as industrialization, is deadening to creativity, yet, from a letter he wrote to Robert Mitchell (August 1816) it is apparent that classical science, in terms of Sir. Isaac Newton's ideas, profoundly interested him as a form of creativity:

When *will* there arise a man who shall do for the science of mind – what Newton did for that of matter – establish its fundamental laws on the firm basis of induction – and discard forever these absurd theories – that so many dreamers have devised?⁸

If a Newtonian-type science could be established for the mind, for the workings of the mind, Carlyle would not have to rely on symbols alone to speak his vision, for he would

then have a new language of the mind to enable him to interpret and communicate the unseen, the reality that lies beyond the physical.

Carlyle quested in many different modes, trying to discover the lost paradise of certainty. His great vitalistic voice, one of if not the major, inspiring and influential intellectual voice of the age, denounces both materialism and the mechanical; but when he suggests objectives, it speaks in terms close to fiction, poetry or biography. The frequent Biblical overtones, however, together with his backward-looking diction and cadenzas of Biblical parallelism, persuasively link his argument to a thesis which was widely understood. In *Sartor Resartus* his prose style locates his quest within the old scriptural framework, yet the quest's purpose is to press forward into a vision of a renewed spirit of religion.

One of the values of the quest form for Carlyle was that it enabled him to speak his vision as a seer, trying to lead mankind through his symbolic language to a reconstruction of thought, to a new vision of the universe where authority could be established upon an aesthetic basis. Pater, in *Marius the Epicurean*, says that his hero, Marius, 'apprehended the Great Ideal' in his experience of reading 'Prophets of Sensibility', in Victorian terms Carlyle, who 'gave him a definitely ascertained measure of his moral or intellectual need, of the demand his soul must make upon the powers, whatever they might be, which had brought him, as he was, into the world at all.'⁹ In his *Unfinished History of German Literature*, Carlyle himself metaphorically attributes the qualities of a quester-knight to the Europe of the Middle Ages, to Medieval Europe athirst with 'that noble zeal for knowledge'.¹⁰ His interest in medieval culture was in a period which 'knew and practically asserted that beyond the sphere of science there is

an Invisible Kingdom in man' (*German Literature*, p.70). In effect, they, the Europe of the Middle Ages, knew and practically asserted 'the Everlasting Yea' that Teufelsdröckh proclaims at the crisis of his conversion, when he rejects the scientific idea of the Universe as being nothing but mechanical, 'one huge, dead, immeasurable Steam-engine, rolling on, in its dead indifference' (*Sartor*, p.164).

Carlyle's claim that his quest in Nature is to reveal the 'Volume of Nature (. . .) whose Author and writer is God' (*Sartor*, p.236), links him to the Romantic quester poets Wordsworth and Coleridge as they were so frequently interpreted by their Victorian readers. A later writer, William Hale White, who owed most to Carlyle, claims that Wordsworth: 'unconsciously did for me what every spiritual reformer has done – he re-created my Supreme Divinity; substituting a new and living spirit for the old deity, once active, but gradually hardened into an idol.' About Wordsworth himself, Rutherford writes, 'Wordsworth's real God was not the God of the Church, but the God of the hills, the abstraction Nature.'¹¹

Petrarch, feeling the weariness of the physical exploit, the first climb of Mont Ventoux, turns to the greater certainty offered by the mind's ascent to God. Bacon replaces the doubt of that objective by the discovery of the secrets hidden by God in the created world. But Wordsworth makes the mysterious delight he finds in the physical into the end itself, a direct apprehension of the divine in moments of intense apprehension: *The Prelude* with its many journeys is a quest poem in which the object of the search is the poet's own identity in its relation to the world and God. When after the vision on Snowdon in the last book of the poem he reflects on what he has seen, in

the 1805 version, which of course the Victorians never knew, he comments that the abyss in the mist:

appear'd to me
The perfect image of a mighty Mind,
Of one that feeds upon infinity,
That is exalted by an under-presence,
The sense of God, or whatso'er is dim
Or vast in its own being.¹²

Petrarch's God here becomes the 'sense of God', the individual's response to its own intimations.

Carlyle's mental pilgrimage was to recapture such a vision of God working in Nature and history. And through the doctrine of the natural and the super-natural, to awaken man's mind deadened by custom and moral insensibility. Yet unlike the quest journey of Petrarch, whose ideas and beliefs were instantly recognizable by his Catholic readers, the nineteenth century quest journeys of Wordsworth and Carlyle had no such external warrant for what the internal journey might be, when the old theorem was no longer seen as valid.

In 'Characteristics', written in 1831, Carlyle develops the argument that the human psyche is unknowable and he reasons that action, alone, can save man from a sense of horror, futility, and the danger of his position. Work has a moral value; doubt can only be removed by action:

Nevertheless, doubt as we will, man is actually
Here; not to ask questions, but to do work.¹³

Carlyle became the major prophet of work, finding, as did many nineteenth-century intellectuals, that intense activity was both a rational method of attacking the anxieties

and doubts of the time, and an irrational ways of escaping them. Through work man could re-discover faith pragmatically.

More than anyone else Carlyle contributed to English culture in the fifty years after 1830, the idea of the hero, the 'Great' man. In *Sartor Resartus* Carlyle declares his belief that 'Great-men are the inspired Text of that divine Book of Revelation whereof a Chapter is completed from epoch to epoch, and by some named HISTORY' (*Sartor*, p.177). And in *On Heroes and Hero Worship*, he claims that hero worship is 'the basis of all possible good, religious or social, for mankind.'¹⁴ Force becomes Carlyle's great animating principle and great men of force – the strong, just man – become his ideal. In his quest for a deeper and more spiritual interpretation of experience, Carlyle is led to claim that only through the immediate vision of a triumphant hero, not by argument addressed to the intellect, can man find the inner joy of renewed energy and freedom: can he rid himself of the fear of meaninglessness. Worshipping heroes is acknowledging the godlike in human form, the spirit of God that is innerly in man, 'The Ideal (. . .) in thyself' (*Sartor*, p.187). In his critique, 'Boswell's Life of Johnson', Carlyle passionately proclaims his belief that the 'Life of every good man (. . .) preaches (. . .) these gladdest tidings: "Man is heaven-born, not the thrall of Circumstances of Necessity, but the victorious subduer thereof"' (*Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, p.90). His readership is therefore encouraged to 'ever reverence Great-Men' for 'does not every true man feel that he is himself made higher by doing reverence to what is really above him?' (*Heroes*, pp.18-19). The intellectual spirit of the age, looking for comfort in an age of uncertain beliefs, welcomed ideas of heroism and strong individualism as something they could continue to believe in, for

when man felt God was fading away if not actually dead, the gods and heroes of history or myth, could take his place and save the moral sum of things.

Froude and Kingsley acknowledge the benefit of the 'atmosphere of the heroic' in Carlyle (Froude, *Short Studies*, p.486); Froude adopts the notion of hero worship as a check to the commercial spirit. He introduces a novel idea, that of modern heroes as 'great, good' men, the 'best' men, as heroes suitable for modern inspiration (Froude, *Short Studies*, pp.474-494). Kingsley, in his 'Preface' to *The Heroes*, claims, 'we call such a man a hero in English to this day' who 'left [his] country better than [he] found it.'¹⁵

These images of the hero as the 'great' man, the 'good' man, the 'best' man, the man of force who courageously helps his country to be 'better than when he found it', could find their correlative in the heroic quest voyagers and explorers of the era. For the nineteenth century was experiencing, as had Bacon's seventeenth century, a renewed period of geographic and scientific discovery. It was a period in which man's need to understand the world he lived in, and the laws which governed it, led him to heroically strive forever forward toward his goal. Alfred Tennyson, though he, like Froude, judges the era as 'an awful moment of transition,' is yet able to claim, 'this generation assuredly has some spirit of chivalry. We see it in acts of heroism by land and sea, in fights against the slave trade, in our Arctic voyages, in philanthropy etc.'¹⁶

On the one hand the world is described in terms of a variousness whose mysteries are capable of solution but on the other it is the equally mysterious intrepidity of the explorer, the defiant fortitude of the adventurer, himself, which is primary.

The journals written by adventurers who travelled to unchartered areas of the globe for the promotion of science became popular reading. Great investment was made in these expeditions, not only in terms of finance, but in terms of energy, time and, most importantly, in terms of men's lives. For on a successful outcome depended reputation, money, status and power, and of vital importance, the honour and prestige of the British nation. Paradoxically, however, the accounts of the voyages of exploration and the overland expeditions, recorded not only images of successful struggle, but images, also, of human helplessness in the face of elemental powers.

Writing about British exploration in the nineteenth century, Fergus Fleming claims:

This [1816] was the age of Romanticism, where crags of ice, tempestuous seas and tribes of undiscovered savages were far more interesting than the dry perspectives of eighteenth-century Enlightenment. As the journals of such expeditions rolled off John Murray's presses to be snatched up by an eager readership, Barrow was well aware that he was in tune with the times.¹⁷

According to Fleming, Barrow 'was the father of global exploration' (*Barrow's Boys*, p.11), the man who 'launched the most ambitious programme of exploration the world had ever seen. Between 1816 and 1845, his hand-picked teams of elite naval officers scoured the globe's empty spaces.' (*Barrow's Boys*, Fly leaf). He 'despatched volleys of expeditions (. . .) to every blank on the map that caught his fancy' (*Barrow's Boys*, p.11). Yet, at the end of his work, Fleming's judgement on Barrow is ironic:

Perhaps no man in the history of exploration has expended so much money and so many lives in pursuit of so desperately pointless a dream (*Barrow's Boys*, p.423).

Barrow's dream to fill in the blanks on his map, is echoed later in the century by the dream of Conrad's Marlow, in 'Heart of Darkness', to fill in the blanks on his map of Africa. Both dreams were romantic; neither dreamer appeared to consider the cost.

Fleming recounts that Barrow, appreciating the strength of an appeal to natural pride, had 'argued that exploration would increase scientific knowledge, that it would be a boon to national commerce, and above all that it would be a terrible blow to national pride if other countries should open up a globe over which Britain ruled supreme' (*Barrow's Boys*, p.11). At the end of his career, speaking in the same nationalistic voice about the British quest to open up the North-West Passage, Barrow argued:

If the completion of the passage be left to be performed by some other power, England, by her neglect of it, after having opened the East and West doors, would be laughed at by all the world, for having hesitated to cross the threshold (*Barrow's Boys*, p.365).

Charles Osmer, John Franklin's purser on the *Erebus*, described the general mood aboard their vessel on 19th May, 1845, as they prepared to set forth on their expedition to quest for the North-West Passage:

The suffocating sobs of delight mingled with the fearful anticipation of the dreamy void . . . could not but impress on every mind the importance and magnitude of the voyage we have entered upon (*Barrow's Boys*, p.374).

Osmer's references, in his account, to the 'fearful anticipation' and the 'magnitude of the voyage' convey a sense of the noble and the heroic which he clearly associated with the exploration and the explorer. Yet Fleming's own, slightly satiric judgement of the

‘Victorian explorer “par excellence”’, as a ‘manly’ ‘chap’, of ‘cheerful ignorance’, somewhat undermines the heroic image portrayed by Osmer. The late twentieth century scepticism only identifies the more clearly the whole heartedness, to use their own word, the ‘earnestness’ of these intrepid Victorian explorers:

Here was the Victorian explorer ‘par excellence’: a brave, patriotic chap, steadfast but daring, manly but emotional, confident but modest, willing to carry the banner of queen and country to the furthest reaches of the world; ready not only to face the void but to stare it down, and to do so in blind, cheerful ignorance (*Barrow’s Boys*, p.374).

Yet even then doubts crept in. Nine years after Charles Osmer so heroically set sail aboard the *Erebus*, on the 28th October, 1854, *The Hull Advertiser* began to express its distress at the sacrifice of lives, which the quest for geographical knowledge had entailed. Four ships had been lost whilst searching for Franklin’s expedition in the 1850’s. The *Advertiser* published the following critical article: ‘The mania of Arctic expedition has lasted long enough . . . We admit the claim of science but not to the extent of repeated wholesale sacrifice of human life’ (*Barrow’s Boys*, p.410). John Roe, the Hudson’s Bay Company overland man, who had found out what had happened to Franklin, whilst travelling overland to explore King William Land, reported that he had learnt from the Eskimos the ‘gruesome details;’ – ‘a story of cannibalism and wholesale death by starvation’ (*Barrow’s Boys*, p.411).

Fleming derisively assesses Franklin’s quest as a quest of mistakes and mismanagement; by inference, questioning the value judgement of the general public who acclaimed Franklin a hero. Fleming argues that Franklin ‘was directly responsible for the deaths of his men by his decision to press eastwards at any cost’. He ‘had

mapped only a miniscule portion of a coastline that everyone already knew existed'. And he had mismanaged almost every stage of the 'journey'. Nevertheless, to the public he was a hero, for 'He was the man who had eaten his boots' (*Barrow's Boys*, p.153). To the public he was the heroic voyager, the quester who had struggled to succeed against the greater forces of nature.

The heroism of nineteenth century voyagers was the theme of a speech given by McClintock, one of Barrow's longest lived explorers, to mark the half-centenary of Franklin's departure:

In laying down their lives at the call of duty our countrymen bequeathed to us a rich gift – another of these noble examples not yet rare in our history, and of which we are all so justly proud, one more beacon light to guide our sons to deeds of heroism in the future. These examples of unflinching courage, devotion to duty, and endurance of hardships are as life-blood to naval enterprise (*Barrow's Boys*, p.424).

There is no word here about economic advantage or scientific discovery; the actual voyage becomes a metaphor for the adventure of the spirit, with the 'beacon-light' as an image for the noble and heroic life proper for the sons of Britain.

Fleming acknowledges that 'Barrow's dream inspired many others'. Clements Markham whom Fleming refers to as an "impressionable" midshipman, was greatly taken by the ethos of Barrow's expeditions, 'the struggle to succeed, the pitting of human strength against the far greater forces of nature' (*Barrow's Boys*, pp.423-4). Indeed, much later, Roald Amundsen, the famous and successful twentieth-century explorer, confessed in his autobiography that it was the heroic stories of Barrow's men which had inspired his quests of exploration:

They thrilled me as nothing I had ever read before. What appealed to me most was the suffering that Sir John (Franklin) and his men had to endure. A strange ambition burned within me, to endure the same privations . . . I decided to become an explorer (*Barrow's Boys*, p.424).

Fleming, critical of the pursuit of 'pointless goals' is suspicious of that frame of mind that wants 'to strive, to seek, to find and not to yield'. What contemporaries found admirable was less the end product of the search than the human qualities it demanded, what McClintock called 'unflinching courage, devotion to duty, and endurance of hardships'. In those Carlylean terms a life apparently far from adventure could still present itself as a constant movement through uncertainty towards the hidden objectives.

The ending of the heroic age of Arctic exploration was symptomatic of a general doubt about the identity of the quest. After about 1870 the distressing sense of the relativity of knowledge and the subjective character of thought, undermined the earlier confidence that truth was subject to heroic assault or that the end of the journey lay in a revelation of God. Although intellectuals like Matthew Arnold, threw their whole weight against relativism, for Arnold the end of the intellectual quest was neither doubt nor the certainty of a Newman who metaphorically claimed to have sailed safely into port, into the one true Church of Rome, but reconstruction. As G.M. Young puts it, Arnold desired 'The gradual improvement of the race, by the transmission of a life more and more in harmony within itself and more and more sovereign over circumstances'.¹⁸ It is the changing identity of these 'circumstances' which alters everything; Heaven is no longer open to be taken by storm. As Young grandly puts it, 'the secular intellect (was) seeking its way to such an apprehension of Being as Process as might hereafter

reconcile the spiritual demands of humanity with the rapt and cosmic indifference of Evolution' (*Portrait of an Age*, p.110).

From Carlyle, it is only a step to the attitude defined by Dobrée in 1934; yet how different is the habit of mind that step produces:

In our present confusion our only hope is to be scrupulously honest with ourselves, so honest as to doubt our own minds and the conclusions they arrive at. Most of us have ceased to believe, except provisionally, in truths, and we feel that which is important is not so much truth as the way our minds move towards truths.¹⁹

¹ Joseph Campbell, *Hero with a Thousand Faces* (Cleveland and New York: Meridian Books, 1970), p. 30 ff.

² Petrarch Francesco, 'The Ascent of Mont Ventoux,' in *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man*, eds. Ernst Cassirer, Paul Oskar Kristeller, John Herman Randall, Jr. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1959), pp.39-42; hereafter referred to as *Renaissance Philosophy of Man*.

³ Philip Edwards, *Sea-Mark: The Metaphorical Voyage, Spenser to Milton* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1997), p.3; hereafter referred to as *Sea-Mark*.

⁴ James Anthony Froude, 'Representative Men', in *Short Studies on Great Subjects* (London and Glasgow: Collins Press, 1850), p.481; hereafter referred to as *Froude: Short Studies*.

⁵ James Anthony Froude, *Thomas Carlyle: A History of His Life in London, 1834-1881*, 2 vols. (London: Longmans Green, 1885), vol.I pp.290-1; hereafter referred to as Froude, *Carlyle*.

⁶ Thomas Fawcett, *The Symbolic Language of Religion* (London: SCM Press, 1970), pp.75-76.

⁷ Thomas Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus* 1834, in *Sartor Resartus and Selected Prose*, introd. Herbert Lewis Sussman (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1970), p.182; hereafter referred to as *Sartor*.

⁸ Thomas Carlyle and Jane Welsh Carlyle, *The Collected Letters of Thomas and Jane Welsh Carlyle*, 2 vols. ed. Charles R. Saunders (Northern Carolina: Duke University Press, 1970), Vol.1. 1812-1821, p.84.

⁹ Walter Pater, *Marius The Epicurean: His Sensations and The Ideas*, 2 vols (London: MacMillan, 1929), II, p.187.

¹⁰ Thomas Carlyle, *Unfinished History of German Literature*, ed. Hill Shine (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1951), p.76; hereafter referred to as *German Literature*.

¹¹ *The Autobiography of Mark Rutherford*, 1881 (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1924), pp.18-19.

¹² William Wordsworth, *The Prelude*, ed. Ernest de Selincourt, rev. Helen Darbishire (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), pp.482-84, xiii, ll.68-73.

¹³ Thomas Carlyle, 'Characteristics', in *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, 5 vols. (London: Chapman & Hall, 1899), vol.III, p.28; hereafter referred to as *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*.

¹⁴ Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero Worship, and The Heroic In History*, 1841 (London: Dent, 1908), p.123; hereafter referred to as *Heroes*.

¹⁵ Charles Kingsley, *The Heroes* (London and Beccles: William Clowes, 1855), p.24.

¹⁶ Hallam Tennyson, *Alfred Lord Tennyson: A Memoir*, 2 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1897), II, p.337.

¹⁷ Fergus Fleming, *Barrow's Boys* (London: Granta Books, 1998), p.12; hereafter referred to as *Barrow's Boys*.

¹⁸ G.M. Young, *Portrait of an Age: Victorian England*, 2nd edition (London, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1953), p.113; hereafter referred to as *Portrait of an Age*.

¹⁹ Bonamy Dobrée, *Modern Prose Style* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), p.222.

Chapter 1

Striving and seeking: Tennyson, Browning and Arnold

From their immediate predecessors, the major Romantics, Victorian poets received, among so much influence on the forms and subjects of their verse, the image of the incompleting journey. The travels of Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner* apparently end where they began, in his home port, but that is only the start of a further journey, seeking those who can learn from his story:

I pass like night, from land to land;
I have strange power of speech;
That moment that his face I see,
I know the man that must hear me;
To him my tale I teach.¹

Coleridge's sailors had never intended to make a voyage of exploration though set in the late fifteenth century by its mythology and original pseudo – medieval diction, the poem ostensibly describes the first circumnavigation of the globe. Yet it is the revelation of his own mind and being that the mariner returns with, not any news of the Antarctic or the Pacific Ocean.

It is the uncertainty of that result which distinguishes the Romantic journey from earlier poems that involve ideas of movement. In Spenser's *The Faerie Queen*, however openly exploratory each book may be and however uncertain the relation between the six books, yet each quest is at least formally completed. If *Paradise Lost* ends with Adam and Eve journeying out into human history, the end of their travels has already been determined by Michael's great vision of the Last Judgement. But in Romantic journeys the reader is left with an indeterminate relation between success and failure and the sense of objective remains at the end characteristically undefined. The end of the poem in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* does not set a bound to the

journey of the Pilgrim himself. In Shelley we cannot tell whether we are looking at failure or a different order of success in *Alastor*, or the voyaging elements in 'Adonais' or *The Revolt of Islam*. Even in *The Prelude*, which of course the early Victorians would not have read, the ends of the various journeys often perplex the reader. The discovery disclosed differs from the original objective, whether it is the taking out of a boat on a lake at night or the crossing of the Alps.

It is this troubled journeying where the mind is at odds with the physical movements of the traveller, which makes Tennyson, Browning and Arnold conceive their images of a double quest. The circumstances of the journey are for them often along a different route from that taken by the mind. The journeys deny the reader the satisfaction of allegory, the shape of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, and there is no sense of even an eventual home-coming. In the foreground of the poem lies the internal world of the traveller himself. The quest is mental but withholds the satisfaction of intellectual resolution.

Tennyson, 'Ulysses'

Tennyson's search for a meaning and significance to existence after the death of Hallam he dramatizes through his poetic vision of the Ulysses myth. Through the medium of the Classical story he can transform the personal grief for a young man who will never grow to be old into the energy of an old man refusing to let go of his youth. A more direct expression would have been less adequate to his complex feelings at that time. As he was to write later, 'words, (. . .) how hard to frame / In matter moulded speech' (*In Memoriam* xcv). Words, Wittgenstein asserts, express our consciousness of reality, yet are often inadequate for the communication of spiritual/psychic/emotional states of being. For 'reality cannot be broken down

absolutely into simples'.² It is the language of symbolism which is needed to explore the self, for, like the self in Matthew Arnold's 'Buried Life', it is inaccessible to the tools of rational analysis. By his use of a well known myth, however, in conjunction with the ritual of quest, Tennyson could dramatically involve the reader in his exploration of crisis, deep and personal between both faith and doubt in the religious sense and faith and doubt in the development of his poetic vision.

In 'Ulysses' Tennyson rejects the idea of received and unvarying truths about heroes and strong individualism, as Browning rejects the idea of received and unvarying truths about quest and questers in 'Childe Roland'. His choice of the dramatic monologue/soliloquy form, enables him to achieve a certain dramatic distance, which itself adds to the poem's ambiguity; for at times the reader is unsure whether the voice is that of Ulysses or of Tennyson. There is certainly a sense, however, that Tennyson's voice is closer to 'Ulysses', than Browning's voice is to 'Childe Roland' and that Tennyson communicates himself more directly than does Browning. In *A Memoir*, Tennyson's son quotes the following claim made by his father: 'Ulysses was written soon after Arthur Hallam's death, and gave my feelings about the need of going forward, and braving the struggle of life perhaps more simply than anything in "In Memoriam"'.³ Tennyson's choice of the word 'need' implies not the actual sense of purpose, but the desire for a purpose.

Though objectively Tennyson's subject matter in 'Ulysses' concerns the aged Ulysses' yearning desire to quest once more for something 'beyond' the physical necessities of our being, subjectively its concern lies with the mental state that gives rise to that longing. Tennyson's mind is simultaneously aware of both the world of Ulysses and that of Telemachus. When Ulysses describes his 'yearning in desire/To follow knowledge like a sinking star, / Beyond the utmost bound of human thought'

(ll.30,32),⁴ the impossibility of the attempt makes the image ironic. For how can you think beyond thought? It is the Kantian impossibility that qualifies the ambition. Kant's theory of knowledge claims "concepts without perceptions are empty; perceptions without concepts are blind." (. . .) we have no way of inferring causal relationships beyond and outside experience."⁵ Yet to interpret the simile, 'like a sinking star' as a comparison paralleling the aged Ulysses' declining powers – they, likewise, being past their zenith, can be seen to carry a sense of pathos. It is such ambiguity which makes it difficult to assess when Tennyson is in sympathy with Ulysses, and when he is, like his source in Dante, being critical; it is an ambiguity which implies a sense of divided will in the poem rather than in its subject. The adjectival verb 'sinking', can be seen both to undercut Ulysses' desire, increasing its inherent sense of futility and negating any possibility of further quest, yet, equally, to present Ulysses as the now pitiful hero, who was once great and famous, but is now 'sinking', nearing his end, his death. Is the reader to condemn Ulysses for his solipsistic arrogance (solipsism being an almost unavoidable trait for a quester) or to combine pity for his waning powers, with admiration for his courageous work? For, however we perceive Ulysses, in connection with his professed desire to quest in order to follow 'knowledge', it is through Ulysses, as a symbol, that Tennyson is able to explore the margins of his own emotions, including his experience of loss and consequent desolation, occasioned by the death of both his father and of Hallam.

In charging Classical themes with his own feelings and ideas, we can see that Tennyson was working in a Romantic tradition. The slow, elegiac movement, in which the blank-verse line is the dominant unit, and the deliberate richness of the poetic language, are in the tradition of Keats. Tennyson clearly admired Keats' poetry, claiming that 'with his high spiritual vision', Keats 'would have been, if he

had lived, the greatest of us all' (*A Memoir*, I, p.152). Tennyson undoubtedly felt free to take from Keats, as from Homer and Dante, that which he found useful for the creation of his own poetic mode. We know that Arthur Hallam, Tennyson's dear friend and firm supporter, admired the genius of Keats, for in his 1831 review of Tennyson's *Poems Chiefly Lyrical*, he states:

[Shelley and Keats] are both poets of sensation rather than reflection (. . .) Other poets "seek" for images to illustrate their conceptions; these men had no need to seek; they lived in a world of images.⁶

Yet time, in which the poetic Ulysses has aged and weakened his possibility of further quest, has also distanced Tennyson from the poetic scene of the Romantics, with their never satisfied aspiration after the unknown and unattainable, from poems such as Shelley's *Alastor* and *Endymion* by Keats. Though *Alastor* is indeed an object of criticism as well as high praise, it is difficult to imagine Shelley including the endorsement of Telemachus's social meliorism offered by Ulysses himself in Tennyson's poem. When Ulysses, looking back in time to his own past-quest, asserts his will 'to strive' forward, we can sense that Tennyson, himself, looking back to past poetic modes, also intends 'To strive, to seek' for a new and legitimate combination of poetic form.

Unlike the Romantics, the word that Ulysses uses for his quest is not 'vision' but the Carlylean term 'work'; referring to his son he says 'He works his work, I mine' (l.43). The knowledge he seeks would show him with what aims to live. The edifices of supposed knowledge, which have supported attitudes and opinions for so long will no longer stand upright, leaving man unsure of his feelings, or what he should do. The old voyager is seeking not the restoration of the past but 'a newer world' (l.57). If that seems indefinite, it still relates to Tennyson's need to articulate a

belief in some kind of mystical experience – which for him is a sense of absorption into ‘boundless being (. . .) seeming no extinction of self but the only true life’ (*A Memoir I* p.320). In an ethos where any phenomenon which cannot be scientifically proved is suspect, this is to be Ulysses’ new quest.

Hence, though aged and apparently approaching the end of his life, Ulysses claims his need is to still ‘shine in use!’ (l.23). It is ‘use’ on his own terms, however; the useful, is what his savage people are to be ‘subdued’ to by Telemachus. In one sense, this can be seen as the Carlylean concept in praise of the nobility of work as expressed in *Sartor Resartus* (and recognised as such by Carlyle when he read the poem). But Ulysses’ use of the verb ‘shine’, could also infer that it is the ego-boasting acclaim of being a hero, the sense of a power ‘that strove with Gods’ (l.53), which Ulysses experiences as loss. The shine on well-used objects is only a secondary quality, but to Ulysses it is primary. The reason Ulysses gives for desiring further quest ‘To follow knowledge (. . .) / Beyond the utmost bound of human thought’ (ll.31,32) can be seen to be undermined by his earlier claim that ‘all experience is an arch wherethro’ / Gleams that untravell’d world; whose margin fades./ For ever and for ever when I move’ (ll.19-21). Carlylean usefulness gives place to spiritual wanderlust. Until he dies; one experience will have to be followed by another, ‘For ever and for ever’ (l.21). Experience becomes paradoxically an empty space, ‘an arch’, framing the next ‘experience’; experience doesn’t exist in fact. Ulysses is unaware that his feelings, attitudes and behaviour are themselves, in the main, the sources of whatever it was that he supposed himself to be knowing. And he has organised himself with knowledge, as the foundation on which should rest his feelings, attitudes and behaviour. Only his death can bring about an end to his aspiration for quest, for to end the quest himself, to reach the ‘impossible’ goal, would

mean his coming to rest again as the 'idle king / (. . .) among these barren crags, / Match'd with an aged wife' (ll. 1-3). These clipped, harsh sounding words, which set the tone at the start of Ulysses' soliloquy, communicate his sense of frustration with, and very unCarlylean contempt for his kingly duties. They stress his need to become, once again, Ulysses the acclaimed hero, the 'name' 'I am become' (l.11). The Romantically 'roaming' Ulysses (l.12) passionately moves on to the unknown, disguising it as work but actually in pursuit of a glorious ideal, which seems forever unattainable; not the aged king, the Ulysses, who has to compel his will to a life of duty, to 'mete and dole / Unequal laws unto a savage race' (ll. 3,4).

Tennyson makes Ulysses present himself as a man of action, but unlike Browning's Childe Roland, it is action in the past, not the present. In the present, Ulysses' outer world of action has been given up, although his inner world appears equally action-packed in its own way. Movement in the poem is therefore static, heavy with the inertia of indecision. The twilight landscape psychologically reflects Ulysses' melancholy sense of the passing of time. Even so, he continues to affirm his heroic aspiration 'To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield' (l.70). Carlyle's biography of John Sterling, gives some indication of the difficulties both Coleridge and Sterling had because of their inability to come to 'grips' with 'reality':

without and within, it was a wide tide of things this ardent young soul was afloat upon, at present and his outlooks into the future, whether for his spiritual or economic fortune, were confused enough.⁷

And Ulysses is oddly an ardent old soul, but just as uncertain about the future. He demands, however, that there be a future, yet a future he creates by imposing a vainglorious vision upon his own life. As much as any Arctic explorer, Ulysses 'cannot rest from travel' (l.6) and his relish for the 'scudding drifts' and 'the dim sea'

is really a pleasure in feeling his own transcendent spirit pitted against them. Carlyle, through the medium of his pilgrim, Teufelsdröckh, endorses a more reflective attitude to the physical world, claiming that Nature is the outer 'Living Garment of God' which enfolds innerly, God's spirit.⁸ Only when this spirit is heeded, is man able to 'see' aright, to truly understand.

Tennyson, in his exploration of consciousness, dramatises the conflict between Ulysses' Romanticism and an implied societal censor. Ulysses claims that he is heeding his 'innerly' spirit, when forsaking his kingly duties and social responsibilities, in order to satisfy his individualistic desire for quest adventure, to search for some kind of imaginative golden age, in time or space, with its attendant fame and honour. Tennyson, undoubtedly, does not agree with the whole of Carlyle's philosophy; he is open to too many possibilities for that. Yet the poem does imply a criticism of that openness in Ulysses. Under the pretext of being guided by an 'inner spirit' (shades of Evangelicalism) men could selfishly pursue their individual desires, to the negation of their wider social responsibilities. Tennyson's poetic mind seems simultaneously to hold the two opposing views in balance and after Hallam's death the possible future seems to involve neither the stasis of Telemachus nor the wild movement of Ulysses as entirely satisfactory models.

Confronted with his responsibilities as husband and king, Ulysses claims that life is dull, 'Life piled on life / Were all too little' (ll. 24,25). Like Hamlet, Ulysses questions the meaning of the life of men, 'That hoard, and sleep, and feed', (l.5) in purely material contentment, 'As tho' to breathe were life' (l.24). Ulysses' experiences of responsibility appear to him as dehumanising and mechanistic influences, because they oppose his desire for a Shelleyan freedom. Yet questions such as these were of great concern to those whose religious and ethical concerns had

been shaken by the new scientific discoveries and the scientific approach to the interpretation of the Bible. In effect, it is a noble, heroic sentiment to claim that bodily functions alone, to 'sleep and feed' and 'breathe', are not enough for man, especially in a society which is becoming increasingly materialistic. Ulysses is conscious of other needs, yet, ironically, his other needs appear to be just as solipsistic as the physical ones he decries. We are once more confronted with ambiguity. In one sense, Ulysses can be seen as an indictment of self-centred activism, a trait which Matthew Arnold later sees as the anarchy of individualism in need of check by the authority of Culture.⁹ And the emphasis on the 'I' throughout the monologue / soliloquy, can be seen as a criticism of Romantic individualism – the single 'I' as opposed to an immense 'not I'. On the other hand, individualism was also seen by many as an admirable trait (especially by the Evangelicals, as noted above) for it encourages a man to take responsibility for his own life; the liberal idea that the individual should be free to think and decide for himself.

Ulysses, however, claims he has 'become a name' (1.11) a questing hero, and this name colours his vision of life. He is trapped by his reputation, his image in other men's eyes, almost as Browning's Childe Roland has become a quester because other men think he is one. When Ulysses is not questing, therefore, his life appears to him empty, meaningless and dull. The ominous images 'The long day', 'the slow moon' (1.55) and 'the deep / Moans' (ll. 55,56) reflect not only Ulysses' melancholy mood, but denote, also, a dialectical clash between the attraction of the deepest – subjective level and the resistance and restraint of other sections of reality. Ulysses' claim that he is 'yearning in desire / to follow knowledge' (ll. 30,31) is ironically undermined however, by his need for continual quest. For if he were to acquire the knowledge for

which he yearns, he might gain an understanding of himself and would not then have to escape from himself back into the 'name'.

The problem of the *In Memoriam* mood for Tennyson is that he needs to go forward because he has lost the friend who helped him to believe there was some point in going forward to be found in their shared theological redefinitions. For Ulysses, the quester, however, it seems that the primary desire is to remain fixed as 'a name' (l.11), 'always roaming with a hungry heart' (l.12), 'honor'd of them all;' (l.15). He is fixed as an eternal quester, in order continuously to experience the adventurous excitement of quest; his eyes focussed always on himself in pursuit of a glorious ideal. Fame is his only resource against the inevitability of his approaching death. The darkness of the scene, together with its slow rhythms is the antithesis not only of the active quest of Childe Roland but also of the acceleration of time experienced by early nineteenth-century society, in contrast to the experience of earlier, more leisurely societies. For the pre-Christian Ulysses, death is 'eternal silence' (l.27) and the only answer is to live a life where 'every hour is saved' (l.26) from it. In effect, his challenge to the 'eternal silence' of death is to 'drink / Life to the lees:' (ll. 6,7). When he asserts 'I am a part of all that I have met' (l.18) the iambic pentameter line seems to echo the sense of the words, effecting a merger between the 'I' and the 'that I have met'. Ulysses reveals he can only understand all that he has met by reference to himself. He becomes his experience; the sense of what he has met. If he fully understood what he met objectively, as separate from himself, not subjectively, as part of himself, he would be able to extend his mind to encompass new ideas. He might then realise his potential, rather than remaining fixed in his present quester mode.

In contrast to 'Childe Roland's' demonic, Dantean-Inferno imagery, the Romantic rhetoric of much of the 'Ulysses' soliloquy is emotionally evocative. The elevated tone and lyric beauty expressed in the syntax 'Gleams that untravell'd world' (l.20), together with the nobility of sentiment inherent in 'Some work of noble note may yet be done, / Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods' (ll. 52,53), create an elegiac mood of aspiration. Ulysses can't of course say what the work would be, for he is still trapped by past glories, by reputation. In *The Story of Goethe's Life* George Henry Lewes quotes these lines as a tribute to Goethe minus the phrase 'may yet be done' and substituting 'who' in place of 'that', to read 'who strove with gods'.¹⁰ Clearly, he quotes these words for their inherent heroic quality, and no doubt saw in Tennyson's Ulysses a symbol of heroism fitting for Goethe, who had completed *Faust* in his eighty-second year, and a parallel also with Goethe's insatiable hunger to get deeper than life itself: 'To scorn delight and live laborious days'.¹¹

Yet in Tennyson's 'Ulysses' there is an undercurrent which has the effect of dragging back a wholehearted admiration as much as with Goethe's Faust. Ulysses refers to his wife, not by her personal name, but as his 'aged wife' (l.3); 'It little profits that (. . .) / (. . .) among these barren crags, / Match'd with an aged wife' (ll. 1-3). There is a noticeable contrast (as referred to above) between the tone of Ulysses' monologue and his soliloquy. His phrase, 'Match'd with,' subtly works to link and equate the image 'aged wife', to 'barren crags', revealing Ulysses' sense of disillusion. This is Penelope, the faithful wife he journeyed ten years back to, but in time everything can lose its savour, can change. Disillusion can operate as a motive for quest; quest can be an escape from the everyday, the limitations of the petty. What is corrupted by ennui here is however, shockingly in this specific case, the ideal

of married love with which Ulysses is associated. It is the ideal praised by Tennyson in his poem *The Princess*:

in true marriage (. . .)
(. . .) will in will, they grow,
The single pure and perfect animal.¹²

Tennyson specified both *The Odyssey* (xi 100-139), and Dante's *Inferno* (xxvi, ff) as his sources for 'Ulysses'. Dante's Ulysses sails out beyond the pillars of Hercules in his quest for knowledge but it is for his deceptions and guile that he is confined in Hell. Immediately, it seems that it is simply Dante's invention of a final voyage, the idea of Ulysses as the perpetual wanderer in search of knowledge and the seeker of his own identity that influences Tennyson. His recreation of Ulysses can be seen, however, to carry some of the Dantean traits attributed to Ulysses. He is unable to love anyone but his own former self. When speaking of the kingly duties he relegates to his son, Telemachus, his tone is constrained, prosaic, unemotional, in sharp contrast to the Romantic, sensuous, freer, picturesque description of his memories of quest. Telemachus has 'slow prudence' (. . .) is 'blameless (. . .) centred in the sphere / Of common duties, decent' (ll.36-40). The adjective 'common' implies the dullness of the duties which he is delegating to Telemachus whereas Ulysses himself is an advanced type, impatient of the conditions of his time and of the savage race for whom in order to 'Subdue them to the useful and the good' (l.38), his son will work in a more patient manner. His rejection of the domestic and civic virtues of Telemachus (ll. 35-43) also separates him from Tennyson's hero Arthur, in 'Morte d'Arthur', written about the same time, who represents the 'ideal man,' in order to combat the selfishness and materialism of the age' (*Memoir II*, pp.128-9). Arthur has been like Telemachus, in that he has honoured his domestic and civic 'common duties', which has resulted in his being able to refer to 'the people which I made'

(‘Morte d’Arthur’, l.22). Tennyson’s poetry is constantly torn between the public and the private vision. Possibly, he envisaged himself fulfilling the dutiful and earnest role of a Telemachus, attempting to ‘make mild / A rugged people,’ through the ideal of his poetry. His poetic imagination presents a Ulysses in contrast to Telemachus, a Ulysses who ignores duty of any sort being required of him, even to do honour to his ‘household gods’ (l.11). It is a rejection of the role of father, of the family concept, in order to pursue his own interests, experience being its own justification. His attitude is Romantic; his unsatisfied emotion crystallising round metaphors of flight, and ideas of the infinite, leading to a beyond. Yet, although he claims that Telemachus ‘works his work, / I mine’ (ll.43,44) he appears to have reached a period of exhaustion. Telemachus, however, is faithful to the conception of a limit. Exaggerated aspiration to quest to a ‘beyond’, is antithetical to his Classical attitude, to one disciplined by order and tradition.

Tennyson’s own attitude towards the antithetical attitudes of Ulysses and Telemachus seems therefore, to be one of ambivalence, yet the earnest Classical attitude of Telemachus, seems more deserving of honour precisely because of Ulysses’ grudging praise. The life-style of Telemachus compared with that of the adventurous quester, Ulysses, seems pragmatically mundane. There is a clear sense of attraction in the idea of the freedom offered by Ulysses’ Romantic quest, and the dazzling rhetoric of the poem and the speaker’s excitement sway the reader’s sympathy. As readers, we find ourselves involved in a dramatic conflict between Romantic and rational elements, both in the poem and in ourselves, as tensions which are built up, are not entirely resolved in the climax of the final line; nor is Ulysses’ desire for further quest resolved in action, only in intent; ‘To strive, to seek’ (l.70).

When Ulysses' rhetoric defends him against meaninglessness 'As tho' to breathe were life. Life piled on life / Were all too little' (ll. 24,25), he is undoubtedly reflecting Tennyson's thoughts as expressed in *A Memoir* (I, p.317) 'if a man is merely to be a bundle of sensations, he had better not exist at all.' Ulysses ambitiously overstates this thought, however; nervous hyperbole typifying his whole stance. Tennyson's next thought is not in correspondence with the philosophy expressed by Ulysses' actions but, in its possible aspiration, is rather an indictment against Ulysses' form of individualism and heroism:

He should embark on his career in the spirit of selfless and adventurous heroism; should develop his true self by not shirking responsibility, by casting aside all maudlin and introspective morbidities, and by using all his powers cheerfully (. . .) *A Memoir* I, p.317.

Worthy of note is the fact that Tennyson and Telemachus have an important experience in common. Each takes over the role of the father figure; has his freedom restrained by his father (Tennyson by his father's death) and accepts the father's duties and responsibilities. As Tennyson interprets the Classical past according to his own reaction to the spirit of the age, he is able to confront the question of morality, outside the framework of nineteenth-century controversial concepts of orthodox Christian belief. Telemachus is characteristic of that way of life which Kierkegaard refers to as the 'ethical' with its sphere of moral obligations, whilst Ulysses is closer to what Kierkegaard refers to as 'the aesthetic'. 'The aesthetic life is that of the man whose only goal is his own satisfaction. What he must avoid are pain and boredom'.¹³ The ethical is characterised by self-abnegation in the name of a publicly recognised cause and the pain of the individual that ensues on that sacrifice, is formally tragic, whereas the aesthetic man has a self-consciousness which means that

he acts for the sake of his own image. The intermingling of the characteristics of Ulysses and Telemachus, with aspects of Tennyson himself, creates both tensions and uncertainties.

J. S. Mill writes in 'A Prophecy':

'old romances, whether of chivalry or of faery (. . .) filled the youthful imagination with pictures of heroic men, and what at least are as much wanted, heroic women (. . .) greatly is any book to be valued, which in this age, (. . .) does its part towards keeping alive the chivalrous spirit (. . .) towards giving to the young and susceptible a noble direction, and keeping present to the mind an excellent standard of worth by placing before it heroes and heroines worthy of the name.'¹⁴

And as support for his view he claims 'the noblest minds in modern Europe derived much of what made them noble from such representation' (ibid. p.284). Likewise, Thomas Carlyle claims hero worship is 'the basis of all possible good, religious or social, for mankind'.¹⁵ Tennyson was, therefore, working within the heroic tradition, as it came down to the nineteenth-century from the literary revival of Homer and the ballad, when he wrote 'Ulysses'. The Hellenic legend was believed by several intellectuals of the time to work as a correlative for moral principles which they felt could no longer be supplied by orthodox religious faith. Charles Kingsley, author of *The Heroes*, claimed that a religious reading of heroic legend was entirely natural. Poets and writers felt encouraged to portray heroic action, to some extent as an escape from the anxieties and cares of the day, but also to delight in the inspiration it offered. However, the heroic image, like the ideal of individualism, can be seen to serve ambiguously. For whilst the image of the hero could represent the great heroic leader, it could work, also, as a correlative to man's feelings of weakness, impotence almost, in an intellectual society shaken by doubt and anxiety. Poetry itself, however, often has a kind of sceptical relation to the great prose images of the time. The Ulysses

Tennyson recreates is ambiguous, somewhat de-glamorised, not exactly the all powerful decisive, heroic image of which one would think Carlyle, Mill and Kingsley would approve. Yet, ironically, Carlyle apparently read into the poem something of himself. The following excerpt from his letter to Tennyson, shows his admiration:

Cheyne Rd. Chelsea

Truly, it is long since in any Eng. Book, Poetry or Prose, I have felt the pulse of a real man's heart (. . .) everywhere a noble sound (. . .) The sunniest glow of life dwells in that soul, chequered duly with dark streaks from night and Hades (. . .) there seems to be a note of 'The Eternal Melodies' (Carlyle continues by quoting lines from 'Ulysses', prefaced with a typical prophetic Carlylean call to action by 'all').

These lines do not make me weep, but there is in me what would fill whole lachrymatories as I read (. . .).

Yours, T. Carlyle.

(*Memoir I*, pp.213-4).

Yet, like 'Childe Roland', 'Ulysses' ends in uncertainty. As all the physical action takes place in the past, Ulysses' stated intention 'To strive, to seek, to find and not to yield' (l. 70) seems, still to be aspiration only. Ironically, in the 'now' of the poem Ulysses, the heroic quester of fame, 'I am become a name;' (p.11), is physically inactive. He is contemplative, philosophical and finally, through his rhetoric, projecting the quest 'ever about to be', into action in the future.

Browning: *Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came*

Browning, like Tennyson, models his poem on antecedents; his quest framework strengthened not only by his allusion to the lost Childe Roland ballad mentioned in *King Lear*, but also by a symbolism which parallels ideas and motifs in

both Dante and Bunyan. Yet it is the concept of orthodox quest that Browning challenges and undermines forcibly. Nineteenth century historicism looked back to the period of chivalric heroism for a model of ennobling behaviour. Evidence for the popularity of such literature is that Percy's *Reliques*:

passed through at least thirty editions in various parts of the world; they rank among those works which have supported popularity for more than a century, and they make their vaunt of having aroused the 'Wizard of the North' to exclaim, 'The first time I could scrape a few shillings together, (. . .) I bought unto myself a copy of the beloved volumes; nor do I believe I ever read a book half so frequently, or with half the enthusiasm'.¹⁶

In an address to Elizabeth, Countess of Northumberland, Thomas Percy claims that the Bards he introduces preserved and propagated 'the memory of illustrious actions' (*Reliques*, I. p.vi). In his essay 'On The Ancient Metrical Romances, etc.,' he further claims, 'that fondness of going in quest of adventures that spirit of challenging to single combat (. . .) are all of Gothic origin (. . .) and at length arrived to their full maturity in the times of the Crusades' (*Reliques*, II, p.81). Percy then refers to the song of Roland, in his discussion of songs of chivalry, and to how, 'when the Normans marched down to the battle of Hastings, they animated themselves by singing (in some popular romance or ballad) the exploits of Roland and other heroes of chivalry' (*Reliques*, II, p.87). He defines an epic poem as 'A fable related by a poet, to excite admiration, and inspire virtue, by representing the action of some one hero, favoured by Heaven, who executes a great-design, in spite of all the obstacles that oppose him' (*Reliques*, II, p.92). Charles Kingsley, in his lecture, 'Heroism',¹⁷ accommodates such an image to the ideals of Victorian life. Like many others of his time, he claims that heroic mythology presents noble deeds readily identified with one

or another aspect of Christian ethics. Ruskin in *Fors Clavigera*, advocates the 'setting forth of noble objects of action, to produce a mood of excited aspiration'.¹⁸

Whilst Browning reflects some of the pre-existing ideological patterns of quest language and thought in 'Childe Roland', equally he generates complexities and contradictions which become questions about quest itself. And his adoption of the three part structure for his quest poem, a hero, a journey and a final recognition, supports his ironic deconstruction.

The poem begins in 'medias res', the hero, Roland, if that is his name, describing his startling meeting with 'That hoary cripple, with malicious eye' (i).¹⁹ The taken-for-granted opening clearly infers an earlier beginning, before the beginning of this poem. And in stanza four Roland speaks of his 'whole world-wide wandering, / (. . .) my search drawn out thro' years'. The poem, in fact, starts with the end of the quest. Roland recounts how acquiescently:

I did turn as he pointed; neither pride
Nor hope rekindling at the end descried,
So much as gladness that some end might be
(CR, iii).

His words create an immediate and dramatic sense of surprise and confusion. For they present a half-hearted and dispirited thought and action, contrary to those normally associated with quest and questing; a disconcerting reversal of normal expectation. We soon realise however, that Browning is presenting an individual quester, who is not conforming to the idealised concept of quest. Roland's words throughout the poem make us question his attitude towards the quest, its history and significance. For this is a knight who chooses resignedly to turn as he 'pointed' (CR, viii) and follow the instruction of 'That hoary cripple', who 'lied in every word' (CR, i). The irony, of course, is that he doesn't lie as we learn from Roland's reference to 'that ominous tract, which, all agree, / Hides the Dark Tower' (CR, iii).

Yet Roland aspires not excitedly to success – Ruskin’s mood of ‘excited aspiration’ – but almost excitedly to failure; ‘I hardly tried now to rebuke the spring/My heart made, finding failure in its scope’ (*CR*, iv). The present tense usage ‘now’ not only tells us that he has been tempted before (and failed before, so not failed but survived) but also that in spite of his sense of the futility of his quest, an external necessity keeps him questing on. The structure of the poetic language, the frequent use of the present tense implied by words like ‘now’, creates an effect of immediacy, but more importantly, it recreates the experience of the quest as an ever living experience; an experience in which the reader is made to share from the inside, sensing Roland’s emotions, as he looks backward to past experiences, and as he moves forward. Imperatives such as ‘Think first’ (*CR*, xv), ‘solve it, you!’ (*CR*, xxviii), insist on the reader’s activity. The syntax takes the reader through the psychological steps, following the process of Roland’s thoughts, as in stanzas i, ii, and iii, where his thoughts lead him to assert his ‘gladness that some end might be’ (*CR*, iii). As the poem is read, therefore, the structure of Roland’s perception is created in front of us. We, too, are thereby made to experience Roland’s feeling of slight relief (the subjunctive ‘might’ revealing a barely admissible hope) at the thought of ‘some end’, though it would be a mere ending only, not a teleology. The authentic conclusion of the quest is what he can no longer contemplate; ‘hope / Dwindled into a ghost not fit to cope / With that obstreperous joy success would bring’ (*CR*, iv). Roland’s use of the positive verb case ‘would’ reveals that he knows precisely what are the appropriate feelings for successful conclusion but ‘obstreperous’ is scarcely a term of praise, and anyway his hope seems now dead – ‘a ghost’. But he ‘had so long suffered in this quest, / (. . .) that just to fail as they, [The Band of Knights] seemed

best' (*CR*, vii). The qualifying verb 'seemed' again reveals his state of uncertainty about what is demanded of him, the gap between his belief and his knowledge.

Roland's quest for the Dark Tower, therefore, appears to be more an attitude of mind, a clinging to the status quo, rather than any belief in the value of the quest itself. The dramatic monologue's form, however, enables Browning to involve the reader in Roland's stream of consciousness, which is nearer to the relativising of 'truth'. The conversational tone creates a sense of intimacy, a certain empathy between Roland and the reader, yet the empathy is undercut by a sense of disquiet, when the compensation looked for in heroic literature, seems here to be subverted. A kind of realism is introduced into the poem, however, as Browning reveals what it is like to keep the quest going in a world which ignores or scoffs at it and when only habit keeps the journeyer on his path. It is really a history of disappointment where the traveller has forgotten why he started on the journey in the first place, and kept going simply through the dullness of routine and the lack of anything else to do. To end the quest, even in failure, could be a relief which released him from the burden. Roland's concern is his fitness to cope with 'some end' – be it failure and/or death.

In his Oxford lecture 'On the Modern Element in Literature', 1857, Matthew Arnold linked the then current feelings of 'depression and ennui' to the breakdown in traditional beliefs.²⁰ Browning wrote 'Childe Roland' in 1852 and his hero, Roland, reveals acute feelings both of depression and of ennui, in his quest for the Dark Tower. The question remains whether weariness and habit as the source of action, in place of duty and honour, are too mundane, too small, to be the origins of the 'virtuous' and merely discredit it. Roland's self-consciousness impresses on him the formidable burden of freedom and choice. For when he chooses to turn 'Into the path he pointed' (*CR*, viii) he quickly finds his choice excludes all other possibilities as he

is 'Pledged to the plain, / (. . .) the safe road, 'twas gone' (*CR*, ix). Ironically, his unchivalric motive for action has the same results as heroic resolve; he is 'Pledged to the plain'. He has gone through the motions of being loyal without believing in it very much, yet his weariness has the effect of the old pledge, the oath that Percy describes: 'Chivalry as a distinct military order, conferred in the way of investiture, and accompanied with the solemnity of an oath' (*Reliques*, II, p.81). Browning demonstrates a realistic, if ironic assessment of how choices may get made.

It is out of this indifference that he accepts the 'hoary cripple' at the start. His perception is that the guide is 'set', 'posted' with his staff (ironically an emblem associated with the good shepherd) to 'ensnare' him. Roland's use of words associated with the duties of a sentry, 'set', 'posted', 'pledge' accord with Percy's description of chivalry as a distinct military order. Yet for the literary reader, the guide, 'the hoary cripple' could be one of those magic attendants of Romance, like the hag in 'The Wife of Bath's Tale', who seem threatening but (as in this case) hold the secret. Equally, however, he could be a Jungian 'trickster', a parallel of Childe Roland's individual shadow, hiding meaningful content under an unprepossessing exterior.²¹ Figuratively, Roland has 'the dirt of the Slough of Despond' upon him, like Christian, but whereas Christian struggles always to release himself, Roland is made to experience himself as object, aware of his own awareness:

That hoary cripple, with malicious eye
Askance to watch the working of his lie
On mine (*CR*, i).

Browning describes his quester's perceptions alone, Childe Roland does not wrestle with his conscience.

For the reader, therefore, many features combine; the uncertainty of knowing the truth of Roland's perceptions of his guide, uncertainty created by shifts to the

present tense in a past tense account, flashbacks to Roland's fleeting memories of dead, dishonoured comrades – questers who betrayed the chivalric code – and they all create a questioning perspective on the nature of quest itself. Browning breaks the forward momentum of his narrative as in the extended ironic simile about the dying man who 'still (. . .) hears all' (vi). The man's emotional needs are overlooked by his friends' greater concern for the practicalities associated with the corpse-to-be, and with 'care about the banners, scarves and staves' (*CR*, vi), of the funeral. He is powerless to act and satirically, 'only craves / He may not shame such tender love and stay' (vi). This is Roland's self-image and its cynicism would appear to originate from his assessment of how his futile journey is generally regarded. The quest must be his death, since everyone else has died on it and the fact that these two stanzas are written in the present tense, makes Roland's observation a description of what he sees as his own situation. Roland's frustration with the search, his suffering at the loss of shamed friends, and the loss of so many years in questing are analogous to his perception of the mental agony of the dying man:

Thus, I had so long suffered in this quest
 Heard failure prophesied so oft, been writ
 So many times among 'The Band' – to wit
 The Knights who to the Dark Tower's search addressed
 Their steps – that just to fail as they, seemed best,
 And all the doubt was now – should I be fit? (*CR*, vii).

To have 'been writ / So many times among "The Band"' even raises the question of whether Roland was by choice originally a quester, or whether he has been made one simply by public repute. In stanza seven, Roland has switched back to the past tense, the dispiriting length of this past being stressed by his three-fold repetition of the word 'so' – 'so long', 'so oft', 'so many times'. The knight's identity is given him not by the objective but by the behaviour of his erstwhile companions; 'To fail as they, seemed best' (vii). There is a disparity between the fragmentary truth about the

objective possessed by Roland, and the one certainty he has which is the behaviour of the other knights. His desire is not to be anomalous but to act as others have done before him. Truth becomes not a certain objective but the relativity of how the quester is generally regarded, as one of a type, the quixotic failure. Failure would at least be an end to it; 'And all the doubt was now – should I be fit?' 'Fit' there means almost 'fitting in', behaving as the others have done and therefore failing in the right way though it is ironically haunted by the bigger anxiety, to be worthy of a more authentic version of the quest.

In Arnold's 'Rugby Chapel', such hapless idealists are presented as those 'whom a thirst / Ardent, unquenchable, fires'²² who 'have chosen our path' (*RC*, 1.84) but who are unable to reach the goal to which they aspire. They can only aspire to the idea of questing. Neither Christian's nor Dante's goal of the eternal city is possible for them. Roland has a goal to which he can aspire, the Dark Tower, yet his use of the passive 'so' – 'So, quiet as despair' (*CR*, viii), 'So, on I went' (*CR*, x) conveys a sense of his resigned weariness to the inevitability of keeping going on. He doesn't say that actually he does despair but values it positively for the calm it would produce. Movement itself becomes the purpose not vice versa, the great danger of intellectual quest; 'I might go on; nought else remained to do' (*CR*, ix). The tense, once again, is ambiguously switched to the present, confronting the reader with Roland's present psychological problems of doubt, distress and despondency, the antithesis of the heroic, ennobled quester-knight. In Tennyson's 'Morte d'Arthur' we also see the enterprise through an ending; where the big act is to throw away Excalibur, to let it all go and not to cling on to the heroic witness of the sword. Faith becomes simply letting the future happen, not seeking to control it.

We are made aware of the problem of knowing the truth and the difficulty, if not impossibility of the quest for Roland, when there is no certainty that what he thinks or how he thinks and reasons, is giving him or us any picture of the reality of the situation. The point of using the quotation from *King Lear* is that no one actually knows what story is alluded to. It can be argued that to just 'go on' to just keep going, when the quest has lost its value and meaning, demands courage. It may not be a positive, crusading attitude, but neither is it defeated and entirely negative; unlike Beckett's Estragon and Vladimir, Roland does not simply wait – though even waiting is a flicker of resolve. Roland, too, despairs, yet he continues to move forward, for in his inner self-questing, he has found not only despairing boredom in his questing, but some joy also, at the prospect of bringing nearer 'some end' (iii). And it is as a result of his continuing to quest, to move forward, that he unwittingly arrives at his goal, the Dark Tower.

Browning's juxtaposition of past tense and present tense, his switching from one tense to the other, produces a sense of time losing its normal dimensionality. Time seems to expand into the present from the past and to simultaneously crystallise into and affect the meaning of the immediate moment. Roland himself seems to recreate his experience of the quest by shaping these moments into fragments of time; 'Giles then, the soul of honour – there he stands / Frank as ten years ago when knighted first' (CR, xvii).

Roland's subjective descriptions of the terrain through which his quest, in his unheroic term continues to 'go on', are grotesquely reminiscent of Gothic representations of devilry and of allegorical figures of sin and suffering in the manner of Bosch or Brueghel. Although despair is not named among the Seven Deadly Sins, its equivalent would be acedia, spiritual torpor, the spirit of Roland's quest. In his

Reliques Percy refers to the Gothic style of description as, 'the monstrous extravagances of wild imagination associated with quest adventure' (*Reliques*, II, p.81). Roland's journey through the magical landscape, is a journey through an existential hell, like the hell of *The Divine Comedy*, a world which desire totally rejects. Yet Dante's hell involves at least a progression, an accelerated descent, whereas Roland's description of each section of his journey over the grey plain, is more like repetition than progress. And whereas Dante is both physically and spiritually supported by Virgil, in his exposure to horrific sights on his journey, Roland passes through his scenes of horror alone. We do not even know whether he rides or walks. Only memory interprets and it is a desperate guide in this case. Roland experiences scenes of brute, intractable violence; 'mud / Which underneath looked kneaded up with blood' (*CR*, xiii), or again:

that engine (. . .), that wheel,
Or brake, not wheel – that harrow fit to reel
Men's bodies out like silk? (*CR*, xxiv).

In Dante it is other people he sees; here, the landscape offers metaphors of Roland's own state of mind. Images of perverted work, the mechanical analogy of man and a dead machine 'its rusty teeth of steel' (*CR*, xxiv); the wheel of torture, the sinister circle – wheel of fate – 'fit to reel / Men's bodies out like silk?' (*CR*, xxiv) underline that Roland's journey on his 'darkening path' (*CR*, xviii), which takes forever and only a moment, is through a universe of desolation, inertia and death. The vegetable world is a nightmarish wilderness everywhere 'such starved ignoble nature' (*CR*, x) which could be a metaphor for his own nature; the land diseased, 'Broke into moss or substances like boils' (*CR*, xxvi). He finds not the tree of life but a barren tree of death; 'some palsied oak, a cleft in him / Like a distorted mouth that splits its rim / Gaping at death, and dies while it recoils' (*CR*, xxvi). Nature is seen as a

battleground, in which specimens fight for their lives; 'Drenched willows flung them headlong in a fit / Of mute despair, a suicidal throng' (CR, xx) into the spiteful river. The animal world is invoked to release images of violence and cruelty; 'tis a brute must walk / Pashing their (leaves) life out, with a brute's intents' (CR, xii), 'the fiend's glowing hoof' (CR, xix) and 'One stiff blind horse, (. . .) / Thrust out past service from the devil's stud!' (CR, xiii). In tales of chivalric Romance the horse is portrayed as man's trusty friend, but in this nightmare landscape it is grotesque and demonic; 'I never saw a brute I hated so; / He must be wicked to deserve such pain' (CR, xiv). The horse's suffering prompts a judgement which lets the beholder escape sympathy and express the submerged cruelty and disgust that generates these images.

To escape the burden of present horrors he looks backward to the old times, searching in memory for the comfort of 'earlier, happier sights' (CR, xv). Yet, unlike Tennyson's Ulysses, he can only recreate memories of the shame of comrades' broken oaths, the disgrace and dishonour of fellow Knights of the Band. Memories of the shame of their dishonour, as vile as the designated evil scene of nature all around him, convince him of his own impotence and the powerlessness of the sufferers to act upon forces which destroy them, and hasten his return to the 'darkening path' of his quest. 'Better this present than a past like that' (CR, xviii). The present is strangely extended. The sun is setting when he sets forth (CR, viii) yet many stanzas later (CR, xxxii) there is still a 'dying sunset'.

Roland appears to be constantly moved forward on his quest by what J.S. Mill calls 'victory over instinct'. Mill claims that:

Selfishness is the 'natural' thing, self-control and altruism have to be learnt and acquired. It is only through 'cultivation' that virtue becomes second nature, stronger than the first.²³

Browning shows Roland in the process of quest and in the process of becoming, cultivating endurance and fortitude, a stoicism which enables him to keep moving forward, to 'go on'. To 'go on' itself becomes part of the end, and is all that is left to him. We do not know with what aspirations or spirit Roland set forth on his quest, only that when we meet him his 'hope / Dwindled into a ghost - ' (CR, iv) is dead, but the memory of it haunts on, though, ironically, his hope is just for failure.

When Arnold, in 'Rugby Chapel', affirms a desire for a goal which will suit the complexities he finds in his present age, his awareness that neither an idea nor an imagination of the need for one can replace the quest itself, raises for him the whole issue of whether there can be a germane Victorian quest. Browning, however, challenges the status of the way in which quest is understood, is known as an aspect of consciousness. Even to be stuck in the rut of search so that you are sick to death of it might be a way of going forward (or just moving).

Kierkegaard, in his *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* maintains that there can be no abstract truth divorced from the existential experience of the individual:

While objective thought is indifferent toward the thinking individual and his existence, the subjective thinker, as an existing being, is vitally interested in his own thoughts within which he exists (. . .). While objective thought attaches supreme importance to results and enables all mankind to practise deceit by copying and repeating results and summations, subjective thought puts all its store on the process of becoming and omits the result, partly because this, precisely, is a matter for the thinker himself, he being the one who knows the way it is reached, partly because he is in constant process of becoming.²⁴

Roland in these terms is the subjective thinker. Browning shows Roland's understanding of quest not as an abstract concept held in the consciousness as knowledge, fixed and immutable, but as an existential experience. We observe

Roland in his process of becoming, as he thinks about his experiences and considers his thoughts about the quest in which he is existing. Through Roland's experience of quest, we witness knowledge being the process of its own development.

Roland's perception of 'such starved ignoble nature' (CR, x) in the wasteland of the quest terrain he journeys through, can be symbolically interpreted, as a Carlylean symbol of his own nature. When Diogenes Teufelsdröckh in *Sartor Resartus* experiences fear and self-doubt in his pilgrimage, his vision of his own wretchedness appears to be mirrored in his wretched vision of the world:

To me the Universe was all void of life, of Purpose, of Volition, even of Hostility, it was one huge dead, immeasurable Steam-engine, rolling on, in its dead indifference, to grind me from limb to limb. (. . .) Why was the Living banished thither, companionless, conscious?²⁵

Teufelsdröckh does not know if he is reading the emptiness, the futility of his own life, into his vision of the Universe, or if it is the Universe which is making his inner life futile. Roland's world, likewise, is almost void of life; 'penury, inertness and grimace, / [. . .] were the land's portion' (CR, xi). King Lear, bitter and disillusioned, sees only bitterness and deceit in the tempest ridden heath. The reader is clearly pointed to the association with Edgar's assumed madness, Lear's ravings, and the heath's demonic imagery, by Browning's own quotation. Edgar's argument that no one can say they are at the worst because there is always something worse, typifies the poem.

Browning's own religious beliefs claimed robustness yet the evidence of 'Caliban upon Setebos' and of 'Bishop Blougram's Apology' indicates a greater complexity. Carlyle's *Life of John Sterling*, contemporary with this poem, shows the kind of experience of which the poem is an image, though a reading of the poem resists Carlyle's own sense of unrelieved waste:

Once more, where “does the way lie!” – To follow illusions till they burst and vanish is the lot of all new souls who, luckily or lucklessly, are left to their own choice in starting on this Earth. The roads are many; the authentic finger-posts are few, – never fewer than in this era, when in so many senses the waters are out. Sterling of all men had the quickest sense for nobleness, heroism, and the human ‘summum bonum’ the liveliest headlong spirit of adventure and audacity; few gifted living men less stubbornness of perseverance. Illusions in his chase of the ‘summum bonum’ were not likely to be wanting; aberrations, and wasteful changes of course, were likely to be many! It is in the history of such vehement, trenchant, far-shining and yet intrinsically light and volatile souls, missioned into this epoch to seek their way there, that we best see what a confused epoch it is.²⁶

What if, like Browning’s Childe Roland, you are no longer young and have grown old in disappointment, the quest an obsession yet the goal dubious and uncertain?

The structure of the quest sharpens an awareness of the problematical nature of discerning. In effect, the goal seems to ‘await’ Roland. The landscape which holds the Dark Tower, although at first not recognised, is described as ‘now stolen into view’ (CR, xxviii). He succeeds at the least likely moment:

And just as far as ever from the end!
Nought in the distance but the evening, nought
To point my footsteps further! At the thought,
A great black bird, Apollyon’s bosom-friend,
Sailed past. (CR, xxvii)

The reference to Apollyon irresistibly reminds the reader of *Pilgrim’s Progress* where the fight with the devil is open, authentically heroic and manifestly successful. A parallel is made, a framework invoked, which does not fit the picture of this quest.

‘Burningly it came on me all at once, / This was the place!’ (CR, xxx). Place is imaged into full meaning. Roland has reached his goal, a triumph whatever else

happens to him. Yet, ironically, at the crucial moment, Roland had failed to recognise that 'Progress this way' (CR, xxix) was not to be ended in stalemate, but in 'the end'; not 'some end', but in the goal – The Dark Tower. Exasperatedly, he sees himself as 'Dunce, Dotard, a-doing at the very nonce, / After a life spent training for the sight!' (CR, xxx). The emphasis placed on the derisive 'Dunce' and 'Dotard' by their capital letters, their position in the poetic line, and their alliterative harshness, (compounded by Browning's use of the word 'a-doing') links the idea of Roland's blindness, his lack of discernment, with the tower itself, 'The round squat turret, blind as the fool's heart' (CR, xxxi). Roland is led to an emblem of himself, which is like the rest of the imagery on the journey, no different from it. The landscape is still perceived as hostile:

The hills, like giants at a hunting, lay,
Chin upon hand, to see the game at bay, –
'Now stab and end the creature – to the heft!' (CR, xxxii).

In full awareness of danger as the metaphoric 'game at bay', and in full consciousness of all his wearisome experience, and the past failures of the band, the names of his lost peers ringing in his ears, their image pictured against the 'dying sunset' (CR, xxxii) 'To view the last of me' (CR, xxxiv), Roland's spirit asserts itself in a celebratory act:

And yet
Dauntless the slug-horn to my lips I set,
And blew '*Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came*' (CR, xxxiv).

In his final act, Roland creates himself in terms of meaning, heroically and triumphantly accepting, presumably, destruction. His discovery, at the end, is not only his perception that success in his quest means just to die bravely, but the recognition of the determined life he has created for himself, by the choices he has made. Logically, as it is Roland who recounts the history of his quest, we know he

cannot die. The language, too, insists we are aware that this is an artefact, presenting just 'one more picture!' (*CR*, xxxiv).

Among the different possibilities that inspire what he calls the objective poet Browning refers, among the alternatives, to 'some sunken and darkened chamber of imagery' with 'rare and precious (. . .) outlooks through here and there an enclosure upon a world beyond', where he could attempt to render 'permanent by art whatever came to diversify the gloom'.²⁷ The chamber he describes, so graphically, in his 'Essay on Shelley', published January, 1852, was the product of the same mind that on January 2nd, 1852 had been busy writing 'Childe Roland'. The 'sunken and darkened chamber of imagery', an area of the mind well below the level of consciousness, bears at least some resemblance to the Dark Tower itself. In that case, when the poet reaches the source of his own inspiration, he finds the discovery inimical. Throughout, the stanzas at the end of this poem words for illumination and sight are frequent; 'sight', 'blind', 'see', 'view' are found throughout the recognition scene. Roland's disillusionment when he perceives the Dark Tower, can be interpreted as Browning's own disillusionment in his ability to capture and to express poetic visions which too often elude him, or fail to convey the desired image. The tower is mean, squat, not in the least grand, unvisionary; but maybe that is the truth he has to settle for. The whole argument in the 'Shelley' essay is relevant, that the modern poet must surrender the universal vision of the Romantics and settle for newly realistic bits and pieces, not knowing where they lead. Browning is a discontented (often enraged) post-Romantic, in love with Romantic vision but seeing it as egotism writ large.

Matthew Arnold, 'Balder Dead'

The poet, to whose mighty heart
Heaven doth a quicker pulse impart,
Subdues that energy to scan
Not his own course, but that of man.²⁸

The subdued metaphor here places the writer as guide, leading the readership collectively towards the unknown land of the ideal. In *Essays in Criticism*, Arnold equates the best in poetry with religion, claiming that religion must pass into poetry, as he earnestly believed was the case with the great works of Dante, in order to penetrate and transform that poor, anxious and error-prone creature, man:

More and more mankind will discover that we have to turn to poetry to interpret life for us, to console us, to sustain us. Without poetry our science will appear incomplete; and most of what now passes with us for religion and philosophy will be replaced by poetry.²⁹

Arnold's criticism can be seen as an extension, in a different medium, of the role assumed in the poetry. For at its most ambitious, his poetry was written in obedience to this claim. Arnold's recreation of the Balder myth in the 'grand style' of a Classical model was his attempt to direct his effort to produce the effects of 'unity and profoundness of moral impression, at which the ancient poets aimed'.³⁰

Although Arnold accepted the concept of the 'Zeitgeist' as the 'temper of the times' – a local, changeable phenomenon, nonetheless he aspired beyond such relativism for a belief in what was unchangeably the good, what he means, indeed by the word 'perfection'. Those excellent actions:

Which most powerfully appeal to the great primary human affections; to those elementary feelings which subsist permanently in the race, and which are independent of time (*AP*, pp.593-94).

Alasdair MacIntyre defines virtues which transcend temporal time as virtues necessary for 'the good life for man'. The kind of life which is a quest 'for the good life (. . .) as the life spent in seeking for the good life (. . .) and the virtues necessary for the seeking are those which will enable us to understand what more and what else the good life for man is.'³¹ MacIntyre's concept of 'the good' as an understanding of 'what more and what else the good life for man is', seems to parallel Arnold's definition of Hellenism as 'the intelligence driving at those ideas which are (. . .) the basis of right practice, the ardent sense for all the new and changing combinations of them which man's development brings with it'.³² Both these concepts of 'the good' break with Arnold's definition of Hebraism 'this paramount sense of the obligation of duty, self-control, and work, this earnestness in going manfully with the best light we have' (*CA*, p.129). I wish to argue that Arnold's exploration of the historical and the 'supra historical' in 'Balder Dead', is an attempt to understand what 'the good life' for man is; the good for man taking over from a specific orthodox type goal. The function 'to interpret life, to console us, to sustain us' and to 'create a current of true and fresh ideas'³³ is to be performed not just by the poet's own voice but by the myth of Balder himself.

The use of Northern mythology allowed Arnold to identify a model of virtue without using the terms of Christianity or Christianised antiquity and thereby to claim a universality for his ethic. MacIntyre develops his thesis to include 'a conception of the good which will enable us to understand the place of integrity and constancy in life' (*AV*, p.204), virtues which, in 'Balder Dead', Arnold ascribes not only to Balder, but to Nanna his wife, to Balder's blind brother, Hoder, and to Hermod, the quester.

Arnold repeats his descriptions of the alien, frozen landscape, which has to be traversed by the quester journeying to Hel, first in Frea's vividly graphic account to

blind Hoder of the hazards of the symbolic landscape, then in the details of Hermod's courageous quest through the supernatural, hostile terrain, and thirdly, his wonderfully heroic return to Hel to acknowledge defeat. The repetitions help to build up a sense of the significance of the ritual of physical quest. Arnold's poetic form involves the secret structures that the anthropologists identify in the hero's sacred journey. Repetition in the poem is a reminder of poetry as chant, as expression of man's primitive experience of life and the cosmos, the mystery of death and hope of rebirth, embodying Nature's inexplicable mystery, even to the present age of science. Celtic natural magic, the repetition of 'magical' numbers – multiples of the number three – symbolic of the three quest journey descriptions, 'Nine days, nine nights towards the northern ice',³⁴ combines with Arnold's many repeated phrases to accrete a significance which is slow and quiet. It is a form mimetic of the making of relationships, unstated and implicit, which balances the remote Classical form with Romanticism, a Northern wildness with the journeys to Hades in *Odyssey xi* and *Aeneid vi* where the future is announced in more promising shape. Arnold's constant references to night and frost make the result of Balder's death the coming of the universal winter to the world; another version of the Arnold waste-land. His landscape of Hermod's journey to Hel becomes the biggest working out of his recurrent imagery of night and frost in his other poems, as the condition of life now. Although Arnold's landscape of deadness in 'Balder Dead', approximates to Browning's in 'Childe Roland' the sense of futility is shifted from the quester as in Browning, to the enterprise itself, as in other images of strenuousness in Arnold (in, for example, 'A Summer Night' or the hunt in 'Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse').

The quester is a recurrent figure in Arnold's poetry. By his use of the pronoun 'we' in 'The Scholar Gipsy' and 'Rugby Chapel', he includes his readers with himself

as persons who need something both to quicken their energies and to give new impetus to the moral life. In the poetics of the 1853 'Preface', Arnold declares that a poem should not be, as is his own 'Empedocles', an account of inner torment suffered, of anguish never given respite by action:

The Gods laugh in their sleeve
To watch man doubt and fear,
Who knows not what to believe
Since he sees nothing clear,
And dares stamp nothing false where he finds nothing sure.
(*Empedocles on Etna*, I.ii, ll.87-91 *AP*, p.160).

Empedocles is:

Nothing but a devouring flame of thought –
But a naked, eternally restless mind!
(II.i, ll.329-330).

and his inner suffering can be ended only by suicide. 'Balder Dead' written in the 'grand style', is Arnold's antidote to subjective poetry. It is his own version of Nietzsche's 'monumentalistic history': 'the concentration on the heroes of the past in an effort to derive comfort and inspiration from the fact that man is capable of greatness, contemporary mediocrity notwithstanding'.³⁵ It is a poetic image to replace his own, and his time's feelings of impotence and timidity. For in the image of the hero, the self-deprecating, doubting mood could find an anti-self, strong in both decisive force and mastery of circumstance. In 'Balder Dead' the image of the quester hero, Hermod, provides this positive sense of heroic life, of energy and vigorous, decisive action. Yet for Arnold, as for many nineteenth-century intellectuals, the desire of the times was not only for Kaufmann's 'inspiration', but also for escape from the intellectual difficulties and meanness of the period. The advantage of the Balder myth was rather that it found an image for those difficulties yet retained the objectivity of narrative. The poem approaches the tragic, as with

'Sohrab and Rustum' but faces it down in its bleak acceptance of heroic failure and the finality of death.

Three reactions to Balder's death make up the poem; the gigantic grief of Odin and the Gods, the heroic will of Hermod to restore Balder to life by his quest to Hel, and the voice of Balder himself. The activity of the quest fails, but the failure establishes by a dialectic the rightness of Balder's own quietism and his trust in a personal life, in the power of human affections, as the surviving truth during the hard time of the world-night.

Balder's speech to Nanna, reveals his deep compassion for his wife's suffering:

'Poor lamb, thou sleepest, and forgett'st thy woe!
Tears stand upon the lashes of thine eyes,
Tears wet the pillow by thy cheek; but thou,
Like a young child, hast cried thyself to sleep. (. . .)
Alive I kept not far from thee, dear soul!
Neither do I neglect thee now, though dead. (. . .)
And well I know that by no stroke of death,
Tardy or swift, would'st thou be loth to die,
So it restored thee, Nanna, to my side,
Whom thou so well hast loved; (. . .)
But even there, O Nanna, we might find
Some solace in each other's look and speech,
Wandering together through that gloomy world'
(*BD*, I. ll.288-328).

The naturalistic speech rhythm, the syntax of conversation, the parallel of Nanna to 'poor lamb' (*BD*, I. l.288) and 'a young child' (*BD*, I. l.291) identify Balder's reaction to his fate with Christian story, but there is here none of the assurance of Heaven and Arnold draws instead on the haplessness of the shades in *Odyssey* xi. If mythology could be seen as a phase in the development of the religious imagination, it could be seen as a permanent source of spiritual truth. But, equally, Christian certainties become now another story among the tales that universal mankind has told itself over the centuries. Writing *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and The Heroic in History*, Carlyle

refers to the Northland Mythology of the Edda, and to Balder, 'the White God, the beautiful, the just and benignant (whom the early Christian missionaries found to resemble Christ)'.³⁶ Charles Kingsley states his belief that the Eddas are, to a degree, a religious book, for they can make children 'love noble deeds, and trust in God to help them through'.³⁷ Kingsley, writing for children, could speak of a God of love, whereas Arnold, to his audience, could speak only of love as the good. Arnold repeatedly explores the idea of love as a constant good, as the good. On the 'darkling plain' of 'Dover Beach' we hear the anguished plea 'Ah, love, let us be true / To one another!' (*AP*, p.239, ll.29,30). 'To Marguerite' and 'The Buried Life' would be other familiar references. Yet in these poems, Arnold's exploration of love reveals that too often love may prove to be transient, feeble and shallow. In 'Balder Dead', however, he shows, in Nanna, Balder's wife, a love which is prepared to sacrifice life itself. It is a concept of love as an eternal 'good', as the good. Balder, though in Hel, is released from the suffering of 'isolation without end' ('Isolation to Marguerite', *AP*, p.121, l.40) through the constancy of Nanna's love for him and his love for Nanna. Balder has not merely '*dream'd* two hearts might blend / In one' (*ibid.*, ll. 38,39) but through his suffering in Hel he is led to experience such 'blending'.

Arnold was always addressing his voice to what he believed was the need of a society which had been robbed of its orthodox beliefs and faced with new, rational, scientific beliefs. Intellectually, he quested for a path which would unite the rationalism of science with the moral ethics of the old dogmas. And in convergence of idea, he sought evidence for a collective wisdom. Spinoza's words, for example, 'Man's happiness consists in his being able to preserve his own essence,' he parallels with The Gospel, 'What is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose

himself, forfeit himself?'³⁸ Behind the myth of Balder, Arnold appears to find administrations of a gospel more abiding than the rites of the church and he gives to the figures in the story, words that are his own version of that universal religion. In effect had Hermod, the quester, chosen not to return to Hel to inform Balder that his quest to rescue Balder had failed, Hermod could not have discovered his need to listen to Balder's quietism. In 'Literature and Science' Arnold supports his thesis as strongly as he can:

[the] desire in men that good should be forever present to them – [which] acts in us when we feel the impulse for relating our knowledge to our sense for conduct and to our sense for beauty (Lit. & Science, p.63).

But always, in speaking to others, Arnold is also addressing himself. In a letter to Clough, Arnold expresses his longing for 'a distinct seeing of my way as far as my own nature is concerned'.³⁹ His later, ironic advice to Clough that he, Clough, is 'going wrong' because he would not 'resolve to be thyself' (*Letters to Clough*, p.130) shows the importance he gives to 'resolve', as well as to self-knowledge. Yet in May, 1853, Arnold argues 'there are characters which are truest to themselves by never being anything, when circumstances do not suit' (*Letters to Clough*, p.135). Quiet may have values of its own, apart from Carlylean firmness, and Balder's patience in Hel has to be set against the strenuousness of Hermod's quest. Matthew, as the sensitive son of the acclaimed, energetic headmaster, Thomas Arnold, whose ethics of courage and nobility of action he celebrated in the quest image in 'Rugby Chapel', discovers that 'to be yourself' is a very difficult task:

Ah! and he, who placed our master-feeling,
Fail'd to place that master-feeling clear.
(*'Self Deception'*, *AP*, p.276, ll.23-24).

The simplicity of the paradigm of his father's Hebraic quest seems no longer possible for the complexity Arnold sees in his modern life. The past, as a source of order, where the pursuit of the father's Hebraic qualities gave that tradition its particular point and purpose, now appears lost. Matthew's challenge is to discover a new unity of being, one without dogma, where truth is multifaceted, where 'perfection – as culture (...) learns to conceive it – is a harmonious expression of all the powers which make the beauty and worth of human nature' (*CA*, p.48). As mentioned earlier, Arnold expresses his admiration for the great Classical works of the ancients, recommending that their works be studied as models of instruction. His claim, for those who study the ancients, is that there appears to be a 'steadying and composing effect upon their judgement . . . they wish to know what it (their age) is, what it can give them, and whether that is what they want' (Preface, 1853, *AP*, p.604). Arnold's looking back to the works of the ancients, including the Eddas, can be seen as not only a search, a quest for a faith, but a quest also for what personal qualities he must look for in himself.

In 'Balder Dead', Balder calms his own anxieties in thoughts and feelings for others and in the detachment of his death state, now that he is released from the frenetic, senseless activity of life in Asgard. Asgard's alternation of activity and grief, epic and elegy, makes it an image of the world as perceived in Arnold's poetry. Nevertheless, Arnold shows that it is Balder's ability emotionally and intellectually to transcend his unjust fate, which enables him to profit from his experience and to grow in spiritual stature.

The grief of Asgard, and the stern endurance of Hermod, who is never appalled as he quests through the nightmare landscape – unlike Browning's Childe Roland, on his quest for the Dark Tower – are interwoven into the fabric of ritualism

and magic. Yet in 'Balder Dead', unlike in 'Childe Roland', quest fails because it was foredoomed to fail.

The poetic style and form in which Arnold recreated 'Balder Dead', contributes to the poem's sense of inexorable doom – a sense engendered by both the constricting control of the Gods and by the tragic necessity of an unavoidable fate which has been woven by Odin, the Father of the Gods. For when Odin first created heaven and earth, the Gods and the first men, he declared: 'ye Gods, shall meet your doom, (. . .) / And I too, Odin too, the Lord of all' (*BD*, I. ll.28,30). It is a doom Freya echoes in her critique of the use of force to rescue Balder from Hela's iron grip and thus attempt to alter fate. 'For all which hath been fixed, was fixed by thee' (*BD*, III, l.254). Later, Freya refers again to the Gods' fixed doom, and to her understanding, her knowledge of it: 'And all that is to come I know, but lock / In mine own breast' (*BD*, III, 286-7). Arnold presents Odin as part of a double consciousness with Freya, which is both heroically active but also recognising the futility of such action (a Byronic voice against the Wordsworth voice of Balder).

The poem implicitly comments on Romantic as much as on collectively Christian images. Arnold clearly attempts to unite the aspirations of the Romantic with the rational sense of limitation, in adopting the 'right' conduct towards an acceptance of Balder's fate. Yet his poetic search to heal the division of the Romantic attitudes which were at war with the Classicism of his home and education, to solve the disunity of the nineteenth-century, of which he was painfully conscious, apparently ran counter to the quest in the poem, which is to restore Balder, the old order. The new wisdom supersedes that order.

Arnold offers in 'Balder Dead', an image of relationships which is both confirmed and questioned. 'Not deep the poet sees, but wide', he asserts in

'Resignation, To Fausta' (*AP*, p.841, l.214). 'Not deep the poet sees, but wide', he asserts also in a letter to Clough (*Letters to Clough*, p.99). The phrase 'the blind Hoder' rings out repeatedly imaging a darkness diametrically contrasted with his admired, beloved brother Balder, 'the ray-crowned' God (*BD*, III, l.517). Of all the Gods, 'the blind Hoder' could have allowed irrational emotions to blind him spiritually – emotions of jealousy and anger at the injustice of a fate which has made him the murderer of his brother. Yet, though Hoder is physically blind, he is spiritually 'all-seeing', like the traditional figure of the poet, blind Homer and blind Milton.

In Arnold's recreation of the Balder myth, Hoder leaves the ritual feasting to seek help from Frea, the mother Goddess, the seer, in his desire to release Balder from Hel and release himself, also, from the guilt of unwitting 'blindness'. Hoder's offer of his own life, as a replacement for Balder, is a suggestion which Frea appears, insensitively, to scorn. Yet Hoder's grief and persistence result in Frea's suggestion that a formal quest might be made to Hela, that Hermod will be the quester, and that she 'will be his guide unseen' (*BD*, I, l.191) though she, like Odin, knows 'all that is to come' (*BD*, III, l.286) and 'all which hath been fixed' (*BD*, III, l.254). It is not Hoder, but Hermod, the 'nimble' God, who is actually to receive the terrible confirmation that the Gods have limited power and that a new wisdom replaces them. Balder tells Hermod that the clash between the Old Gods and the New Gods will bring forth a new Asgard. The New Gods are feared as evil, although in the beginning of the world, both the Old Gods and the New Gods were created by the one Father God, Odin. Many times we are told, that the Gods of Asgard hate Loki, 'the evil'. Nonetheless it is an evil they repeatedly seem to tolerate as a Hegelean antithesis and with Goethean irony out of this evil comes good. It is Balder's tragic

experience which enables him to 'see' in a different light. Loki's evil, therefore, is shown as a part of Balder's 'becoming'. Although Balder, himself, does not advocate any specific activity, but resignedly accepts his fate as a prisoner in Hel, his disposition of mind looks forward to a future Asgard, where to achieve the good is seen as a possibility.

The resilience and courage of Hermod, on his quest journey through the alien world of Hel, are not, therefore, the point of the poem, though they produce a constant brilliance of imagery. Physical quest becomes an obstacle to mental discovery. The object of rescuing Balder keeps from his mind his own condition of feeling and the deeper exploration the inner quest is to be in his discovery of his own bitterness. In Niflheim, Hermod, accuses Hoder of being 'blind in heart and eyes!' (*BD*, III, l.387), ironically failing to see that his accusation, 'Doubtless thou fearest to meet Balder's voice, / Thy brother, whom through folly thou didst slay' (*BD*, III, ll.392, 393) proves that it is he, Hermod, 'the nimble', the physically blest, who, through his bitterness, is blind to the truth of the tragedy. Yet Hoder's reaction and response to the injustice of Hermod's accusation is to attempt to help Hermod to 'see' the truth, in order that Hermod might forgive him, if only to 'pass pitying by' (*BD*, III, l.400). Hoder, the hapless slayer, becomes in Arnold's addition to the myth the precursor of the teaching offered by the Balder he killed. He appeals to the idea of containment which 'Make us, not fly to dreams, but moderate desire' ('Empedocles on Etna' p.171, I.ii, l 386):

'Hermod, the nimble, dost thou still pursue
The unhappy with reproach, even in the grave?
For this I died, and fled beneath the gloom, (. . .)
And canst thou not, even here, pass pitying by?
No less than Balder have I lost the light
Of Heaven, and communion with my kin;
I too had once a wife, and once a child,
And substance, and a golden house in Heaven –

But all I left of my own act, and fled
Below, and dost thou hate me even here?
(*BD*, III, ll.395-406).

Arnold stresses the courage and nobility of Hoder's act of expiation for an involuntary offence, by his line break, 'fled/Below'; below the light of the golden Asgard, the love of his wife and child, burying himself in the shadows of 'Below' in Hel. This was not an unwitting act, like the one which precipitated the doomed Balder to his fate in Hel, but willed, deliberately enacted – 'fled / Below'. Typically, Arnold's sympathy goes not to the free actions of Hermod but rather to the victim of necessity, who, nevertheless, assumed responsibility for his terrible action and offered his own life in expiation. Death was not a weak way out of the tragic situation, but a sacrifice of his physical self; an act of conscience, which he believed would enable him to preserve himself 'spiritually', that is, to be himself. As Arnold claims, 'In criticism, as in life since both are guests, you must lose yourself to find yourself'.⁴⁰ The verbs associated by Classical poets with the existence of the dead shades are used by Arnold to give a more individual modesty to Hoder's presence. 'Hovering' (*BD*, III, l.383), for example, is used by Dante for the lingering of the dead souls and 'flittest' (*BD*, III, l.389) is a common translation for the flight of the soul in Virgil and Homer.

Hermod's instinctive response to Hoder as killer of Balder is based on an incorrect perception of the truth. At the end of the poem, however, as Balder, Nanna and Hoder, 'Departed o'er the cloudy plain' (*BD*, III, l.552) Hermod has so changed his former ideas that:

Mute, gazing after them in tears; and fain,
Fain had he followed their receding steps,
Though they to death were bound, and he to Heaven,
Then; but a power he could not break withheld.
(*BD*, III, ll.555-558).

It is not his kin in Heaven, with their orthodoxy, their ritual and their gloomy apprehension of their foredoomed overthrow 'In that great day, the twilight of the Gods' (*BD*, III, 1.68), but his kin in Hel, with their serenity, their calm acceptance of their fate, their comfort in one another and their hope that one day they might reach 'Another Heaven' (*BD*, III, 1.519), 'The Second Asgard' (*BD*, III, 1.521), who become, for Hermod, the objective of his protracted quest. Balder's assertion that he and Hoder will live again with the Gods, sweetens their present defeat, their death.

Yet it would seem that Arnold's hope for the future, embodied in Balder's future reconstruction of Asgard, is more emotionally than intellectually satisfying. It is the revelation of Balder's nobility that replaces the physical courage and endurance of Hermod's quest. The grandeur of Balder's soul and the fundamental irony of his existence, make the work tragic, although the 'recognition' occurring after his death, gives mortality a consolatory value:

For I am long since weary of your storm
Of carnage, and find, Hermod, in your life
Something too much of war and broils, which make
Life one perpetual fight, a bath of blood.
Mine eyes are dizzy with the arrowy hail;
Mine ears are stunned with blows, and sick for calm.
Inactive therefore let me lie, in gloom,
Unarmed, inglorious; I attend the course
Of ages, and my late return to light,
In times less alien to a spirit mild (*BD*, III, ll.503-512).

Balder rejects the overt force of war and aggression, as a means of achieving the good, as Arnold, in the end rejected Carlyle's attitude towards force and the French Revolution. Balder's preference for 'inglorious' calm can be paralleled with Arnold's plea for the literary critic not to become involved in nineteenth-century frenetic, political and economic life, but to abandon 'the sphere of practical life'.⁴¹ For, 'The rush and roar of practical life will always have a dizzying and attracting effect upon the most collected spectator, and tend to draw him into its vortex' (*EC*, I, p.25).

Hermod, the God of practical life, is like Faust; he does achieve insight in Hel, though not the insight he set out for (and anyway, it is what Odin and Freya have in secret known all along).

The type of leader like Dr. Arnold in 'Rugby Chapel', who must 'keep, keep them combined!' (*AP*, p.444, l.182), finds in the end it is an impossible task, as impossible as getting everyone to weep for Balder. Arnold's answer is for Balder to withdraw from society, albeit a painful withdrawal, to 'endure / Death, and the gloom' (*BD*, III, ll.545, 546). 'Hela's mouldering realm' (*BD*, I, l.315) must be endured, till such times as are propitious 'to a spirit mild' (*BD*, III, l.512). Like Balder, Arnold felt himself to be in a netherland, a Niflheim, a darkling plain between two worlds the one which has begun to die and the one which is to be born. By comparison, the Gods' life in Asgard is lacking in moral purpose. Like the Barbarians, the Aristocrats of *Culture and Anarchy*, the Gods of Asgard are impenitent sportsmen, attacking Balder as a joke, in order to demonstrate his magical invulnerability to physical injury; they are the doomed old forces of a naively indulgent way of life. Whereas, although Balder's existence in Hel is but a pale transcript of the desires of the living, he is not 'wholly to be pitied, quite forlorn' (*BD*, III, l.458).

Balder was remembered in Asgard for the love and healing his 'song of joyance' gave to all who heard. In Hel, his song to Hermod is no longer of joyance, yet the words are not of self-pity but are words of concern for the age of suffering and grief which, because it is foredoomed, will inevitably befall 'the men on earth, the Gods in Heaven' (*BDIII*, l.485). The words he utters are not words designed to offer comfort:

Mourn not for me! Mourn, Hermod, for the Gods;
Mourn for the men on earth, the Gods in Heaven
(*BD*, III, ll.484-5).

The echo of Biblical parallelism here, clearly contributes both to Arnold's 'grand' style and to the overall sense of inexorable doom. The parallel is with Christ foretelling to the women of Jerusalem the end of the old dispensation of the Law and the destruction of their city. The implication is irresistible; religions pass away in sorrow and such an occasion as happens here in Hela will happen again in the history of the world. For who can help the men on earth, the Gods in Heaven? Balder, the Beautiful One, the Burnished, can now only claim that in the shadows of Hel he has 'all the solace death allows' (*BDIII*, 1.469), whilst the tragedy for the Gods, as for the speaker in 'Dover Beach', is a want of faith in the future.

Hela gains significance silently as the poem proceeds, a significance which is not diminished by commentary and interpretation within the poem. In the 1853 'Preface', Arnold claims that the tragic poet treated his action:

As to permit its inherent excellences to develop themselves, without interruption from the intrusion of his personal peculiarities; most fortunate, when he most entirely succeeds in effacing himself, and in enabling a noble action to subsist as it did in nature ('Preface', 1853, *AP*, p.598).

Arnold himself does not always entirely succeed in 'effacing himself' in his interpretation of the Balder myth; there are moments when his distinct anxieties can be clearly heard. The poem may begin with the steadfastness and activity of Hermod's quest but the end of the journey is to resist such values and replace them by the patience and habit of acceptance of the dead Balder. The attraction of a tale about the Northern pantheon for Arnold must have been partly that Odin and the Gods are a temporary dispensation, always conscious that their time of rule will end at the last days; the poem repeatedly refers to Ragnarök. The mythology gave expression to Arnold's sense of impermanence yet desire for an eternal something, promised by the

idea of a new order that would follow the death of the gods. These parallels with his own fears for the end of the Christian dispensation articulated both his melancholy and his longing to believe that there could be a good and satisfying life beyond the apparent ending. For that the tale of Balder was ideal; Balder the god slain by the tree (mistletoe) descends to the underworld (Hel) but in place of Christ's triumphant Harrowing of Hell, he is kept there and instead it is Hermod who, as hero, must journey there in a futile attempt to wrest Balder from the shades. As in most such myths (except the Christian version) the quest fails, yet the compensation is the intellectual and spiritual gift of a new wisdom, offered by Balder himself. The sea of faith may ebb but ears may catch in its retreating roar the words of an everlasting gospel. Unlike the purely personal quests of Ulysses and Childe Roland, Arnold's adventurer, Hermod, discovers an insight addressed to humanity collectively, speaking with painful bleakness words of consolation and modified assurance.

¹ S.T. Coleridge, 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner', in *Poems*, ed. E.H. Coleridge, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1912), vol. 1, p.208, ll.586-590.

² W.D. Hudson, *Modern Moral Philosophy* (London: Macmillan, 1970), p.30.

³ Hallam, Tennyson, *Alfred Lord Tennyson: A Memoir*, 2 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1897), I. p.196.

⁴ Alfred, Lord Tennyson, 'Ulysses', in *The Poems of Tennyson*, ed. Christopher Ricks (London, Longmans Green, 1969), p.560; hereafter referred to as Tennyson, *Poems*.

⁵ Alasdair MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980), p.191; hereafter referred to as MacIntyre, *Ethics*.

⁶ Arthur H. Hallam, *The Poems of Arthur Henry Hallam, Together with his essay on the Lyrical Poems of Alfred Tennyson*, ed. Richard Le Gullienne (London: Elkin Matthews and John Lane, 1893), pp.93-4.

⁷ Thomas Carlyle, *The Life of John Sterling* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1888), p.55.

⁸ Thomas Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus in Sartor Resartus and Selected Prose*, ed. Herbert L. Sussman, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970), p.182; hereafter referred to as Carlyle, *Sartor*.

⁹ Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*, ed. J. Dover Wilson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), pp.50-51.

¹⁰ George Henry Lewes, *The Story of Goethe's Life* (London: Smith, Elder, 1873), p.372; hereafter referred to as Lewes, *Goethe's Life*.

¹¹ Lewes, *Goethe's Life*, p.353

¹² Alfred, Lord Tennyson, 'The Princess' in Tennyson, *Poems* (VII ll.284-288), p.214.

¹³ Alasdair MacIntyre, *Ethics*, p.216.

¹⁴ J.S. Mill, 'A Prophecy', in *Dissertations and Discussions, Political, Philosophical & Historical* (London: John W. Parker & Son, 1859), p.285.

¹⁵ Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero Worship and the Heroic in History*, 1841 (London: Dent, 1908), p.150; hereafter referred to as Carlyle, *Heroes*.

¹⁶ Thomas Percy, *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, 1765, ed. J.V. Pritchard, 2 vols. (London: George Bell, 1876), I. p.viii; hereafter referred to as *Reliques*.

¹⁷ Charles Kingsley, *Sanitary and Social Lectures and Essays* (London: Macmillan, 1880), pp.231-32.

- ¹⁸ John Ruskin, *Fors Clavigera* in *Works*, 39 vols. (London: George Allen, 1903-12), xxviii, pp.655-6.
- ¹⁹ Robert Browning 'Childe Roland' in *Poetical Works 1833-1864*, ed. Ian Jack (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), p.614; hereafter referred to as *CR*.
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- ²¹ C.J. Jung, 'On the Psychology of the Trickster-Figure', in *Four Archetypes* (London: Routledge Kegan & Paul, 1974), p.133.
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- ²⁴ Soren Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 1846, trans. Dorothy Swanson & Walter Lowrie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1941), pp.67-9.
- ²⁵ Carlyle, *Sartor*, p.164.
- ²⁶ Thomas Carlyle, *The Life of John Sterling*, 1851 (London; Chapman & Hall, 1871), p.108.
- ²⁷ Robert Browning, *An Essay on Percy Bysshe Shelley* 1852, The Shelley Society's Publications, 4th series, No.8 (London: Reeves & Turner, 1888), pp. 12,13.
- ²⁸ Matthew Arnold, 'Resignation to Fausta', in *AP*, p.84, ll.144-147.
- ²⁹ Matthew Arnold, *Essays in Criticism, Second Series*, 1888 (London: Macmillan, 1906), pp. 2,3; hereafter referred to as *ECII*.
- ³⁰ Matthew Arnold, 'Preface to Poems', 1853, *AP*, p.590.
- ³¹ Alasdair MacIntyre, 'Virtues, Unity of Life and Concept of Tradition', from *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (London: Duckworth, 1981), p.204; hereafter referred to as *AV*.
- ³² Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*, 1869, ed. J. Dover Wilson (London: Cambridge University Press, 1969), p.129; hereafter referred to as *CA*.
- ³³ Matthew Arnold, *Essays in Criticism, 1st Series*, 1865 (London: Macmillan, 1910), pp.18,19; hereafter referred to as *EC, I*.
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- ³⁵ Walter Kaufmann, 'Art and History', in *Nietzsche*, 5th edn. (New York: Meridian Books, 1960), p.122; hereafter referred to as *Nietzsche*.
- ³⁶ Thomas Carlyle, *Heroes*, p.22.
- ³⁷ Charles Kingsley, *The Heroes* (London and Beccles: William Clowes, 1855), pp.23-24.
- ³⁸ Matthew Arnold, 'Literature & Science', in *Philistinism in England and America*, ed. R.H. Super (Michigan: University of Michigan University Press, 1974), p.67; hereafter referred to as *Lit & Science*.
- ³⁹ *The Letters of Matthew Arnold to Arthur Hugh Clough*, ed. Howard Foster Lowry (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1932), Letter 32, p.110; hereafter referred to as *Letters to Clough*.
- ⁴⁰ Matthew Arnold, *Essays in Criticism, Third Series*, ed. Edward J. O'Brien (Boston: Bell Publishing, 1910), p.12.
- ⁴¹ 'The Function of Criticism at the Present Time', *EC, I*, p.25.

Chapter 2

The Life Quest: Newman and Ruskin

Wayfaring is a natural model for the autobiographer and the example of *The Pilgrim's Progress* is central for the English writer. Yet Bunyan's great allegory is not, of course, simply an account of his own experience and the actual life-story in *Grace Abounding* tells a very different story. It is the objective narrative which presents life as a journey to an end point whereas in his relation of his own life he describes a much more confused process of passing in and out of despair and hope and any sense of resolution is swallowed up in the sense of continued trial and suffering. The two tales provide a way of distinguishing those two mid-Victorian fictional life-stories, *David Copperfield* (1849-50) and *Villette* (1853). After the deaths of Dora and Steerforth David's life seems to have fallen into the hands of Giant Despair, yet that is only a stage in his eventual recognition of what had all along been the major force in his life, his love for Agnes or, more precisely, his search for a figure who will guide his life as Agnes will. The underlying note of confidence throughout the novel is justified retrospectively by that final discovery. The tone of *Villette*, almost in answer to Dickens, is as interior and troubled by its movements between hope and despair as *Grace Abounding*. If it moves in its roundabout way to a point of trust in M. Paul, that is only for the reader to discover at the end that he was after all lost again, drowned at sea. Retrospectively, as in *David Copperfield* though on exactly opposite grounds, the reader recognises a justification for the apparently arbitrary bitterness which otherwise perplexes the text. All the doubts and

misgivings that had flawed Lucy Snowe's sense of her future had all turned out to be after all true foresights.

For all the religious intensity of Lucy's submission to what she sees as God's trial of her by her life of suffering, her autobiography is unlike the model of devout self-scrutiny offered, for example, by St. Augustine's *Confessions*. Grace abounds in Bunyan to *The Chief of Sinners* and the loss of direction is ascribed to his own errors and perversities. The model of the religious life is more often that of *Pilgrim's Progress*, the discovery of the hidden hand of providence at work in a life in a way of which at the time it was scarcely conscious. It is *David Copperfield* in fact which is closer to the model of the religious autobiography. It would be difficult to think of a later first person novel, which could be written, with that degree of confidence, to end in such clear words of affirmation. Among Victorian autobiographies it would be equally difficult to find another so sure in its discovery of a destined shape, and of a sense of arrival as Newman's *Apologia*. The more expected model is of a 'faltering forward' where the progress is balanced by loss and shape becomes a recurrent discovery remembered within a work which remains itself open-ended, requiring a conclusion but only really able to find a suitably rhetorical ending; Ruskin's *Praeterita*, in fact.

Newman, *Apologia pro Vita Sua* (1864)

According to Herbert Kohl, Heidegger claims 'Being cannot be captured through philosophical discourse' but 'when we turn the language of Being as it reveals itself to us into human speech, poetry results.'¹ Newman came to believe that Kingsley's attacks upon him had to be answered not by philosophical argument, but by a demonstration of

the essential truth of his life. He chose therefore, to explain his own 'Being', the how and why of John Henry Newman, in autobiographical form, using the analogy of quest as a vehicle, whereby he could demonstrate 'That living intelligence by which I write and argue and act'.² It is the personal pronoun that matters here; the *Apologia* being an inner history of an 'I'. His argument, 'We must be content to follow the law of our being in religious matters as well as in secular',³ he dramatically presents in the *Apologia*, with a hero wandering in search of the purpose of his own life.

When we consider Newman's claim for poetic form, we can appreciate why his purpose in writing the *Apologia* dictated a form with the logic of poetry:

By a skilful adjustment of circumstances it brings into sight the connexion of cause and effect; completes the dependence of the parts one on another and harmonises the proportion of the whole, tracing its progress from a complication of incidents to their just and satisfactory arrangement. . .⁴

A symbolic quest form enabled him best to show his religious development and final settlement. The quest form also enabled him to describe the movement of his mind in the symbolic structure of the language which recounts that movement. Through the imagery of the quest, he was not only able to look at his own beliefs and experiences, as if they were another's, but also to enable his readers to look on them as if they were their own, and hence to gain the sympathy of even the Protestant reader. Its dream-like selectiveness, which involves the inclusion of only those incidents and characters from his past which would show his development, is inspired by his belief that poetry has a logic of its own quite distinct from formal argument and inherently more adjusted to the complexity of human existence.

The interdependence of the parts becomes the discovery in the present of the significance of past events. To see, in retrospect, his experiences as quest, unknown at the time, and as providence, dictates the style of dramatization of these past events which, in the 'then' present, he understood as significant and germane to his having reached his goal.

In most of his writing Newman thinks of himself as the solitary explorer, contrasting himself in *The Idea of a University*, for example, with those 'engaged in provinces of thought, so familiarly traversed and so thoroughly explored', whereas he himself has been 'like a navigator on a strange sea, who is out of sight of land'.⁵ So the great metaphor goes on its majestic way, and the authority of the past becomes only a compass to guide the solitary captain. The analogy gives to purely intellectual life an epic identity and an almost physical presence. He wished to show that he did not 'move' from reason to reason, in his quest for religious opinion. And the quest form enabled him to convey development as movement of the whole man, 'the whole man moves' (*Ap*, p.225) and so restore mind to its context in life. For life grows, 'Not from propositions to propositions, but from things to things, from concrete to concrete, from wholes to wholes.'⁶ Newman convicts Kingsley, not on grounds of argument, but on the basis of a false model of life. If the self is the object of the quest, then it cannot be known in advance; truth takes it by surprise.

In a century threatened by change, where earlier beliefs of certainty were being fragmented by new scientific discoveries and by new philosophies, Newman quests to justify his right to what he calls certitude, especially in matters of religion. He states 'How it comes about that we can be certain is not my business to determine; for me it is

sufficient that certitude is felt' (*GA*, p.344). Certitude is not mere debate but 'an active recognition' (*GA*, p.345) felt as the end point of development. Newman argues that it is by the 'Illative Sense' that certitude is attained. The 'Illative Sense', intellect or reason rooted deep within individual identity, works unconsciously but its conclusions are ascertainable by intellect and reason. The dramatic centre of the *Apologia* is Newman's struggles in his quest to find this certitude, with its concomitant inner wholeness and harmony. His effort is to turn thought into conviction, conviction into principle, but always he is being carried forward in this process by his whole being.

Paradoxically, each new order draws Newman nearer to the old order, that most fully revealing the truth laid up in the Primitive Church; the order, the theology, he finally finds 'lying hid in the bosom of the Church (the Roman) as if one with her, clinging to and (as it were) lost in her embrace' (*Ap*, p.180). That was what he had least expected when the journey began. The goal for which he had quested, the One True Church of authority, was paradoxically to be found in the Church which he had attacked as being the seat of Antichrist, superstition, and idolatry, their political efforts offering prospect of 'perpetual war' (*Ap*. p.213).

At the age of fifteen, Newman explains how:

the seeds of an intellectual inconsistency (. . .) disabled one for a long course of years (. . .) I read Newton on the Prophecies, and in consequence became most firmly convinced that the Pope was the antichrist, predicted by Daniel, St. Paul and St. John. My imagination was stained by the effects of this doctrine up to the year 1843 (*Ap*, p.100).

He is enthralled, cursed, like any knight, by a false belief from which he has to be cleansed in action, before he can be metaphorically whole. The intellectual inconsistency

had to be lived through by the quester, as intellectual unrest, hampering his search for religious truth, as Christian, in *The Pilgrim's Progress*, is hampered, diverted and troubled, by misconceptions which to him, acquire a physical presence. Only if we recognise the centrality of the idea of movement in the *Apologia*, does the full force of 'disabled' strike us; he is the wounded knight who does not even recognise his own maiming. The 'seeds' which 'stained' Newman's imagination at the age of fifteen, themselves have to undergo 'gradual decay and extinction' (*Ap*, p.100). Imagery of sickness, disease, followed by renewed health, permeates the description of Newman's search for the truth. It forms an ebb and flow pattern, as Newman's mind moves forward in its search for religious truth at one period, whilst at another period, like the one referred to above, it is hampered; it has to pull back or change its course. Such paradox forms, then, the normal tissue of life for Newman.

In *The Grammar of Assent* he writes:

I suppose most men will recollect in their past years how many mistakes they have made about persons, parties, local occurrences, nations and the like, of which at the time they had no actual knowledge of their own: how ashamed or how amused they have since been at their own gratuitous idealism when they came into possession of the real facts concerning them (*GA*, p.32).

As so often, *The Grammar* is even clearer than the *Apologia* in its generalisation out of the particular life, but its appeal here is to recognition by 'most men'. What it looks like in detail appears in the *Apologia*:

I began to have misgivings, that strong as my own feelings had been against her (Rome) yet in some things which I had said, I had taken the statements of Anglican divines for granted without weighing them for myself (*Ap*, p.190).

From the inside, 'mistakes' begin to be recognised as 'misgivings'. Identity is so given by where we start from, that prejudice is scarcely recognised as such; he takes things for granted. Changing one's mind becomes a discovery of identity itself, the discovery of what one's non-disabled, unstained identity always had been.

Newman's metaphorical description – 'the melting, refining, and moulding' (*Ap*, p.280) of his religious opinions, till they reached a point of certitude, conveys his intense experience of the 'felt' strenuous activity as the mind grapples with new ideas and thoughts, in its quest for intellectual conviction. He used concrete imagery to describe the movement, the quest of his mind, to stress that his certitude was not the conclusion of an abstract syllogism but was the result of his complex, personally acquired appreciation of the concrete facts of Christian history – a 'felt' experience. For Newman, contemplation was as much involved with feeling as with thought. According to William Jones 'melting', losing the rigidity of former definition, is often described in religious experience as the physical experience which occurs when a sense of 'otherness' is felt.⁷

In Part III of the *Apologia*, Newman thinks of the 'work' he has 'to do in England' (*Ap*, p.121), as 'my battle (. . .) with liberalism' (*Ap*, p.132) which leads to the Oxford Movement. He recounts, also, that Southey's poem, *Thalaba*, came into his mind (*Ap*, p.121). As a selfless hero, devoted to a noble cause, *Thalaba* was clearly seen by Newman as a heroic example in a physical conflict. 'I began to think I had a mission'

(*Ap*, p.121). Even the motto he and Froude chose for the *Lyra Apostolica* was the words of Achilles on returning to the battle, ““You shall know the difference, now that I am back again”” (*Ap*, p.121). He presents himself as the knightly champion or hero, not with arrogance, but out of a sense of the inevitability of the conflict. ‘Mission’ is like a vocation appointed from the outside.

What he does not recognise, is that the battle is actually a quest; he does not yet know for what he is fighting. From his symbolic resting place in the Established Church, the words of Achilles reveal his commitment to fight for the Church, which he assumes is the Church of England and do battle with the Liberal attack, which he believed ‘was threatening the religion of the nation and its Church’ (*Ap*, p.122). Newman’s battle with liberalism was to defend traditional Christianity. His journey to the truth he presents as a journey of battles, as experience follows experience, conversion follows conversion. The word ‘battle’ belongs to the pattern of Newman’s symbolic quest language. Its constant use enables him to show the conflict of religious opinions in his mind as concretely ‘felt’ experience. As he battles for what he considers to be the way to the truth, Newman is brought ‘into collision both with my Bishop and also with the University authorities’ (*Ap*, p.194). The fight turns into what looks at first like Civil War here. He can claim that over tract 90, he seems ‘almost to have shot my last arrow in the Article on English Catholicity’ (*Ap*, pp.199,200). The metaphor implies that a phase of the war is ending; there are no more arrows left.

It is significant, therefore, that he can immediately go on referring to the battle, as though it has changed its identity. He refers, for example, to a ‘a great battle may be coming on, of which C.D. (Milman’s) book is a sort of earnest’ (*Ap*, p.201). It is as

though all he has been fighting for, so far, is only a preparation for a still grander field. He is beginning to understand the scale of the fight in new terms: “The whole of ‘our’ day may be a battle with this spirit” (*Ap*, p.201). When he adds to that a concomitant question ‘May we not leave to another age “its own” evil, – to settle the question of Romanism?’ he presents himself as still in the dark. This ‘evil’ – the question of Romanism – was the inner conflict with which Newman had to fight his most enervating battle and discover that he was, in the end, to be its champion.

His use of such violent metaphor becomes the means of expressing, and relieving, the psychological and theological frustration of uncertainty. At the start of the final part, ‘General Answer To Mr. Kingsley’, he can describe his present position as ‘perfect peace and contentment’ (*Ap*, p.275). The concrete imagery of battle then is not, or so he claims, Newman’s final model of existence but represents the ‘melting, refining and moulding (. . .) process’ (*Ap*, p.286) forging the development, but not the completed forms, of his religious beliefs. It is the absolute seriousness with which he holds intellectual principle which inevitably makes him see others as also aggressive, even if they do not know it. To his friend Mr. Bowden, he declared in a letter ‘under date of March 15’, ‘The Heads, I believe, have just done a violent act (. . .). Do not think that this will pain me (. . .) my shoulders shall manage to bear the charge (. . .). I have asserted a great principle, and I “ought” to suffer for it’ (*Ap*, p.202). His fiery language, ‘violent act’, ‘pain’, is evidence that he saw the history of his religious opinions as battles, as a perpetual engagement of forces in a fight for truth, where he, like the chivalric knight of holy orders or like Bunyan’s Christian, whose shoulders were ‘loaden with the burden’ was prepared to suffer in his quest for the truth. He ends another letter with the heroic flourish ‘I have no

intention' whatever of yielding any one point which I hold on conviction' (*Ap*, p.203). Even the set phrase 'to yield a point' becomes in the context of writing that renders the conflict so vivid, the action of a knight in the tourney submitting to his opponent. The concrete physicality of the word 'blows', used to describe both his intellectual development and his response to the Bishop's charges against Tract 90, is consistent with this imagery. We are in a world of hand to hand conflict.

But there is more. The first blow was sensed as 'wonderful', yet caused 'misery of unsettlement' like the magical exchanges of Romance. The references are not merely picturesque. The knight in such a narrative acts heroically but characteristically does not understand the laws that are governing his action. Throughout, Newman presents himself as surprised by consequence, as though he is living with a mystery that has yet to be explained. The ordinary Anglican term 'a Bishop's charge' acquires a new meaning here. So he can write: 'The Bishops one after the other began to charge against me (the second 'blow'). They went on in this way (. . .) for three whole years' (*Ap*, p.203). The third 'blow' was 'the project of a Jerusalem Bishopric (. . .) which (. . .) brought me on to the beginning of the end..' (*Ap*, p.209). It is when his own party turns against him and after the magical effect of the three blows has been delivered, that the meaning of the battle becomes clear; it is to lead him 'on into the Church of Rome' (*Ap*, p.248).

Newman's many references to battles, together with his references to the heroes of the classics, create a Romantic, as well as a dramatic setting – a setting which makes his presentation of the history of his religious opinions as a quest, both possible and credible. He builds on his readers' literary awareness of and interest in tales of chivalric quest, in other words their 'mental set', in order to reconstitute the truth of the archaic

references in his own time. It is ironic, that the man who publicly asserted that Newman 'taught lying on system' (*Ap*, p.28) and was responsible for Newman's writing of the *Apologia*, the Reverend Charles Kingsley, was a champion of the chivalric quest tale, exhorting its noble effect on both the young and the old.

What transforms battle into quest in the work, is the equally potent series of references to the journey. In a fight, the advantage, but also the danger, is that the combatant is certain about his objectives. So at any one moment Newman presents himself as clear at least about what he is opposing. But in a journey such clarities are withheld, since of what may happen along the way, one can never be sure and where the road leads is usually hidden. He is not only moving in the fight, therefore, but being moved by the secret shape of his developing life and mind. Hence he sees himself, in memory, as quester, as pilgrim, ever searching for the authority of the One True Church and led by a divine providence, a guiding 'light' (*Ap*, p.121). It is this metaphor, which reveals in the present, his whole life from the vantage point of hindsight. 'I am giving my history from my own point of sight' (*Ap*, p.139). It becomes a quest for self-discovery and fulfilment, when he had experienced it as a battle for the soul of the Church of England.

As early as 1831, July 21, in a poem he wrote whilst holidaying in Devon, Newman cast himself in the role of Romantic pilgrim quester:

There stray'd, awhile, amid the woods of Dart,
One who could love them, but who durst not love.
A vow had bound him, ne'er to give his heart
To streamlet bright, or soft secluded grove.

'Twas a hard humbling task, onwards to move
His easy-captured eyes from each fair spot,
With unattach'd and lonely steps to rove
O'er happy meads, which soon its print forgot;—
Yet kept he safe his pledge, prizing his pilgrim-lot.⁸

'The Pilgrim' recounts Newman's battle with his Apollyon, the premature desire for rest and peace. He, the man mistaken as the permanent warrior, would actually prefer to settle in 'the happy meads'. In both Dartington and Sicily, Newman clearly struggled, battled, with conflicting claims – those of Apollo, and his vow to dedicate his life to God. In the poem, he confesses his admiration for the seductive beauty of nature, 'streamlet bright (. . .) soft secluded grove' – the soft repeated sibilants effectively reinforcing the sense of his words.

Later he was to face the temptation of falling under the spell of the 'historical sites and beautiful scenes' of the Mediterranean (*Ap*, p.119). He recounts his delight in Sicily, for example; 'the scene was most beautiful (. . .). The whole day, the scene was like the Garden of Eden most exquisitely beautiful'. He had been 'tempted', he admits, to return to this 'beautiful' Sicily against the advice of the Froudes, his travelling companions but once there 'felt God was fighting ag.st me – and felt at last I knew "why" – it was for self-will'.⁹ Newman, as 'tempted' quester, blames himself, like Christian, for drawing back his foot 'from the way of peace', though in Newman's case it is the battle he is resisting. And like Christian, he has to resist torpor, to fight against evil and error, to keep himself on the 'straight and narrow way'. In his account of his 'Illness in Sicily', August 31, 1834, Newman wrote:

Well, in an unlooked for way I come to Sicily
and the devil thinks his time is come. (. . .) I
was given over into his hands. From that time
everything went wrong (. . .) certainly I was

weak and low from that time forward, and had so many little troubles to bear that I kept asking impatiently why God so fought against me. (. . .) I could almost think the devil saw I am to be a means of usefulness, and tried to destroy me ! (*Aut*, pp.121-22).

He sees his illness as retribution for wilfully allowing the devil to tempt him with love of Sicily's beautiful landscape – sensed by him as the veritable Garden of Eden – from the 'right way, God's way', without knowing where he is being led.

Newman leaves the beauty of Sicily to search for the invisible reality behind the veil of that beauty – 'truths still under the veil of the letter' (*Ap*, p.116). Paradise becomes the type of the Church and he will not find rest until he arrives there. In a letter to his sister, May 1828, he reveals he regarded his illness in Sicily as part of his preparation for the Oxford Movement, as God's way of teaching him to mortify his self-will. His Sicilian illness and period of self-recrimination, are followed by a renewal of healthy, energetic optimism. This pattern of destruction and reconstruction, supports the underlying theme of Newman's religious development.

His sense of being guided in his religious opinions is implicit in his frequent use of the word 'fell'. It is not derived from the Fall but from chance, 'befell', which he now recognises as Providence. For example, he writes early in the biography, 'I fell under the influence of a definite Creed' (*Ap*, p.97). It is the other side of his frequently used word 'led': Dr. Hawkins 'led me . . . [to obviate] mistakes by anticipation, which to my surprise has been since considered (. . .) to savour of the polemics of Rome' (*Ap*, p.101). Messengers from God can include apparent opponents so that, for example, Blanco White 'led me to have freer views on the subject of inspiration than were usual in the Church of England at the time' (*Ap*, p.101,102). The journey is also assisted by the dead, through

their writings: 'Butler's doctrine that probability, is the guide of life led me (. . .) to the question of the logical cogency of Faith'. Dr. Whately taught me 'to see with mine own eyes and walk with mine own feet' (*Ap*, p.103).

But – the usual agency is the events of his own mind, which have incalculable results: 'that great revolution of mind that led me to leave my own home' (*Ap*, p.165). Increasingly, the movement is recognised as Providence; he is "led on by God's hand, blindly, not knowing whither he is taking me" (*Ap*, p.186). He can be surprised by his own behaviour, 'the general conduct to which I was led,' (*Ap*, p.186) until, finally, he knows the destination, 'led on into the Church of Rome' (*Ap*, p.248). Metaphorically, he casts himself in the quest image of voyager and links himself imaginatively to Odysseus. Like the ancient questers, his journey was a 'trial' (*Ap*, p.201) where 'my mind had not found its ultimate rest (. . .) in some sense or other I was on a journey' (*Ap*, p.186). He made the journey image – the symbolic quest – the structure of his form, the vivid imagery of journeying framing the actions of his mind. He thinks in terms of physical movement, as he answers his friend's judgement in favour of his retaining his living when he cautions, 'a single false step may ruin all, we are not yet out of the wood' yet, 'that we have made a "great step" (movement in journey) is certain' (*Ap*, p.202). The whole work as a history of development is impelled forward by references to journey and movement, often so delicate and slight that they are scarcely noted. He can write, on consecutive pages, for example, 'I moved out of the shadow of liberalism' (*Ap*, p.114) and, 'The broad philosophy of Clement and Origin carried me away' (*Ap*, p.115).

The combination of heroic purpose and a leading from above, makes his imagination turn often to the sea voyage: 'I felt as on a vessel' (*Ap*, p.128) or, in his

examination of the Council of Nicæa, 'launching myself on an ocean with currents innumerable and I was drifted back' (*Ap*, p.114), back in quest of certainty, examining the writings of the Fathers. In his ability to cope with the first wave of adverse reaction to Tract 90, he refers to himself as having 'weathered the storm' (*Ap*, p.201). The metaphor of the interrupted voyage is not forgotten, so that, "leaving Littlemore is like going on the open sea" (*Ap*, p.274). It is only when he reaches Rome that he feels it is 'like coming into port after a rough sea;' – the beginning of Part VII (*Ap*, p.275).

His sea references derive, in part, from his illness in Sicily, which he felt had been a trial of his commitment to God's service; he prayed for God's guidance whilst 'becalmed a whole week in the Straits of Bonifacio' (*Ap*, p.121). In writing the lines of the hymn 'Lead Kindly Light' (*Ap*, p.121) Newman confirms his belief that God's providence will return him safely home, in renewed health and vigour, to fight on His behalf. In 1833, the Straits were physically becalmed. In 1845, the metaphorical 'rough sea' from which he was guided 'into port' – 'like coming into port after a rough sea' to 'perfect peace and contentment' (*Ap*, p.275), was the 'rough sea' of doubt and moral sickness, which had put him on his 'death-bed' as regards his membership with the Anglican Church.

The advantage to Newman of these images of strenuous journeying is that they express the feelings of the time and complicate the purely intellectual structure. If the battle embodies the sense of excitement, the journey directs our attention often to the weariness of it all and his knowledge that life does not consist in endless turmoil, so that, for example, he wants to rest in the Church of England, as a place of refuge 'because of

the steepness of the way' (*Ap*, p.269). The best comment on this occurs, as so often, in his chapter on the Illative Sense in the *Grammar of Assent*:

As regards religious and ethical enquiries, how little we can effect, however much we exert ourselves, without that Blessing: for, as if on set purpose, He has made this path of thought rugged and circuitous above other investigations. . . (*GA*, p.352).

The Apologia is a distractingly varied work which looks at first like a miscellany composed of actual reminiscences but interspersed with long extracts from his own writings and letters. The haste with which it was composed may account for this furious self-quotation but the effect is not of carelessness. He is partly writing his own biography, a life and letters in which he looks at the shape of his life from the outside. But it is a work of revisions, in which he communicates to the reader the double perspective of the actually perceived mess of life in the present, discovered to have a secret order in retrospect. Like Bunyan, in *Grace Abounding*, he is communicating what often seem like disasters, with all their pain upon them, but discovers, later, the hidden work of grace. Newman's illness in Sicily, for example, examined from the vantage point of hindsight, is interpreted by him as a major crisis in his life, preparing him for the writing of the Tracts. The following extract shows how he viewed this third illness as the start of his quest on the third stage in his religious development. In his Journal June 25th, 1869, in order to illustrate the wonderful dealings of Divine Providence with him throughout his life, Newman wrote:

Another thought has come on me, that I have had three great illnesses in my life, and how they have turned out! The first keen, terrible one, when I was a boy of fifteen, and it made

me a Christian – with experiences before and after terrible and known only to God. My second not painful, but tedious and shattering, was that which I had in 1827, when I was one of the Examining Masters, and it too broke me off from an incipient liberalism, and determined my religious course. The third was in 1833, when I was in Sicily, before the commencement of the Oxford Movement. (*Aut*, pp.119-20).

Whilst recovering from the illness in Sicily, referred to as his ‘third’ crisis, we learn that he was still ‘more driven back into myself, and felt my isolation’ (*Ap*, p.120).

His sense of isolation, of feeling set aside, different, as one with ‘a mission’ (*Ap*, p.121) is a sense which is frequently referred to in his self-analysis. This sense of withdrawal from life, of course, was part of the Oxford tradition – the monastic ideal of ‘faith fleeing the world’. His strong commitment to celibacy, his belief that it was ‘the will of God that I should lead a single life (. . .) the notion that my calling in life would require such a sacrifice as celibacy involved’ (*Ap*, p.100) reveals that he viewed his life as one of dedication and mission, the true spirit of chivalry. The ideal is expressed in *The Broad Stone of Honour*, the work so influential for Newman and Froude; ‘Of necessity also, to the spirit of chivalry must belong temperance and constancy’.¹⁰ In this he is being true to the original inspiration of his university, which was largely funded by the great medieval religious houses. And it was through faith and celibacy, in the monastic tradition, that Newman hoped to fulfil his sense of mission. From letters he wrote to his sisters, we learn that he looked with distaste, disgust almost, upon activities such as attendances at balls, theatres and operas. Whilst on his tour, he wrote to Harriet the following letter, revealing his struggle for restraint:

Dec. 18, 1832.

I no longer wonder at young persons being carried away with travelling, and corrupted; (. . .) I never felt any pressure of danger from the common routine of pleasures, (. . .) but I think it does require strength of mind to keep the thoughts where they should be while the variety of strange sights-political, moral and physical – are passed before the eyes, as in a tour like this.¹¹

We see in his negation of the physical senses, his struggle, his battle, with the power of his senses. Because he believed natural phenomena were an economy for the true reality of God, his quest was to break the power of the physical senses, so that he could set his intellect free of its bondage and enable it to 'see into the life of things'. To see the reality of God behind 'the veil'. 'What a veil and curtain this world of sense is! beautiful but still a veil',¹² he wrote in a letter to Jemima, whilst thinking of Mary, the sister who died.

The three major events of the life were judged by Newman, from the perspective of 1864, to be critically important signs that he was being guided towards the One True Church. His 'inward conversion' (*Ap*, p.98) at the age of fifteen, that he was 'predestined to salvation' (*Ap*, p.98) was the crisis which he claims converted him and made him a Christian. If he had remained an Evangelical, there would probably have been no appeal to the idea of the quest in his writing since his life would have been an effort to remain true to that once-for-all revelation to him as an individual. It is his belief that God must have provided for his people a church which leads him first to the image of the fight for the besieged citadel and then to his discovery that it is somewhere else, which turns battle into journey. Forty-eight years after the conversion, however, he describes the experience as almost physical, as 'illness' and 'awful and known only to God' (*Aut*, p.119). That the conversion was still felt, in memory, as 'awful' – awe-inspiring –

stresses the searing impression it made upon his imagination as a boy. Certainly his conversion is the basis for that peculiar habit of mind which strikes all readers of the *Apologia*, its assurance and solitude 'making me rest in the thought of two and two only supreme and luminously self-evident beings, myself and my Creator' (*Ap*, p.98). It was important for Newman to show the development of what he calls 'childish imaginings' to his subjective apprehension of himself and his Creator – an apprehension which never forsook him, and which was of paramount importance to his final acceptance of the authority of Rome.

It is not only directly religious writers which contribute to the making of Newman's mind. In giving that sense of the incalculable in his life, nothing is more impressive than his tribute to apparently irrelevant influences, which he convinces us are absolutely critical in the shaping and direction of his mind. Among them is Wordsworth; of course the initial influence could not have included *The Prelude*, not published until 1850, yet that poem seems immediately to have similarities with the *Apologia* as well as signal differences. Like the Romantic poets, Newman's concern was with the invisible world and in 1839, he asserted that in modern times 'Poetry (. . .) is our mysticism'; in that it, like religion, tends 'to penetrate below the surface of things and to draw men away from the material to the invisible world'.¹³

Newman and Wordsworth quested for an understanding of the self, for self-knowledge and self-possession. Both looked back to their childhood, searching for signs and interpreting as significant, events and actions which, at the time, they had not understood as such. In retrospect, Newman saw events as symbolic and significant to his having reached his goal, whereas in Wordsworth the goal is less defined. Newman

recounts the 'significant' events dramatically, not only to show that his memories still deeply affect him, but in order, too, that his readers will be able to experience the impact they had on him. He describes how 'the device' he discovered he had drawn on his childhood copy-book 'almost took my breath away with surprise' (*Ap*, p.96) and he remembers crossing himself when going into the dark. From the vantage point of hindsight, he explains the devil, the cross and the necklace, as signs of a Providence, which without his knowing it at the time, was guiding him forwards. But he still wonders 'how, among the thousand objects which meet a boy's eyes, these in particular should so have fixed themselves in my mind, that I made them practically my own' (*Ap*, p.97). Wordsworth, in the 1850 *Prelude*, describes his memories of sensing, as a child, that events so alarming as the vision of 'the huge cliff', were purposeful; 'One summer evening (led by her)'¹⁴ is how he introduces the boating episode. Neither Wordsworth nor Newman could naturally account for their childhood impressions, yet both felt the importance of its experiences and sensations, when attempting to assess their own later development. As a child, Newman recounts how 'I thought life might be a dream (. . .) and all this world a deception' (*Ap*, p.96).

Wordsworth's quest poem is a celebration of the spiritual influence he saw in nature. Newman, by contrast, was driven to state, 'I look into the living busy world, and see no reflection of its Creator (. . .). The sight of the world is nothing else than the prophet's scroll, full of "lamentations, and mourning, and woe"' (*Ap*, p.278). Paradoxically however, the poetic beauty of Newman's imaging is drawn from nature, so that in describing his feelings he refers to the 'winter of my desolation', 'make the buds unfold and the leaves grow within me' (*Ap*, p.278). The metaphor preceded by the

negative, 'they do not take away', reveals and stresses his deep feelings of anguish at his inability to see a reflection of the Creator in the world around him. It is that sense of an interior world opposed to the outer, therefore, which makes Newman's writing so inherently metaphorical, unlike Wordsworth. In many ways he would seem to be closer to the Coleridge of 'Dejection', where he rebukes Wordsworth's philosophy with the words, 'And in our life alone does Nature live'.¹⁵ 'They are not to me now the Things, which once they were' (l. 295) expresses Coleridge's change of perception to the belief that outward forms do not arouse emotion in us; it is we who bestow our feelings on them. What Coleridge calls Wordsworth's semi-atheism was apparently antithetical to Newman's belief that he could only find God by looking inwards to 'this voice, speaking so clearly in my conscience and my heart' (*Ap*, p.278).

Newman, of course, discusses Coleridge, showing his interest in this poet, as one who 'made trial of his age' (*Ap*, p.169) but it was the faith of modern literature in a life more mysterious than that presented by common-sense materialism which impressed him. Coleridge and Wordsworth, Newman claims, "addressed themselves to the same high principles and feelings, and carried forward their readers in the same direction" (*Ap*, p.169). One is reminded here of Newman's definition of the illative process that a man 'gradually advances to the fullness of his original destiny' (*GA*, p.399). He discusses, at length, an article which he wrote for the *British Critic*, first mentioning Sir Walter Scott, whose literary influence 'turned men's minds to the direction of the middle ages, (in) setting before them visions' (*Ap*, p.168). It is an age Newman knows the reader will associate with ideas of chivalry and quest. These literary figures, he claims, were

amongst those who had borne witness 'of the need which was felt both by the hearts and the intellects of the nation for a deeper philosophy' (*Ap*, p.168).

By becoming a Catholic, Newman had made himself incomprehensible to many of his desired readers. But the assumption written into the metaphor of the quest, that the self, the thinking, conscious self, is also being led along a path which at the moment of treading it it does not understand and which only afterwards is properly recognised as the revelation of a necessary truth, could have been recognised as their own experience by, for example, George Eliot and Charles Darwin. Newman carefully and deliberately builds up a picture of his mind and its operations and we are told nothing about his physical appearance or that of his friends. He clearly wishes the reader to understand him from the inside, a personal viewpoint which could be best communicated through the presentation of 'the whole man'. The greater the reader's understanding and appreciation of him as a fellow human being, the easier it would be to sympathise with him in his quest struggle, to appreciate the 'whys and wherefores' of his thoughts and his actions. Newman, likewise, describes in great detail the stages along his way to the truth – the experiences and sensations in his past which, in memory, he makes subject to his quest form. And by giving detailed accounts of the major steps on his journey, before his goal is reached, he attempts to convince the reader of the sincerity of his arguments and beliefs. His dramatic technique involves the reader in the struggle, in the process of working out the 'contrariety of claims between the Roman and Anglican and the history of my conversion is simply the process of working it out, to a solution' (*Ap*, p.180). Newman takes the steps his conscience sanctions, rather than the ones his intellect rationalises. He believed that conscience, rightly considered, is not the perversion of that

doctrine, but 'internal witness of both the existence and the law of God'.¹⁶ It was Newman's strong desire to rest on something other than his own strong insight, something independent of himself, that led him to preach against the principle of private judgement and quest after an infallible Church. The fineness of his critical intelligence would leave him stranded in scepticism without an equally strong belief that God must have appointed a source of authority to guide the world. According to the views attributed to Godefridus in *The Broad Stone of Honour*, the spirit of chivalry was seen in harmony with the wisdom and simplicity of nature which ordains that man should be indebted for all essential knowledge to authority (*II*, p.41). In finding the 'plot' of his life, the crucial factor is not conscious arrangement, but its hidden harmony, which has to be discovered. He reads it like a poem; 'it is not in the plot, but in the characters, sentiments and diction, that the actual merit and poetry of the composition is placed' (*Poetry*, p.227). In a letter to Canon Walker, July 1864, he uses the analogy of a 'cable', which is made up of a number of separate threads, each feeble, yet together as sufficient as an 'iron rod'¹⁷ to describe the cumulative pattern of his argument, the consistency of his views with the recognised teaching.

Newman's journey, in Parts V and VI of the *Apologia* follows the structure of Dante's *Divine Comedy* with a descent into Hell, before he can ascend into Paradise. Dante's guide on his quest is the poet Virgil, whose words 'infandum dolorem' Newman quotes in his reference to the "infandum dolorem" of years, in which the stars of the lower heavens were one by one going out' – the years of his 'descent', his metaphorical 'sick-bed' (*Ap*, p.165). This reference not only links Newman to Dante, through Virgil, but links him also to Aeneas. For just as Aeneas becomes an exile after the fall of Troy,

and finds his new home in pagan Rome, so Newman becomes an exile – ‘that great revolution of mind, that led me to leave my own home’ (*Ap*, p.165) – from both the Church of England and Oxford, finding his ‘spiritual’ home in Christian Rome. In its proximity to the Aeneas reference, Newman’s use of the word ‘revolution’ develops a concrete, symbolic quality. For as the Greeks conquered Troy, so the Latitudinarians and the Protestants conquered the ‘Kingdom’ of Oxford. The liberals defeated Newman. ‘The men who had driven me from Oxford were distinctly the Liberals’ (*Ap*, p.251), he claims. He suffers a keen sense of loss for ‘Trinity, which was so dear to me’ (*Ap*, p.274). He describes how ‘There used to be much snap-dragon growing on the walls opposite my freshman’s rooms there, and I had for years taken it as the emblem of my own perpetual residence even unto death in my University’ (*Ap*, p.275). The poignancy of the repeated ‘my’ identifies it as home. The only way for Newman to save his true home, however, that ‘old idea of a Christian Polity’, that tradition of fifteen hundred years’, was to leave the Oxford home. Like a pilgrim, he has to leave his home to find his true home, ‘and my happiness on that score remains to this day without interruption’ (*Ap*, p.275). What makes the work specifically speak in the voice of its own time is that it balances against that final happiness all the implications of its image of the journey. The quest attains its objective but it retains also all the marks of the attendant pain, the loss as well as the gain of the wanderer as well as the pilgrim, the exile separated from home and friends as well as the man who has reached his journey’s end.

John Ruskin, *Praeterita* (1885-89)

Famously, *Praeterita* is an account of a life the other way round from Newman's *Apologia*; where Newman was writing to prove the inevitability and consistency of his mental journey, Ruskin on the advice of his doctor, kept out of *Praeterita* any reference to his ideas altogether. Yet if the metaphor of an achieved quest is absent, the actual restless journeys of his life take its place. The locations from which the ideas originate are present throughout. *Pilgrim's Progress* is mentioned in the first paragraph, though the literal influence, his parents' attempt to guide him to the ministry, is denied, the effect of the teaching persists. The journey is, like Pilgrim's, backwards, to find what has been lost, sustained 'by help of these occasional glimpses of the rivers of Paradise'.¹⁸ It is a journey in quest of means to recapture visions, which might enable him to find a 'way' to his unrealised self. For, like the 'we', the questers who are left in Arnold's 'Rugby Chapel', Ruskin does not, until his imagined vision of his return to the Eden land of childhood, experience the joy of quest fulfilled but the sense of bitter disillusionment of years of work, 'work which to-day has come to nought' (*Pr*, p.431). Newman fixed the limit of the *Apologia* around the finished action of his arrival at his metaphorical 'true home', his conversion to Catholicism, for he had reached a point in his development beyond which there was no change; quest, for him, was ended. 'From the time that I became a Catholic of course, I have no further history of my religious opinions to narrate' (*Ap*, p.273).

In contrast, Ruskin presents a picture of his development, at the very moment of his writing *Praeterita*. He recalls moments of vision which, at the time, had awakened him to new mental perspectives but which, in the then of the writing looking back from

1886, he views as only undeveloped moments, as energies thwarted; moments to be remembered in his old age, like Wordsworth's recollected 'spots of time' but uncertain in their still vivifying power. Ruskin's portrait of his own mind arriving at its own conclusions, through its own experiences, (minutely observed), is similar to the intellectual questing in Bunyan's *Grace Abounding*. Ruskin, too, describes his tormented struggles with the private horrors of nightmarish encounters, his battles with a dragon – snake, the demonic temptations and secret thoughts which plagued his later years.

Yet *Praeterita* begins with descriptions of a young, literary minded Ruskin, whose formative experiences had taught him to be both stoically self sufficient, and acutely and imaginatively perceptive. From an early age, he accompanied his parents as his father 'went the round of his country customers' (*Pr*, p.7). Questioning all that he observed as noteworthy, he seemed destined to follow the pattern of the self-formative, Romantic, educational journeyer. In their 'worshipful pilgrimages' through gentlemen's houses, Ruskin noted the disparity between his literary notions of 'Kinghood', as a model of noble and selfless heroism, and the actuality which he observed – the apparent abdication by the owners of all kingly duties and responsibilities:

A painful wonder soon arose in my child-mind,
why the castles should now be always empty (. . .)
Sterling, [was there] but no Knight of Snowdoun (. . .)
Deep yearning took hold of me for a kind of 'Restoration',
[of Kinghood] (. . .) men capable of Kinghood (*Pr*, pp.8,9).

The fact that the landlords were absent was interpreted by the young Ruskin as the breaking of a moral law. Ruskin's use of the 'kingship' image is significant. It is an image which reverberates throughout the text; one which underlies his concept of the 'sacred' structure of family life at Herne Hill, the 'kingdom' of his childhood, where he

received the 'quite priceless gift of Peace [and] the perfect understanding of the natures of Obedience and Faith' (*Pr*, p.34).

Trained in the knightly values, his childhood prepares for the mission to teach an unseeing age to open its eyes and find the truth, 'to help a man to perceive rightly' or again, to find 'these perceptions and trains of ideas (. . .) in a mingled and perfect harmony'.¹⁹ The purpose of later pilgrimages to Europe was not 'for adventures, nor for company, but to see with our eyes, and to measure with our hearts' (*Pr*, p.107). Ruskin's first vision of the Alps, on his continental journey of 1833, was interpreted by him as a religious vision, 'infinitely beyond all that we had ever thought or dreamed, – the seen walls of lost Eden could not have been more beautiful to us, not more awful, round heaven, the walls of sacred Death' (*Pr*, p.103). It led him to declare, 'I went down that evening (. . .) with my destiny fixed in all of it that was to be sacred and useful' (*Pr*, p.104). The finality of his words express the certainty he felt, that he had been granted a mission in life. And to Ruskin as to Newman, the mission was felt as vocation appointed from outside.

The minutely, detailed descriptions of his journeys can, on one level be interpreted as representations of a symbolic landscape, as the journey of his aesthetic development. The Black Forest hills he interprets as the "Gates of the Hills"; opening for me to a new life' (*Pr*, p.101). The imagery communicates not only his idealism and his optimism, but his sense that he possesses a visual power, which compensates him for his lack of athletic power. Ruskin's choice of Biblical imagery to describe his vision reveals both the influence of his Evangelical training and the emotional depth of his sense of commitment. The 'Gates', associated with Paradise, are 'opening' the path of his

ambitions, 'for me' as one who is chosen, 'to a new life', the Dantean phrase. In contrast to Newman, Ruskin sees nature as suffused with self. The walled garden of Herne Hill, his childhood Eden, is apotheosised in the mountain vision as a heavenly City; like a chaste young knight of Romance, eager to meet the challenge, he is true to the object of his first love.

He vividly recalls the experience of looking at the Alps through the pinnacles of Milan Cathedral – 'the sense of dream wonder (. . .) the perfect air (. . .) the perfectness (. . .) and purity, of the sweet, stately, stainless marble against the sky' (*Pr*, p.106). The attribution of moral quality to the aesthetic, so that he glimpses ideal qualities within the actual 'perfectness' and 'perfect air', comes about because he associates Gothic building with the Alps. A whole, lost, historical habit of mind to which he is to devote his life, provides the context for the other main vision of his life, the grandeur of mountain landscape. The two things are an experience, a single moment of vision, 'the sense of dream wonder (. . .) seemingly immutable good' (*Pr*, p.106) before they are connected ideas. The life becomes a quest to relate what he sees first as a visual impression. If historically he wants to recover what has been lost (a 'Restoration'), so in the whole life he seeks to recover by adult thought the impression, the vision, he was given as a boy; 'To that terrace, and to the shore of Lake Geneva, my heart and faith return to this day' (*Pr*, p.104). The metaphor of journey is irresistible, but also, typically, where Newman was afraid of getting mentally ahead of himself, Ruskin is constantly going back to what he first saw and judging the extent to which he comes short of it; 'my heart and faith return', but, unlike Newman, he does not 'find myself in a new place'. The facts of his life he treats in terms of their individual history.

That Ruskin casts himself in the role of seeker is clear from his mythological description of his 1835 journey to the Col de la Faucille. Whereas his first sight of the Alps aroused in him Romantic ideas of a 'lost Eden' (the childhood garden) and 'walls of Sacred Death', his sense of discovery here is expressed as revelation, as blissful loss of self through Romantic identification with the immediate scene:

The Col de la Faucille, on that day of 1835 opened to me in distinct vision the Holy Land of my future work and true home in this world. My eyes had been opened and my heart with them, to see and to possess royally such a kingdom! (*Pr*, p.157)

Ruskin's politics are inherent in what he regards as the authentic conception of the 'king'; the Toryism, as he calls it, of Walter Scott and Homer, who:

Made their kings, or king loving persons, do harder work than anybody else (. . .) they not only did more, but in proportion to their doing, "got" less than other people – nay, that the best of them were even ready to govern for nothing! (*Pr*, p.6)

Royalty of identity is produced by response to the Col, which is 'his kingdom'. Ruskin feels that he is historically destined, explaining that before Rousseau's time 'the sentimental love of nature', the near religious enthusiasm for mountains, would not have been available to him. Nor had there been 'such apprehension of love of "all sorts of conditions of men" not in the soul merely, but in the flesh till Scott's time' (*Pr*, p.103). This apprehension of love has awakened him to a concern for the nobleness and kindness of men, the concept expressed by Ruskin's chivalric knight in his study of famous knights.²⁰ Ruskin's future work as seer, as prophet, to reveal to mankind the connection

between physical perception and moral perception becomes interpreted by him as a historical destiny.

He recounts that from childhood he had been imbued with the Evangelical doctrine that life should be dedicated to furthering the works of God, and it was, therefore, natural that he should see and interpret his life in terms of a quest, to spread God's word, not, however, by entering the ministry, the wish of his parents, but by awakening in mankind their sensory faculty of pleasure in sight. In a letter to Canon Dale he wrote 'I myself have little pleasure in the idea of entering the church and have been attached to the pursuit of art and science (. . .) as long as I can remember'.²¹ Ruskin fervently believed that a true perception of beauty was a moral and religious act, that 'Nature' was only a convenient term for the physical operations of God. His belief that the sensual appreciation of beauty interpenetrated the sacred, the spiritual, was undoubtedly antithetical to Newman's beliefs, that he could see no sign of God in the world around him; 'I look into the living busy world, and see no reflection of its creator' (*Ap*, p.278). Ruskin's apostrophe to the mountain, in his poem, 'Mont-Blanc Revisited', is clear evidence of his quest for the religious spirit in Nature:

O mount-beloved, thy frontier waste
I seek with a religious haste
And reverent desire
(. . .)
Such thoughts as holy men of old
Amid the desert found (*Pr*, p.439).

Like an Old Testament prophet, he seeks for a true vision of Yaweh, in his mission to lead mankind to a 'pure, right and open state of the heart'. And this belief that the writing of meticulously observed 'facts' about the nature of God's creation, together with a critique of the interpretation of God's creation by the major artists, would help mankind

to achieve this goal, become the quest to discern and to teach 'the excellency and supremacy of five great painters' in *Modern Painters*.²²

His claim that 'an idea of beauty should be accompanied first with joy, then with love of the object, then with the perception of kindness and veneration towards the intelligence itself' is like a commentary on Carlyle's claim that 'Nature [is] the living Garment of God'.²³ For, like Carlyle, Ruskin saw his mission as being to turn his readers from one way of seeing the world to another. Carlyle claims, 'The man who cannot wonder, who does not habitually wonder (and worship) (. . .) is but a Pair of Spectacles behind which there is no Eye'.²⁴ Like Carlyle, Ruskin everywhere uses metaphorical language to extend the dimension of his thoughts and ideas, for through metaphor he believed he could symbolise and body forth his vision of beauty in every day reality. At the same time, however, unlike Carlyle's mainly prophetic exhortation to his readers to 'see' the truth of Nature, which means to see beyond it, Ruskin's aim was to present his vision in detail and literally as logical deduction, incorporating scientific scrutiny of the evidence. It is impossible logically and scientifically to reveal the existence of a 'super intelligence', for the vision belongs to a region of mystery which science cannot penetrate, hence, like Carlyle, Ruskin must, in fact, rely on the symbolic language of his imagination. Carlyle directed his invective at those who have 'no Eye', who disembellish God's world by reducing all to mechanical habit and custom. Ruskin's quest was to 'open man's eyes' for 'To see clearly is poetry, prophecy and religion all in one'.²⁵ To see nature aright is to discern Nature's own ineffable truth of line, order, and system and to realise that Nature establishes a paradigm by which all men should live. For him, this

was the experiential paradigm of the Bunyanesque quest, evidenced in his admission 'I felt myself somehow called to imitate Christian in the *Pilgrim's Progress*' (*Pr*, p.178).

In the 'Preface' to *Praeterita*, Ruskin claims that his quest is to re-live experiences which give him 'joy to remember', (*Pr*, p.1) experiences which he can cherish the past for. He not only omits references to his many works of social criticism but also to his marriage to Effie Gray, instead selecting episodes which seem to offer his troubled mind a pattern of order with a concomitant sense of the serenity and stability, the 'perfect peace' of his childhood. The writing of *Praeterita* can be seen as Ruskin's own search to discover the symbolic, as against the ideological, truth of his life, which had often changed direction. Like Newman, he has to live through the intellectual inconsistencies of his life, but unlike Newman, Ruskin does not find a new identity. His imagination returns at the end of *Praeterita*, to the Eden-land of his childhood, the point at which thought is not separate from feeling and visual response, at which God is a visible fact. The early gardens in the autobiography become the later landscapes which integrate memory. The rivers of Paradise, glimpsed in 'the stones round the spring of crystal water' (*Pr*, p.11) and 'the little crystal spring of Bower's Well' (*Pr*, p.58), are glimpsed again in 'the surges dashing far below against rocks of black marble, and lines of foam drifting back with the current to the open sea' (*Pr*, p.256). This is the promontory of Sestri di Levante where he sees 'the dark blue outline of the hills as clear as crystal', refers to Turner and Derwentwater and, even then, knows he is experiencing a vision 'such as can only come once or twice in a lifetime' (*Pr*, p.256). The 'magical splendour of abundant fruit' at Herne Hill, with its varied colours, 'fresh green, soft amber, and rough bristled crimson (. . .) clustered pearl and pendant-ruby' (*Pr*, p.26)

becomes the magical splendour of 'fiery woods (. . .) mountains (. . .) suddenly purple – nearly crimson, the rainbow, (. . .) one broad belt of crimson, the clouds above all fire' (*Pr*, p.256).

Praeterita is patterned also by a symbolic water imagery of divine energy. Ruskin's most vivid description is his image of the Rhone, as 'flying water', 'one mighty wave that was always itself' yet, it 'used to stop to look into every little corner' (*Pr*, p.297). The Rhone becomes an image symbolic of the exuberant richness which he called 'life', analogous to his own energetic, erratic life-force. For he repeatedly claims that even though his aesthetics may have changed direction, as he too, metaphorically looked 'into every little corner', he unlike Newman, found himself still the same inner 'self'; 'I found myself in nothing whatsoever "changed" (. . .) in the total of me I am but the same youth, disappointed and rheumatic' (*Pr*, p.206). Disappointed and suffering a sense of loss, he becomes more and more aware of the incongruities between the 'kingdom' of his childhood and the 'kingdom' of the outside world.

Though Ruskin set forth heroically, in the manner of the traditional Romantic quester knight, his journey became a history of disillusionment, intercepted, only occasionally, by hopes of promise. He was frequently plagued by nervous illness, with a concomitant dimming of his imaginative and descriptive powers. In the 1850's and 1860's his path became less clear, as the intensity of his feelings for nature as experienced in childhood and early manhood perceptibly declined. His almost mystical communion with nature, akin to experiences Wordsworth relates in his poetry, was lost. And as the mature Wordsworth had anguished about his loss of visionary power, so Ruskin felt the deprivation of his emotional sight as a loss of direction. The isolated

moment when he once again experienced a 'visionary gleam' was, therefore, grasped as a sign guiding him forward. In 1841, the sight of the Alps had led him to affirm, 'I had found my life again; (. . .) my line of work (. . .) determined for me' (*Pr*, p.269). His old joy in the Alps had returned to him like some form of epiphany – the vision had again been manifested. The previous December, 1840, after a bout of fever, he had described the sight of a snow cap on the mountain as 'like a sudden comet-light fallen on the earth' but had added, despairingly, 'and yet, with all this around me, I could not feel it'. Like Coleridge in 'Dejection' he had found he 'could not feel' the beauty of nature 'around' him (*Pr*, p.257). Helplessly, he wants 'to find out why every imaginable delight palls so very rapidly on even the keenest feelings' (*Pr*, p.257).

Moreover, the vision itself darkens. *Praeterita* opens with a sense of delight in the freshness and diversity of one natural scene after another; all of them 'a revelation of the benevolent will in creation' (*Pr*, p.261). With confidence he can claim that this belief is 'the root of all that I have usefully become, and the light of all I have rightly learned' (*Pr*, p.156). Nothing could be more different from the fear of Newman in the *Apologia* where he interprets his illness in Sicily as a retribution for wilfully allowing the devil to tempt him with the love of Sicily's beautiful landscape. For Newman, Paradise is to be found in the type of the Church, not in the beauty of Nature. The sight of Vesuvius, however, became for Ruskin an image of a deep-rooted evil, which seemed ineradicably to alter his earlier experience of Paradise. Natural beauty he had interpreted as a representation of God's spirit but the 'valley of ashes and throat of lava were visible Hell' (*Pr*, pp.261,2). Confronted with the reality of nature alienated and evil, he was faced with a sudden realisation that man's spirit also could become alienated from the divine,

or, rather, that is how *Praeterita* itself presents the journey of his mind. The valley of ashes was read as a revelation of social neglect in the life of Italy, a reading which triggered radical shifts in the dialectics of his social thought, although these thoughts 'did not take clear current till forty years afterwards' (*Pr*, p.262). The metaphoric 'clear current', which had its source in his vision of Vesuvius but was not fully visible 'till forty years afterwards', is an instance of how he turns his life into a journey through a varied landscape, associating thought, great changes in his mind, with very specific moments of experience. Through repetition, he emphasises the importance of his mission to always 'see' the 'truth'; 'I saw with precise notes of its faults' (*Pr*, p.262), 'I saw (. . .) the horror of neglect' (*Pr*, p.263). His metaphorical quest path through the valley – the valley of ashes – led him to 'see', but the knowledge was of both loss and gain. It was a knowledge which not only took him further away from the innocence and peace of the paradisaical gardens of his childhood, but also marked the beginning of a change in his quest direction.

Ruskin's Latin title, *Praeterita*, translated 'The Past', effectively stamps an air of finality on his past experiences; the tragedy being that those past experiences, his moments of sublimity, of affection, are felt to be lost, never to be recaptured, except in memory. Though it is a more structured book than at first it appears to be, the impression Ruskin creates is that things come to him and then he thinks about them, a less patterned and directed life than Newman's. It is more like a quest where adventure comes but 'Whether in the biography of a nation, or of a single person, it is alike impossible to trace it steadily through successive years' (*Pr*, p.159). Physical sensations are primary and it is places, landscapes and buildings that arouse his emotional response. The world of Nature

and the realm of history, not actual societies or distinct individuals, are what influence him, so that the effect is of a solitary mind, as much as Newman's in the *Apologia*, which is engaged on adventurous and momentous encounters. His feeling of the inner/outer divide is the initial premise of this adventure:

The adventure is defined by its capacity, in spite of being isolated and accidental, to have necessity and meaning (. . .) it is a specific organisation of some significant meaning with a beginning and an end, and (. . .) despite its accidental nature, its extraterritoriality with respect to the continuity of life, it nevertheless connects with the character and identity of the bearer of that life (. . .) transcending, by a mysterious necessity, life's more narrowly rational aspects.²⁶

Though these encounters are measured in terms of their effect for the life as a whole, and they occur in chronological order, loss and gain, vision and disillusion succeed each other with no final order. He can describe his failure as a musician, for example; 'even to this day I look back with starts of sorrow to a lost opportunity of showing what was in me' (*Pr*, p.159). Yet pages later he will describe how in Genoa, in 1840, wandering in disconsolate mood, he saw 'then for the first time the circular Pietà by Michael Angelo, which was my initiation in all Italian art. For at this time I understood no jot of Italian painting, but only Rubens, Vandyke and Velasquez' (*Pr*, p.239). The sense of time is often as vague as that of *The Faerie Queene*, for example, and the work is structured by moments of vision offered often as crucial instances, unique discoveries, life-shaping events of a life, however, which never come to rest in any single belief, unlike the *Apologia* or *The Pilgrim's Progress*. In relating his crucial experience on the road to Norwood, his revelation that until sketching 'a bit of ivy round a thorn stem, (. . .) I (. . .)

had never seen the beauty of anything' (*Pr*, p.281), he seems almost to employ the pattern of a religious conversion narrative. Interestingly he emphasises the symbolic quality of this revelation occurring on a 'road'. 'It ended the chrysalid days'. Thenceforward my advance was steady, however slow' (*Pr*, p.281). He had begun to 'see' with a still clearer vision. The second most important discovery Ruskin records, is his perception that his drawing at Fontainebleau, of a small aspen tree against the blue sky, gave him 'an insight into a new silvan world' explaining, 'this was indeed an end to all former thoughts with me' (*Pr*, p.285):

The woods, which I had only looked on as wilderness, fulfilled I then saw, in their beauty, the same laws which guided the clouds, divided the light, and balanced the wave. 'He hath made everything beautiful, in his time', became for me thenceforward the interpretation of the bond between the human mind and all visible things; and I returned along the wood-road feeling that it had led me far; - Farther than ever fancy had reached, or theodolite measured (*Pr*, p.285).

An encounter with Turner's work, particularly the sketches of Switzerland, which 'were straight impressions from nature, - not artificial designs, like the Carthages and Romes' (*Pr*, p.281) had led him to these moments of discovery which, in turn, led him to a deeper understanding of Turner's quest for truth. In its turn this led to his belief in nature's own ineffable truth of line, and to the critical realisation that in art, he needed to put truth of line before beauty. Ruskin's frequent use of the word 'led' - forward movement - intensifies the sense of his life as journey.

Yet all the main things seem to come by chance and add up to an account of the actual career he has lived rather than to some final truth he has discovered. If they are

like a destiny arriving they also seem precarious. Other influences would have produced a different life:

If only then my father and mother had seen the real strengths and weaknesses of their little John; – if they had given me but a shaggy scrap of a Welsh pony, and left me in charge of a good Welsh guide, and of his wife, if I needed any coddling, they would have made a man of me there and then, and afterwards the comfort of their own hearts, and probably the first geologist of my time in Europe (*Pr*, pp.84-85).

How differently his life might have developed! And how he asks, could his parents, in 1836, when the Domecq daughters stayed at Herne Hill:

Allow their young novice to be cast into the fiery furnace of the outer world in this helpless manner (. . .) thrown, bound hand and foot, in my unaccomplished simplicity, into the fiery furnace, or fiery cross, of these four girls, – who of course reduced me to a mere heap of white ashes in four days. Four days, at the most, it took to reduce me to ashes, but the Mercredi des cendres lasted four years.

Anything more comic in the externals of it, anything more tragic in the essence, could not have been invented (*Pr*, p.169).

The new powers incorporated by Ruskin's reading of Byron, the realistic delineator of heroic love, together with his sense of revelation when beholding the mountains in the Alps, had led from his initial sense of visionary power to an awakening of his power of affection, a power which prefigured the coming into his life of Adele Domecq. In retrospect, Ruskin sees how his quest for love was constantly thwarted, as was his struggle for emotional self-sufficiency, and for freedom from the control of his parents.

The root of his feelings of emotional starvation can be seen in his declaration that as a child 'I had nothing to love (. . .) I had no companions' (*Pr*, p.35). And 'in the fixed purpose of making an ecclesiastical gentleman of me', the blessed visits to the aunt, to the one person whom 'I entirely loved (. . .) became rarer and more rare' (*Pr*, p.27), so that 'when affection did come, it came with violence utterly rampant and unmanageable' (*Pr*, p.35). He does not describe love as a relationship but as an intensity of longing within the self. In the heroic tradition of the chivalric knight, he writes poetry for his 'mistress' Adele, who first awakened in him 'a true and glorious sense of the newly revealed miracle of human love' (*Pr*, p.171). Newman, in his dedication of his life's quest to the love of God, had made a strong commitment to celibacy in the belief 'that it was the will of God that I should lead a single life' (*Apologia*, p.100). But for Ruskin, the loss of Adele is an irremediable disappointment, casting a blight on the rest of his life. Symbolically, her loss represents both the death of his own youth and the loss of his intense landscape feeling.

Like Newman, Ruskin experiences recovery from illness whilst travelling abroad, as if by divine providence. But the sense of life restored is followed later by the experience of protracted despair. The recovery of June, 1841 seems crucial:

I had found my life again, all the best of it. What good of religion, love, admiration or hope, had ever been taught me, or felt by my best nature, rekindled at once, and my line of work, both by my own will and the aid granted to it by fate in the future, determined for me (*Pr*, p.269).

Yet in the second experience, in 1845, he 'was stopped at Padua by a sharp fit of nervous fever' (*Pr*, p.343) and although he could travel after a day or two, 'the mental depression,

with some weakness of limb, remained all across Lombardy' (*Pr*, p.344). The fever returned slightly as he travelled through France and having just received news of John's death he 'fell gradually into the temper, and more or less tacit offering of a very real prayer' (*Pr*, p.346). Three days later he felt 'the consciousness of an answer (. . .) and a certainty that the illness (. . .) would be taken away' (*Pr*, p.346). It was 'a thrill of conscious happiness altogether new to me (. . .). That happy sense of direct relation with Heaven'. Again we notice the apparent finality of 'altogether new'. Yet, 'I had scarcely reached home in safety before I had sunk back into the faintness and darkness of the Under-world' (*Pr*, p.346).

The movements in and out of despair, the apparently final revelation which then turns out to be only temporary, the sense of mission contradicted by the whispers from the Under-world recall the shifting feelings of *Grace Abounding*. But the religious intensity is conveyed in terms that are secular and aesthetic. At Lucca he discovered 'a ruined feudal palace and tower, unmatched except at Verona', and here he 'settled myself for ten days, – as I supposed. It turned out forty years' (*Pr*, p.315). Significantly, Lucca also contained 'the loveliest Christian tomb in Italy, (. . .) the tomb of Ilaria di Caretto (. . .) a supreme guide to me ever after' (*Pr*, pp.315,316). The forty years preparation of Israel in the wilderness becomes Ruskin's time of dedication to Lucca, the restoration he had dreamed of as a boy becomes the restoration of feudal ruins and the supreme guide that was once the columns of fire and smoke becomes a tomb in Italy.

Ruskin's religious development becomes subsumed into his belief that art was the moral expression of man. He recognised and admired the individualism of the artistic expression in Gothic architecture, for his Evangelical training had stressed the belief that

individual man, alone, was accountable to God for his way of life on this earth. The influence, acknowledged in *Praeterita*, of Puritan writers such as Milton and Bunyan from whom 'I had received the religion by which I still myself lived' (*Pr*, p.455) must have strengthened this belief. He began to realise, however, that the Bible which he had been taught to take as the literal word of God, had to be interpreted and could not simply be read as the 'truth'. Geology, the Higher Criticisms of his own developing doubt began, by the mid 1850's, increasingly to threaten his childhood Evangelical beliefs, beliefs which provided, however, the core of his interpretation of art and life. His religious development was influenced, also, by what he refers to as his 'growth' (*Pr*, p.308), leading to his appreciation of Veronese and Titian – a 'growth' of thought which led, in 1858, to his 'Evangelical beliefs [being] put away, to be debated of no more' (*Pr*, p.461). The year 1858 marked the end of ten years of increasingly painful religious doubts, doubts intensified by his experience of continental Catholic culture and art and his acquaintance with, and admiration for, art created by men such as Veronese, whom he had considered to be irreligious.

Ruskin's intellectual quest led him to examine how his faith was undermined, how 'firm faiths were confused by the continual discovery, day by day, of error or limitation in the doctrine I had been taught' (*Pr*, p.356). Like Newman, who has 'misgivings' about having taken the statements of Anglican divines for granted (*Ap*, p.190), Ruskin had also taken Evangelical doctrine for granted. But he had begun to react against Evangelical intolerance of other beliefs and Evangelical resistance to scientific knowledge. His quest for truth led him to the bitter conclusion 'All I had been taught had to be questioned, all that I had trusted, proved. I cannot enter yet into any

account of this trial' (*Pr*, p.399). Like a knight of holy orders, like the Christian of *Pilgrim's Progress* and the Newman of the *Apologia* he was prepared to suffer in his quest for the truth. But this was a quest which finally led him to the 'inevitable discovery of the falseness of the religious doctrine in which [he] had been educated' (*Pr*, p.448), a discovery which changed the focus in his aesthetics from God to man. For once he placed man at the centre of his view of the universe, Ruskin's aesthetics underwent a great change in direction. The images and designs he had attributed to Nature were no longer so meaningful.

He recounts that his final apostacy from the Puritan doctrine of Sabbath-keeping occurred one Sunday in Rheinfelden during his drawing of an orchis:

It seemed to me wholly right to describe it as examined; and to draw the outlines as described, though with a dimly alarmed consciousness of its being a new fact for me that I should draw on a Sunday (*Pr*, p.458).

Yet the visionary gleam had gone, the flower perceived as a dark purple orchis only; there was no longer a vision to testify to the experience of a spiritual beauty, a spiritual truth. Natural fact no longer reverberated with further meaning. Equally, garden landscape is no longer interpreted within the exegesis of Ruskin's memories of the Eden-like gardens of his childhood. The return of another garden, the landscape of the Chateau Blonay (*Pr*, p.482) he describes in language which has lost its former quality of exuberance in the presence of nature's beauty. He no longer reads 'Nature-scripture' in terms of type and shadow as he had been taught to read God's written word. His language has lost its former richness, the metaphors few and prosaic, the adjectives constrained. It is a style which has lost its sense of high romance and is become more

‘scientific’, dealing with value judgements no longer, but interpreting nature according to new assumptions.

The Evangelical insistence upon the imperfection of human life seems to permeate all Ruskin’s thinking. He leaves the garden at Herne Hill, which only later he viewed as a flawed paradise having forbidden fruits and no companionable beasts, his quest being a challenge to cultivate man’s sight, to reveal to mankind the truth of nature’s system, in other words to restore a former glory to this theological image of fallen man. As Ruskin develops the Garden of Eden image, as a dominant, recurring symbol in his account of his life, he makes it a touchstone to express moments of both sublime elation and dark despair. The symbol links back in time not only to the innocent garden of his childhood, but also to his stress on the fact of his unchanging yet growing self, ‘I could become nothing but what I was or was growing into’ (*Pr*, p.457). There is a tension in the narrative between the forward momentum of time on his turbulent quest journey, and his ever present regressive longing for the ‘perfect peace’ which, in memory, he associates with the ‘single and straight path’, of his childhood (*Pr*, p.118). Ruskin, looking back on his life, presents himself ironically, describing himself as a ‘blind bat and puppy’ for not recognising, in his quest, the ‘perception of truth and modesty in light and shade’ of the Venetian School (*Pr*, p.309). He calls himself ‘a little floppy and sappy tadpole’ (*Pr*, p.253) battling, not very effectively, with the vicissitudes of his life and work, as he tries to create a harmony out of conflicting impulses and ideas and experiences. He is led only by ‘dim notions of bettering my way in future’ (*Pr*, p.263). He writes *Praeterita* as a man with a European reputation, revered far and wide, yet the language he uses to describe himself characteristically speaks of disappointment and

weakness. There is an ironic set-off between Ruskin's emotional experience of the Alps – like Eden – and the stern judgement of the monk in the Monastery of the Grande Chartreuse, 'We do not come here to look at the mountains' (*Pr*, p.442). The comment, of 'significance enough to alter the courses of religious thought in me, afterwards for ever' (*Pr*, p.441) refers back to an earlier experience. Yet he had already written of a visit to the Alps, when he 'could not feel' their beauty (*Pr*, p.257).

Ruskin's religious upbringing had taught him that life was merely a period of pilgrimage, so when the pilgrimage became a journey without purpose his goals and the meaning of his work become questionable. 'After fifty years of trial', of troublesome questing, he found to his dismay, that 'the clouds and mountains which have been life to me, were mere inconvenience and horror to most of mankind' (*Pr*, p.221).

The image Ruskin presents in *Praeterita* changes from that of a pilgrim quester to castaway. He describes himself in terms of a shipwrecked sailor, cast ashore like Robinson Crusoe, and desperately searching for pieces of wreckage in order to survive. Unlike Newman, who both 'weathered the storm' (*Ap*, p.201) – the first wave of adverse reaction to Tract 90 – and the 'rough sea' of his doubt and moral sickness, Ruskin feels stranded in mid-voyage. His journey is no longer seen as possible as he is no longer able to believe in St. Augustine's heavenly home. Yet like Newman, he imaginatively links himself to the questers of the *Odyssey*, for, like one of Homer's epic heroes, he too has crossed dangerous waters to commence a journey, but unlike Homer's hero, he writes to Norton in 1875 that he feels 'now merely like a wrecked sailor, picking up pieces of his ship on the beach (. . .). People gone – and things (. . .). All gone – but I can gather bits up, of the places for other people.'²⁷

In the *Apologia*, Newman describes his experience of conversion to Catholicism as metaphorically 'coming into port after a rough sea' (*Ap*, p.275). Ruskin, however, had floundered on his quest voyage; had experienced an unconversion and become a symbolic castaway. Like a castaway, he looked around for anything he could salvage from the wreck of his quest. 'I looked for another – world, and find there is only this, and that is past for me', he had written to Norton in August 1861.²⁸ What he salvaged was his 'Gospel of Work'; his somewhat re-discovered sense of the divine in Nature – for science will not answer the hard questions – and the powers of his imagination. Those powers he asserts in the final paragraph of *Praeterita*, in his fervent response to the beauty of the shining fireflies, as though they are sparks from the old light. It is his powers of imagination which enable him to create a mythical ending, and imaginatively re-enact the promise made by Michael to Adam to:

Bring back
Through the worlds wilderness long wanderd man
Safe to eternal Paradise of rest.²⁹

In imagination he returns himself to his 'own home' to 'Eden-land' (*Pr*, p.525-6) where the bird's voice 'was always at the other side of the field, or in the inscrutable air or earth' (*Pr*, p.526), an image of perfect innocence like 'the hidden laughter / Of children in the foliage' in Eliot's fantasy refuge of the rose-garden.³⁰

If we agree with the dictum that the only criteria for success or failure in a human life as a whole are the criteria of success or failure in a narrated quest, 'the narrative understanding of ourselves'³¹ then we must agree that Ruskin's quest to create the artefact, *Praeterita*, is a success. For in his narrated life, he imposes on his experiences of loss and gain, some sense of order and unity culminating in a visioned goal of peace; a

restored paradise, 'Eden-land Rosie calls it' (*Pr*, p.526). In some ways, like the traveller in 'Childe Roland' he finds in mid-journey that the objective has been lost but the habit of belief remains and the values to which it had witnessed remain true. There is no point of rest as for Newman but no redefinition of goals either; the wandering is maintained in weariness, frustration, with recollected but also willed glimpses of the better world. The sense of mission and the visionary quality of the experiences described in it make *Praeterita* a work of Romantic quest but it is the quester's own frame of mind, his tenacity despite disillusion, which make it an alternative model of the life-story to Newman's *Apologia*.

¹ Herbert Kohl, 'The Mystery of Martin Heidegger', in *The Age of Complexity* (New York: The New American Library of World Literature, 1965), p.141.

² John Henry Newman, *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*, 1864 (London: Collins, 1972), p.99; hereafter referred to as *Ap*.

³ Nicholas Lash, *Newman on Development: The Search for an Explanation in History* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1979), p.36.

⁴ John Henry Newman, 'Poetry with Reference to Aristotle's Poetics', 1829, in *English Critical Essays: Nineteenth Century*, ed. E.D. Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1916), pp.234, 226.

⁵ John Henry Newman, *The Idea of a University*, 1852 (London: Basil Montagu Pickering, 1873), p.213.

⁶ John Henry Newman, *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*, 1870 (London & New York: Longmans Green, 1889), pp.344-45; hereafter referred to as *GA*.

⁷ William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, 1901-2 (London: Collins, 1960), p.69.

⁸ John Henry Newman, 'The Pilgrim', in *An Album for Verses on Various Occasions* (London: Burns, Oates, 1868), p.48.

⁹ John Henry Newman, *Autobiographical Writings*, ed. Henry Tristram (London: Sheed and Ward, 1956), pp.123-125; hereafter referred to as *Aut*.

¹⁰ Kenelm Henry Digby, *The Broad Stone of Honour or The True Sense and Practice of Chivalry*, 1822, 2 vols. (London: R. Gilbert, 1823), II; p.28.

¹¹ W. Robbins, *The Newman Brothers* (London: Heinemann, 1966), p.48.

¹² John Henry Newman, *Letters and Correspondence*, ed. Anne Mozley, 2 vols. (London: Longmans Green, 1891), I, p.184.

¹³ David J. DeLaura, 'Newman and the Future of Poetry', in *Hebrew and Hellene in Victorian England Newman, Arnold and Pater* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1969), p.140.

¹⁴ William Wordsworth, *The Prelude*, Helen Darbishire (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), p.24, I, l.35.

¹⁵ S.T. Coleridge, *Poems*, ed. E.H. Coleridge (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1912), p.365.

¹⁶ John Henry Newman, *Certain Difficulties Felt by Anglicans in Catholic Teaching*, 2 vols. (London: Longmans Green, 1874), II, p.248.

¹⁷ Wilfred Ward, *The Life of John Henry, Cardinal Newman*, 2 vols. (London: Longmans, Green, 1912), p.43.

¹⁸ John Ruskin, *Praeterita* 1885-89, introd.. Kenneth Clark (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p.11; hereafter referred to as *Pr*.

¹⁹ John Ruskin, *Modern Painters* (London: Smith, Elder, 1856), III, pp.163 and 290.

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- ²⁰ E.T. Cook, *The Life of John Ruskin*, 2 vols. (London: George Allen, 1911), II, p.485; hereafter referred to as *The Life*.
- ²¹ E.T. Cook, *The Life*, p.123.
- ²² John Ruskin, Epilogue of 1883 in *Modern Painters*. From the Epilogue of 1883 para. 13.
- ²³ Thomas Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus & Selected Prose* introd. Herbert Sussman (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970) p.182.
- ²⁴ *ibid.*, p.88.
- ²⁵ John Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, 1856 (part IV, XVI, para.28).
- ²⁶ George Simmel, 'The Adventure', in *George Simmel, 1858-1918*, ed. K.H. Wolff (Columbus: Ohio University Press, 1959), p.246.
- ²⁷ *Correspondence of John Ruskin and C.E. Norton*, ed. John Lewis Bradley and Ian Ousby (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p.369; hereafter referred to as *Corr.*
- ²⁸ *Corr.* p.66..
- ²⁹ John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, XII, ll.312-4, in *The Poetical Works of John Milton*, ed. After The Original Texts by The Rev. H.C. Beeching, M.A. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1925), p.440.
- ³⁰ T.S. Eliot, 'Burnt Norton' in *Four Quartets* (London: Faber & Faber, 1955), p.13.
- ³¹ Alasdair MacIntyre, 'Virtues, Unity of Life and Concept of Tradition' in *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (London: Duckworth, 1981), p.211.

Chapter 3

Personal Fulfilment and Public Responsibility: the Quest in Jefferies, Gissing and Conrad

Sir John Franklin's fame as the man who ate his boots in order to survive in the wastes of Northern Canada was sustained by the difference between the privations he had had to endure as an explorer in the service of the British Admiralty Office and the security, prosperity and comfort of the London society which had lionised him. He had not wanted as a young man any of the celebrity that eventually overtook him. He avoided the Leicester Square panorama of 1819 on Buchan's expedition because his portrait was prominently displayed in it and he feared 'the passers by should say, "There goes the fellow in the panorama".'¹ The hero is partly, maybe largely, an invention of his public. But the adventurer, the man who is drawn by the need to perform some great feat into the surrender of all the ordinary amenities of social life, is often also a transgressive character. In Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein*, when Robert Walton's men, threatened by ice-mountains, want to turn the ship back and sail home if the ice relents, they are urged on towards the North Pole by Frankenstein himself:

'Did you not call this a glorious expedition? and wherefore was it glorious? Not because the way was smooth and placid as a southern sea, but because it was full of dangers and terror; because at every new incident, your fortitude was to be called forth, and your courage exhibited; because danger and death surrounded, and these dangers you were to brave and overcome'.²

The speech itself is partly inspired by that of Ulysses in Dante's *Inferno* and its status in the novel is as ambiguous as that of the character who utters it. The glory the adventurer

pursues makes him an individualist following his solitary track, partly in love with the risks and dangers that threaten him, and out of contempt for the placid and smooth, the life desired and quietly led by those other men at home who will claim him as a hero if he returns or even if he does not.

That dangerous solitude, the need, almost, to be the outsider certainly marks Tennyson's Ulysses and has become the consequence for Browning's Childe Roland of his identification by the public at large with the quest for the tower. In the autobiographies of Newman and Ruskin it was also a danger, the danger for Newman that his life would be seen, in the terms presented by Charles Kingsley, as a solitary act to deceive England into becoming a Catholic country, for Ruskin that a perfectly good art critic had ended up preaching a revolutionary economics. For them, the metaphor of the quest transformed what might have been seen as lives of desperate and almost mad individual adventure back into steadfast pursuit of the truth, undertaken amid innumerable dangers and threats, and their solitude becomes not a wilfully chosen attempt to be different from their fellows, an arrogant individualism, but the painful consequence of the route along which the truth they follow takes them.

The ambiguity of the figure of the explorer persists, however, trapped between being the hero that the public recognise as the saviour they did not realise they wanted until he performed his great acts and the individual wantonly in love with danger for its own sake and led on by some vision of glory that will rescue him from the tedium of everyday life. The realist novel in the nineteenth century from Jane Austen to Hardy takes the everyday, the representative circumstance, however extraordinary some of the events that happen in it, as its subject and its discipline but the recurrent thread of the

Gothic or the sensation novel consistently shows also a kind of rebellion against what is felt to be a limitation. I want to look at three later-Victorian novels which deliberately choose to set the figure of the explorer, the intellectual adventurer, against the background of the norms and assumptions novel-readers of the period might expect and take for granted. In place of a community of values they set solitary heroes who must follow their own track yet who in doing so both affect the way in which the norms of this society are understood and still remain apart and outside because of the knowledge they have required on their actual or mental journeys.

Richard Jefferies, *After London* (1885).

Let me launch forth and sail over the rim of the sea yonder, and when another rim arises over that, and again and onwards into an ever-widening ocean of ideas and life.³

Richard Jefferies, in his literary quest, *After London*, creates a quest hero, Felix Aquila, whose aspirations seem to reflect those of Jefferies himself, as described in his autobiography, *The Story of My Heart*. Felix, like Jefferies, quests for 'soul' knowledge, for a 'greater perfection of mind and soul' (*SH*, p.80) and the biographical facts reveal that Felix is particularly close to Jefferies. Felix, unlike for example Tennyson's anxious Ulysses, is a young man whose quest is not in the mythical historical past nor in the past of his own life but in a hypothetical future, a future which has been affected by a great natural catastrophe. Gone are the technological developments and scientific knowledge of Jefferies' present, as are also the centuries of accumulated knowledge of the arts. Though Felix, like Ulysses, is the archetypal quest-voyager, unlike Ulysses, whose aspirations led only to ineffective inaction, Felix turns thought, aspiration, into purposive

action to quest for the remains of a civilization which has been lost, that of Jefferies' own day. His quest takes place not in a future of inevitable progress, but in a future of regression. The situation, relative to the reader, is catastrophic, yet the journey is inspired for that very reason with the fresh sense of adventure of chivalric Romance.

After London envisages water flooding the great city of London and its environs, to form a great lake filling the Thames valley as a result of some geophysical disaster, which has also wiped out most of the population. We are clearly not expected to equate this flooding with the Old Testament Deluge, as a punishment meted out by a retributive Yaweh to a sinful people; Jefferies shows little concern with the nineteenth-century overriding problem of religious belief. Paradoxically, water, as the flood, is destructive of nineteenth-century civilization and its knowledge, yet it is water, as the Lake, which gives Felix the chance to quest for the ancient knowledge which has been lost, and for ideas which will restore and widen human consciousness. The historical pattern of *After London* reflects the historical pattern of revolutionary change experienced so keenly in the nineteenth-century as the old orders of doctrines and institutions were attacked or modified or discarded, whilst other, new orders, were being proposed or inaugurated. Unlike prophets of change, like Carlyle, who looked to historical process, Jefferies restores the accidental and overwhelming force of physical nature as the primary agent of change. Jefferies, like Carlyle, stresses right perception as the required human activity within historical process but not to reveal Nature as the 'Living Garment of God.'⁴ For Jefferies nature is both more powerful and random and his quester has an almost mystical relationship with nature as life-giving and always dangerous and a desire to restore some of the machines that once gave men a measure of control over its forces.

Carlyle's vision of the new 'Living Spirit of Religion' arising, like the proverbial Phoenix, from 'the dead Letter of Religion' (*Sartor*, p.125) is his view of early nineteenth-century transition, which involves both destruction and creation; yet it is a concept of sequence and progress. Tennyson also, in the middle of the century, expressed a vision of Utopia in the epilogue to *In Memoriam*, his dedication to his friend, Arthur Hallam:

The man that with me trod
This planet were a nobler type
Appearing ere the times were ripe.⁵

The sense of being in an epoch of dissolution and transformation was also sustained by the optimistic view of evolutionary progress.

Jefferies, in contrast, formulates an opposing theory of discontinuity. The future England Felix Aquila inhabits is not a future of sequence, of ever forward progress, but one of rupture and regression; a radical dissociation from the familiar present of the nineteenth-century. After 1859, Darwin's theory of evolution and natural selection, could be made to fit perfectly this general atmosphere of Victorian progress. Jefferies restores to the gradualism of the Darwinian reading, an old catastrophism, which has also a peculiarly twentieth-century relevance. The result is to make the quest not a single journey, but a repetition of the old route from barbarism. He can set in a remote future a story of adventure modelled on the remote past. In this he has curious similarities with Nietzsche. Empirical facts did not seem to Nietzsche to warrant the belief that history is a story of progress, that ever finer moral insight is slowly developing, and that whatever is later in the evolutionary scale is 'eo ipso' more valuable. Nietzsche's theory of the Eternal Return and his claim that "Progress" is merely a modern idea – that is to say a

false idea',⁶ have analogies with ideas Jefferies explores through Felix's adventures. *After London* is his corrective to what he saw as the over-confidence of too much of nineteenth-century thought. Like Hardy, Jefferies could claim for his quest novel, 'if way to the Better there be, it exacts a full look at the Worst'.⁷ A universe moved by blind chance, where a natural catastrophe is able to wipe out a civilization, might well be a Hardy vision also. Jefferies' quester Felix, an intelligent and sensitive man alienated from society, from the military caste at court but also from his contentedly farming and exiled father, is able to break free from the system in which he was born, to search for some principle of progress and innovation; Victorian words restored to significance by the collapse of society into inertia and savagery. Felix's reaction to his perception of his social condition, his way of 'seeing' the world, and himself in that world, is not like other late nineteenth-century questers, like Hardy's Jude or Gissing's Godwin Peak, inward looking. Barbarism leaves so much to do that there is no time for self-examination. He sees his role in society as a quest to bring about change in the physical conditions of life, for the benefit of mankind in general, not just for his own personal advancement. To his own society he is a dangerous non-conformist, however, and his own reasons for setting out on his heroic journey certainly include delight in adventure and private curiosity. His salvation, like the knight pursuing adventure for his lady, is his heightened sense of a personal existence fostered by his love for Aurora. Jefferies' *After London* reinvents Romance devotion, as against Romantic individualism, as giving permanence to human life and experience and the establishment of a system of a new personal order which we see only in its origins. All Jefferies gives us is a fragment of the Felix chronicle written by the future historians.

Jefferies' answer to the current debates was to set the historical time of his novel in the future where he could break the nineteenth-century 'circle of ideas' with which his intellect was confronted. His answer was not to be found in Felix's questing for a religious belief, nor in his questing for scientific certainties, issues obliterated in the past catastrophe, but in his aspirations to awaken and widen man's consciousness – his desire for a 'greater perfection of soul' knowledge (*SH*, p.80). The natural descriptions and the sense of awe and delight in the wilderness that the new coming Dark Ages have restored produce a different kind of religious sense from Wordsworth's and his nineteenth-century admirers. From *The Story of My Heart* we learn that Jefferies' 'conscious' need was for the understanding of 'an inexpressible entity infinitely higher than deity' – 'a cosmos of thought' (*SH*, p.57). An 'immensity of thought which lies outside the knowledge of the senses' (*SH*, p.202) can be seen as not only Felix's goal in *After London*, but Jefferies' goal also, in nineteenth-century England, though he knows it to be threatened by the ever increasing alienation from country life. By restoring an image of nature as triumphant and mysterious he can put his hero into the right relationship with it, neither surrendering to it nor purely resisting. It is with a strong inner consciousness and intense aspirations to carry thought into action, that Felix quests for the lost knowledge of the ancients, that is, that tradition of Western thought which leads to nineteenth-century achievements and anxieties, once again rescued from a nature wild and triumphant. Felix quests to re-discover man's lost ideas and knowledge, in the firm belief that time, which dispersed knowledge in the great flood, will one day restore both lost technology and the development of human consciousness.

Unlike the nineteenth-century pilgrim quester of, for example, Matthew Arnold's 'Rugby Chapel', 'whom a thirst' for a 'Path to a clear-purposed goal, / Path of advance'⁸ leads not to successful action and a purposeful goal but to introspection and the acute awareness of spiritual and intellectual isolation and despair, in his generation's loss of religious faith, Felix, in the Dark Ages of his regressive future, is presented primarily as a man of action. The intellectual quester is reunited with the original Romance image of the man of benign and just action. Yet he is a man of intense aspiration also, an isolated intellectual, questing for knowledge and understanding but setting out on his travels with no clear mission or programme of reform. In an England where every group clings to its locality in a grim struggle to survive, Felix sets out like a Victorian explorer of the sources of the Nile, to discover the terrain of the Thames Valley and the Downs.

In Jefferies' quest, Felix is given a dual role. As a Romantic, orthodox quester, he finally sets sail to explore unknown territory and in true chivalric style his aim is to win fame and honour in order to claim his love, Aurora. She, 'beautiful calm (. . .) glowing with hope and love'⁹ is presented as a remote figure of almost saintly purity, guiding Felix on his quest journey, in the manner of Beatrice guiding Dante. Jefferies' creation of Aurora's image as refined, religious and courtly, together with the courtly style of their love relationship, places Felix and Aurora firmly in the era of medieval Romance reinvented in this possible future. Like some version of Percival or Gareth, he is at first the fool, a man despised, whose actions, nonetheless, gradually inaugurate a new response to the environment where he will be able to use his intellect to restore the clever machines and cities of defence which he has read about in remnants of old manuscripts. In his mind, the nineteenth-century is restored as a golden age of peace and light to be

aspired to. He believes that the recovery of scientific knowledge will make possible the application of scientific laws to the development of man's intellect and the widening of his understanding. For all Carlyle's dislike of industrialised technology, his admiration for scientific discovery marks that double response to natural philosophy which is characteristic of the nineteenth-century. Jefferies' Romance allows him to separate off the scientist as hero from the dread of mechanisation. In the future time of *After London*, Jefferies' Felix is still only hoping for scientific knowledge, which will make possible a Newtonian 'science of the mind'. Theology and metaphysics he sees as false methods of trying to reach the goal of truth. Yet Felix's quest is not solely to reconstruct society on a scientific basis. London, the scientific capital of its day, has become a vast heap of rubble, damming the entry to the Thames and polluting its waters. For all the achievements of the nineteenth-century, the great 'catastrophe' had not been prevented, 'war with rude Nature' was not 'always victorious'.¹⁰ Man had not learned to triumph over Nature in *After London*; ironically it was Nature which had triumphed over man.

In his choice of the character Felix, Jefferies also breaks with the nineteenth-century conventional 'circle of ideas' by discarding the traditional Romance preference for the strong man as hero. We are told that it is Oliver, Felix's younger brother, whose room in his father's manor-house 'spoke of the knight' (*AL*, p.55). We learn that 'Oliver made conquests, Felix was unregarded' (*AL*, p.57), that Oliver had 'knightly prowess' (*AL*, p.70). Yet it is Felix, the youth of 'precise ideas' (*AL*, p.61), 'the dreamer' (*AL*, p.71) 'the ridiculed ponderer over old parchments' (*AL*, p.47), Felix, the sensitive intellectual, 'interested in learning (. . .) of all things the most despised' (*AL*, p.47) who is Jefferies' quester, rather than Oliver, despite his physical energy and manly prowess.

The man of physical action and conquest may play the hero in Romantic quest, but he is imprisoned by his success in fulfilling the 'knightly' image of his own day, fixed in the character of the Romantic quester, to bring about the intellectual change which Jefferies wished to explore. His quester must be a man drawn by action but intellectually alive to new and more individual modes of activity, a man whose failure in the modes of his own day makes him the more open to new agendas of thought. Whilst Oliver's 'whole delight was in exercise and sport' (*AL*, p.55) and he was 'ever ready for tilt or tournament', Felix was despised for his 'studious habits' and 'solitary life' (*AL*, p.56). Felix is shown as the misfit in this future, static, 'conservative' society. And it is Felix who decides to break out of the stasis to fight against the injustice of a system where 'cruelty reigned everywhere (. . .) where humanity was unknown' (*AL*, p.121).

Aurora has a sympathetic interest in Greek Drama, because it reveals the injustice of the then system and recognises its relation to the present social system. The remnants of Classical education survive for the upper classes in that future society and the nineteenth-century reader would ironically identify this as a fossilised version of contemporary social divisions intensified. The authoritative and dispassionate tone of the narrator – chronicler, rather than the point of view of the young Aurora herself, effectively stresses the importance of these words to Jefferies' theory and, importantly, the necessity for some means to break free from the stratification of social class it demonstrates:

In some indefinable manner the spirit of the ancient Greeks seemed to her in accord with the times, for men had or appeared to have so little control over their own lives that they might well imagine themselves overruled by destiny (. . .) the division of society into castes, and the iron

tyranny of arms, prevented the individual from making any progress in lifting himself out of the groove in which he was born unless especially favoured by fortune. As men were born, so they lived, they could not advance and when this is the case the idea of Fate is always predominant (*AL*, p.115).

Jefferies' contemporary readers could well see how Aurora's opinions applied equally to their own views of economic forces and social injustice. And, together with other like minded intellectuals, they would see the 'John Bull' image of universal progress and improvement as a myth. Jefferies looks back to the political system of ancient Greece not in terms of Arnoldian ideals but in order to criticize tyrannical and oppressive 'slave' systems, which existed in the historical past and exist still in the future present of *After London*. The Classical education favoured by the nineteenth-century elite survives in shreds and tatters in Jefferies' ruined world to reinforce the same social injustices. Historicism today tends to mean New Historicism, the Marxist exposure of the concealed ideology in Bourgeois writing, as with Stephen Greenblatt. Jefferies used the historical perspective in *After London* to involve the reader in critical questioning of the values and attitudes of the nineteenth-century, towards scientific, technical and cultural knowledge, and also its cherished relation to its Classical antecedents.

Felix has to leave his immediate environment, which alienates him, to quest with social purposiveness and to seek for others who are ready and willing to accept new ideas and new methods. Only if he can restore to man the priority of intellect he admires in the distant Victorian epoch, ironically, will he be able to emancipate him from his present ignorance. First, however, Felix has to prove, like the pilgrim Christian, on his quest

journey to the Celestial City, that he can overcome the challenges of the Bunyanesque allegorical figures, Worldly Wisdom and Ignorance.

Having contrived a boat, launched it with the help of Oliver, and sailed across the great central sea, the lake of the Thames Valley, he lands in an alien territory where a city is under siege and where he himself is in danger of death as an alien, an aristocrat betraying his own caste. He meets Ignorance, the suspicious resistance to new ideas, in the character of Ingulph, the master of the local king's artillery, who believes his position to be assailed by Felix's claim to the king, 'that he could make a machine which would knock the walls yonder to pieces' (*AL*, p.184). Worldly Wisdom he meets frequently, and in several guises. The grooms and retainers he meets in the camp 'read men (. . .) as an animal (. . .). They stripped man of his dignity, and nature of her refinement' (*AL*, p.171). Jefferies implies that their social conditioning as serfs, successors to the Victorian poor, has left them with a belief in life as nasty, brutish and short. Felix has surrendered all the marks of aristocratic caste and wanders as an unknown freeman for hire. The retainers had learnt to function in a society where aristocrats could free men of lesser rank from slavery for their own advantage, as in the example of the carter's brother, who 'was born free (. . .) but was fond of roving'. When he is seen by Baron Robert 'who was in want of men (. . .) they shaved his lip, and forced him to labour under the thong' (*AL*, p.160). With irony, addressing the bewhiskered reader, Jefferies makes facial hair the prerogative of freedom; slaves are clean shaven.

In *After London*, 'outer' physical nature, uncultivated, has created the 'Wild England' of Part II, where 'docks, thistles, oxeye daisies, and similar plants' choke the wheat, barley and meadow grass (*AL*, p.2). Likewise, man's inner spiritual nature, which

includes his moral sense, uncultivated, has suffered what the chronicler, in the brief first part, calls 'The Relapse into Barbarism'. Jefferies' delight in the restoration of wildness to the landscape and interest in what England might then look like has to be balanced against his mistrust of untutored nature as a guide to action; he came of farming stock after all. In a study of John Stuart Mill's 'Essay on Nature', Basil Willey states his impression that:

In his plea for wild, uncultivated tracts, and still more in his passion for individual liberty and his suspicion of the State, [Mill] was unconsciously influenced by this [unanalysed] notion that Nature is God's work, and therefore perfect – a model for us to imitate. [And Mill] finds that although the spectacle is vast, even sublime and awe-inspiring, yet it is non-moral through and through; a claim Mill justifies by his reference to the 'perfect and absolute recklessness' of natural forces (. . .) 'nature's everyday performances' – killing her creatures, with 'the most supercilious disregard both of mercy and of justice'.¹¹

In his reference to the nature of man, and social virtues, Mill asserts his belief that self-control and altruism have to be learnt, for the virtues are 'repugnant to the untutored feelings of human nature',¹² that it is only through cultivation that virtue becomes second nature. Mill's theory that uncultivated human nature lacks a moral sense, is taken by Jefferies as his working assumption. Mill's symbolic description that 'the germs of virtue (. . .) left to themselves (. . .) would have been smothered by the weeds which grow so rankly and luxuriantly – so much more "natural" are the vicious tares than the virtuous wheat' (NS, p.189) is strikingly similar to Jefferies' description of rampant physical nature in Part 1 of *After London*. Jefferies does not refer to Mill in his autobiography, nor to literary works which influenced him, apart from *The Odyssey*, but his philosophy of

nature in *After London*, is very much akin to that expressed by Mill in his 'Essay'; 'Conformity to nature' has 'no connexion whatever with right or wrong' (*Essays*, p.65). Mill urges that our nature is to be conscious, constructive beings who 'cultivate the garden (. . .) dig, plough, build, or wear clothes' (*NS*, p.188). The tension in Jefferies lies in this belief in cultivation and his delight in the untouched spontaneities of wild nature, the 'subtle inner essence' of the beauty of nature (*SH*, p.77). In *After London* he transposes this desire to Felix, who 'did not question or analyse his feelings' as 'the beauty of the Lake before him filled him with pleasure' (*AL*, p.188). The nature Jefferies depicts in *After London*, does not belong to man at all, yet it constitutes the bond between his spirit and his realm of vision. 'A thrush singing sweetly; whitethroats busy in the bushes, and swallows overhead' appear to Felix 'like awaking in Paradise' (*AL*, p.211). 'It is then, a common essence for all "creation"'¹³ betokening the fact that the universe and man has but a single soul which is both exterior and interior to man. In *The Story of My Heart*, Jefferies reveals how his soul 'desired the beauty – the inner subtle meaning (of nature) to be in me, that I might have it', and with it 'an existence of a higher kind' (*SH*, p.78). So it is for Felix, for, 'In the glory of the scene' – the green line of the sea – 'his old and highest thoughts returned to him in all their strength,' and 'the resolution to pursue his aspirations took possession of him as strong as the sea' (*AL*, p.238). Mill's theory of Nature becomes fact for Felix, as he 'began to understand that high principles and abstract theories were only words with the mass of men; the one thing all the men about him seemed to think of was the satisfying of their appetites' (*AL*, p.172).

As his quest journey forces him to widen his own consciousness, as he is in effect educated by the landscape itself, Felix has to struggle with his own prejudices and

preconceptions. It is not until he has suffered ignominies and rejection at the hands of Ignorance and Worldly-Wiseman, that he enters the Valley of the Shadow of Death, the ruins of old London, and surviving that dreadful place eventually meets with the friendly shepherds and discovers that his efforts to bring justice and defend the innocent finally meet with success. The widening of his own consciousness by abandoning his social group and familiar locality involves Felix in both intellectual and emotional struggle to overcome, for example, his 'natural hauteur and pride' (*AL*, p.147). His resolution to seek the 'humblest service in King Isembard's camp, to bow his spirit to the orders of men above him in rank but below in birth and ability' (*AL*, p.147) as a token of 'devotion to Aurora' could be a rationalization of the situation in which he found himself. 'He believed he had ideas; but he had nothing substantial, no result, to point to' (*AL*, p.147). By interpreting his 'humbling' act as a sacrifice for Aurora, his courtly lady, he is able to fulfil, in his imagination, the role of the Romantic knight. It is a theme Jefferies develops as he describes how, at the camp, Felix was 'beaten like a felon hand' as his 'aspirations', his 'high hopes' and 'great ideas' were repudiated by Ignorance (*AL*, p.168). Jefferies in the person of the future chronicler, indirectly voicing Felix's thought, both offers it as an analysis and evaluation of the situation as seen from the outside, by the historian as observer, yet also as never wholly objective; 'The world does not recognise intrinsic worth, or potential genius' (*AL*, p.146). The retrospective comment adds more value to the judgement than had it been spoken in the subjective voice of Felix. By objectifying the thought through the voice of the chronicler who is recounting the acts of the hero, Felix Aquila, as a history, Jefferies is able to comment minutely on the judgement he could have himself made, about the public's reception of his own literary effort.

Felix's intellectual development on his quest journey, is apparent, also, in his learning to overcome his instinctive pride of caste. The ancient prejudice of class springs foremost to his mind when he realises that he has mistakenly on his journey and at his first landfall 'eaten at a slave's table, and sat with him face to face' (*AL*, p.157). Felix himself rarely generalises, except when confronted with a choice of action. At such times, as in this incident, it is momentary, for he is quickly able to recognise and discount his initial feeling as prejudice and offer to shake the hand of the slave. His physical action signals that it is not only in principle but in action that he is able to 'recognise man as distinct from caste' (*AL*, p.157). In that distant, yet familiar, hide-bound future, even so simple an act as this has incalculable consequences for Felix's world. What in the present would count as a minimal gesture might in such circumstances have to be discovered all over again and could count as a revolutionary moment.

The narrator describes how, in his quest journey, Felix is constantly assailed by doubt about the validity of his ideas, 'whether if tested, they might not fail; whether the world was not right and he wrong' (*AL*, p.140). He makes mistakes about the physical features of the landscape, the great inland sea which fills the Thames Valley and what he takes to be a channel, for example, is only an inlet. Observation and idea are related in his mind; 'the doubt arose whether, if he was so easily misled in such a large (. . .) purely physical matter, he might not be deceived also in his ideas' (*AL*, p.140). Jefferies underlines the difficulty of making the right judgement when knowledge is so limited that the bases of most assumptions might easily turn out to be mere ignorance. Yet, although we are told that 'In reverie, the subtlety of his mind entangled him', we are also told that 'in action, he was almost always right' (*AL*, p.141). The difficulty of reading *After*

London is that sometimes the details are a parody of Victorian habits and at others a corrective to them. Here, alongside a self-portrait, Jefferies is also critical, however, of the introspection of his own day. No wonder the book was admired by William Morris.

Like Bunyan's pilgrim, Jefferies' hero struggles forward submitting to the chances of the journey rather than remaining suspended in doubt and misgiving. After Felix has been beaten out of King Isembard's camp, unjustly accused of being a liar and a jester, he struggles back to the Lake, leaving the tyrannical land of Ignorance and Injustice for the 'loveliness' of the water. He here becomes entirely submerged in 'being', *en rapport* with the essence of nature – the 'soul' knowledge of *The Story of My Heart*. His sense of experiencing a subtle, inner meaning in the beauty of nature, he describes in depth in his autobiography and here attributes to it Felix's recovery of his mental poise. It is this restoration of self-awareness through the neutrality of natural objects which serves as Felix's version of religious faith in *After London*. Aurora is a devout believer in the old religion and Felix loves her for her purity and nobility of spirit. Yet he cannot believe himself, professing, as noted above, a deeper sense of mystery in the natural world; 'For the mystery of existence had impressed him deeply while wandering alone in the forest' (*AL*, p.123). Though he smiled and listened 'unconvinced' as Aurora spoke of the 'old faith', to him it is meaningless intellectually and emotionally. As a countryman, Jefferies might have been expected to have had at least a cultural feel for religious practice and ceremonies, like Hardy, yet none of his characters ever feel the loss that echoes in the regret of Arnold's travellers, 'We bring / Only ourselves' ('Rugby Chapel', ll.117, 118), the 'only' betraying the disappointment that at the end the 'we' have only the reflexive 'ourselves' with which they started. Arnold's world of the 1850's

both derides his sorrowing, and denies him the nobleness of grief for his feelings of loss of direction. The concern for Jefferies world, of 1882, was how far one could support the church on cultural and moral grounds. It is a concern which Jefferies addresses, not directly in the nineteenth-century, but in the future time of *After London*, for although he explains that Felix has 'too clear a mind' to accept the religion which was taught, a purely ritualised Catholicism, he acknowledges the effect of the old faith's 'moral beauty'. on Aurora (*AL*, p.122), a kind of book-centred Protestantism, and he acknowledges also, that the ancient and true religion, as practised by Aurora, was 'a living protest against the lawlessness and brutality of the time' (*AL*, p.122). On cultural and moral grounds, Felix is able to support Aurora's religion and on the night of their parting he was severely tempted to accede to her desire that he should believe; 'with her hope and her love, with her message of trust, she almost persuaded him. He almost turned to what she had so long taught. He almost repented of that hardness of heart' (*AL*, p.123). The thrice repetition of 'almost' stresses not only Felix's love for Aurora, but also his attraction to the ethical and inward qualities of her religion. Yet, though 'with her (Aurora) he became himself' and though he had no time for those who 'mocked at all faith and believed in gold alone' (*AL*, p.121), 'he stood aloof (. . .) unconvinced'. Faith for Felix is not possible. Yet lack of faith does not occasion him the anxiety and remorse experienced by Arnold's quester in 'Rugby Chapel' nor does it rob him of a sense of purposiveness, a sense of the worth of life. For Jefferies himself, the 'soul ideal', 'soul' being the term for the 'inner consciousness which aspires' (*SH*, pp.156-7), first needs the 'deadening influence of tradition to be destroyed' (*SH*, p.134); only then will the mind 'be lifted out of its old grooves' (*SH*, p.167). Felix cannot remain contented with the

present 'circle of ideas'. And it is this discontent which creates 'that unutterable distance, (. . .) between him and other men' (*AL*, p.123) and drives him to quest for another way of life. Jefferies' 'human ideal' is neither the spirit of Aurora's old religion, nor the spirit of a new Carlylean religion; rather it is to 'Never, never rest contented with any circle of ideas' (*SH*, p.181). It is this ideal which shapes the form of Jefferies' *After London* as a restless uncompleted quest.

After escaping the poisonous swamp that covers the site of the old London, Felix escapes with barely his life and eventually joins a band of shepherds on the Downs and helps them against their marauding enemies. Sustained as they are by a kindly landscape, these are the only comparatively decent group that he meets on his journey and his future might seem to lie with them. Yet even that would be to cut short the need to understand still more of the strange world which was once the single place, Southern England. Always to know more is the ideal which makes Felix as a character unable to remain contented as 'Leader' of the tribes of shepherds. 'The resolution to pursue his aspirations' (*AL*, p.238) drives him to leave his success and power as 'commander' of about 'eight thousand spearmen' (*AL*, p.236) in order to continue to quest, though the 'way' is through a trackless, dangerous forest.

Although the trials endured by Felix on his journey on land drive him away from the society of men, where he has successfully tried to realise his lofty ideals of justice, back to the symbolic purity of the Lake, his aspirations are not deterred. His inability to exercise any control over the basic instincts of the men he met or to kindle their interest in the benefits to be gained from the knowledge of basic scientific principles does not detract from the earnestness of his desire to circumnavigate the Lake, both as a source of

knowledge and in his need to win Aurora's love by winning wealth and heroic fame. As Christian's faith in the love of God is shown to sustain him in his moments of affliction and despair, Jefferies shows that it is Felix's faith in love, which sustains and comforts him in these moments of trial.

From the point of Felix's rejection by the men of the cities and his return to the 'beauty of the Lake' his quest develops an almost surreal quality. After his canoe has been held stationary in a calm as dead as the calm which 'dropt the sails' in Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*, he is swept onwards by furious winds, in the fashion of Homer's mythical quester, Odysseus, to the 'extreme desolation of the dark and barren ground' (*AL*, p.200), the site of the old London he so much admires. Black, tainted water replaces the purity of the Lake. The 'desolate' land, 'where there was not a grass blade or plant' (*AL*, p.202) is even more threatening to Felix, than the nature of 'inertness and grimace', the 'starved ignoble nature where nothing throve', through which Browning's quester, Childe Roland, struggled on his quest journey towards the Dark Tower. But in Jefferies' landscape of the great city, nineteenth-century London, fallen into decay, we are presented with a symbol of the power of time to reveal the City's other face. Its soil exudes 'gaseous emanations' which are 'contained in the yellow vapour' which 'narcotized' and 'deadened' Felix's senses (*AL*, p.203). It is these vapours which had killed 'men who had ventured, in search of ancient treasures' (*AL*, p.205). It is a Dantean landscape of Hell, influenced by Browning's poem; a transformed image of the urban wasteland. And yet, in the midst of these landscapes of hostility, both Browning's and Jefferies' heroes continue their quest. In Felix, courageous action is a celebration of life, of effort, in contrast to the dead past which surrounds him. In 'the midst of that dreadful

place' Felix is able to think of the 'wonderful people' who had once inhabited that 'utterly extinct city of London' (*AL*, p.206).

Felix emerges from his perilous journey across the 'black earth', through 'the darkness of the air' (*AL*, p.206), saved from death by the accident of a Western gale which keeps back the poisonous air of old London, with his aspirations as undaunted as they had been by his trials with the men of the cities, the warring and walled villages that now have replaced the old centres. Inherent in Jefferies' description of Felix's courage, is that described in narrations by the many Victorian explorers. The overland explorations of Africa and Australia; the seafaring explorations of the North and South Poles. Felix's steadfast courage gains him treasure for Aurora, yet had he been greedy, like the earlier treasure seekers, he too might have perished in the noxious elements. His experience of the sterility of the city serves to enlarge his 'circle of ideas', to help him develop and widen his understanding of the 'civilised' past he has always admired. In his autobiography, Jefferies describes how, living in London he was often conscious of the emptiness of all the frantic effort of its streets, 'it vanishes in the moment that it is done' (*SH*, p.99). Compared with the energy of the unfading sun and the pull of the tides beneath the London streets, 'the glamour of modern science and discoveries faded away, for I found them no more than the first potter's wheel' (*SH*, p.109).

It is not the work of the 'wondrous men' of London that actually helps Felix to achieve a sense of success, therefore. He is shipwrecked among the stones that mark the edge of the partly submerged Downs and he meets there a group of shepherds. Beyond London, before it and after it, lie the perpetual needs of life which are its true riches, the need for food and warm clothing. The shepherds, an ancient craft, follow a nomadic life-

style similar to that of the shepherd tribes in the Old Testament. They welcome and accept Felix, and for the first time on his journey, he finds he is able to co-operate with others, in their attempt to resist violence and band together to protect their property. 'All the Aquila courage' and Felix's will to succeed, vital to his quest so far, is equally necessary to his battle against the gypsies, the enemies of the shepherds. Not being a natural soldier, he uses the primitive technology of the bow which he has re-invented with consummate skill. However, in his final battle with the attacking gypsies, he is so excited and conscious of his desire to excel, that 'his will (the driving force of his quest) was powerless to control (. . .) his intensely nervous organization' (*AL*, p.224) and twice his arrows fall short. It is the shepherds' contempt for the sophisticated weapon which rouses him; 'he forgot himself; he thought only of his skill as an archer' (*AL*, p.225). He realises that it is the value of archery which is important and that fear of personal failure, of weakness, must not be allowed to undermine the claims of skill and effort; 'The third arrow', therefore, 'he fitted properly to the string' (*AL*, p.225). The number three appears as a talisman for Felix throughout the quest and from then onwards the fight is his.

In the 'city', Felix's 'superior knowledge' led to his beating and his banishment, but in Wolfstead, the home of the shepherd tribe, the shepherds recognise the worth of such knowledge and, as a result, Felix's influence and authority over them grow rapidly. He gains a 'sense of mastership' as he encourages the shepherds to fortify the area, for with fortifications he could rule the whole country and put into practice his beliefs of a fair and just system, in which individual man could develop. And when the shepherds find a great spring in the spot where Felix's 'study of the knowledge of the ancients' led him to intimate water might be, he is saluted, like Moses, who struck the rock and

brought forth water, 'as one almost divine' (*AL*, p.232). Not so far from the site of old London, Felix will found another city. The importance the chronicler gives to Felix, though all that Jefferies wrote was only supposed to be the start of his career, intimates the future importance of that act.

Though Felix appears to have fulfilled his visionary scheme, for as leader of the tribes he is in a position to help restore a belief in the value of ingenuity, to give importance to intelligence over social conservatism and brute force, 'he was not happy. (. . .) Months had now elapsed since he had parted from Aurora' (*AL*, p.236). In his quest to develop and widen the consciousness of his time he also begins 'to find out for himself the ancient truth, that difficulties always confront man. Success only changes them, and increases their number, (. . .) new difficulties sprang up for solution at every point' (*AL*, p.235). It is the old problem of the hero, that he must always ask what next, that the quest only creates the conditions for always journeying onwards. But, beyond that personal dissatisfaction of the quester, it is also possible to see that Jefferies has a more specifically contemporary issue in mind.

Jefferies, like Arnold, is aware that traditional beliefs and institutions are no longer adequate to embody the contemporary life system. And an age of transition, in which change is revolutionary, has the dual aspect of destruction and reconstruction. This dual aspect of revolutionary destruction and reconstruction Jefferies portrays in the future time of *After London*, destruction as the great catastrophe and reconstruction as Felix's quest. Yet sandwiched between destruction and reconstruction is a long period of regression. In *England and the English*, referring to the nineteenth-century, Bulwer Lytton wrote:

The age then is one of destruction! (. . .)
Miserable would be our lot if it were not also
an age of preparation for reconstructing.¹⁴

The future time Jefferies presents in *After London*, a future imaginatively reconstructed out of his own age of destruction, is itself an age of such destruction that man has regressed to a period which Jefferies refers to as another 'Dark Ages'. The task of his quester, Felix, is to try to restore to regressed man some of his lost knowledge and his human consciousness.

The structure of Jefferies' *After London* challenges man's concept of time, his ideas of change and development through time. For present, past and future time in the novel, is not the present, past and future time of the reader; the present of the quest being always the future of the reader and the heroic past of the chronicler. Jefferies' open ending draws the reader into this manipulation of time; Felix continues his quest into a future that only the chronicler knows but which each reader must project in his or her own imagination.

The book ends inconclusively, unlike most Victorian novels, leaving Felix setting out to journey back on foot to his father's farm and to Aurora. But that is appropriate to a book which builds up the importance of Felix so notably, makes him the only consistent presence in the book, so that all other characters, as in *Pilgrim's Progress*, are turned into helpful or hindering bystanders, yet presents him as achieving little and still at the close remaining only as a figure of promise. Are we looking at success or failure? Jefferies replaces the inwardness and anxiety of comparable Victorian quest novels with the boldness of action yet the action accomplishes little. He is finding a metaphor for the debate about progress in his own day. Progress is replaced by regression in the novel and

the achievements of the nineteenth-century become a lost memory but are also parodied in the image of London transformed into a deadly marsh and a society where the knowledge of Latin is both the mark of the aristocracy and a futile accomplishment serving only as an exclusive proof of one's social class. Yet in these circumstances Felix is offered as a figure committed to ideas of progress and eager to reinvent the lost machines and restore technology. The fable works in both directions, as an exposure of both universalised and over-complex elements in nineteenth-century life and yet, also, as an act of faith in knowledge as progressive and in the value of technology over brute strength. The hero is at once an adventurer, with a personal mission to find wealth and fame and marry Aurora and a liberator, the creator of the new times perceived by the chronicler. In that double identity lies Jefferies' commentary upon not only the ambiguous figure of the quester but also the nature of his own culture, at once individualist and responsible.

George Gissing, *Born in Exile* (1892)

George Gissing creates a quest structure for his novel, *Born in Exile*, in which his hero, Godwin Peak, follows a discipline of self-scrutiny in the process of a story which parodies the conversion narratives of St. Augustine's *Confessions* or Newman's *Apologia*. But it is also a quest to come home from exile and a Romance search for the ideal lady undertaken by a knight far from being faithful and true. Godwin Peak's pilgrimage unlike that of St. Augustine or Newman, is not an example of quest fulfilled, the sinner become saint or the Anglican finding his true spiritual home in the Catholic

church. Gissing's use of quest elements is sceptical, the end reached not the closed end of a satisfying solution but an open end of unresolved stress and emotional conflict. For although Peak shares Augustine's typological hope for a new and better future, and to that goal he directs his quest, his belief that he could reach that goal (his freedom from exile) whilst retaining his autonomy, proves to be an illusion. Whitelaw College, with its opportunity for Peak to achieve educational success gives him hope for his acquiring a successful vocation, one whereby he could attain his desired goal, the 'intimacy of refined people',¹⁵ and thereby end his bitter sense of social exile within his own lower middle class he sees as barbarians. Although Peak voices humanistic ideals of freedom and independence and believes he is, in a spiritual and intellectual sense, a 'natural' aristocrat, 'an aristocrat of nature's own making' (*BE*, p.41), his overriding desire is to become a part of that stratum of society to which he feels he rightly belongs as an equal:

Of mere wealth he thought not; might he only be recognised by the gentle of birth and breeding for what he really was, and be rescued from the promiscuity of the vulgar! (*BE*, p.129).

But, in reality, the moral and physical 'trials' (*BE*, p.48) he suffered in order to study at Whitelaw had led only to a sense of 'gnawing discontent, intervals of furious revolt, periods of black despair', as later, with some apparent success, he 'earned daily bread, and something more' (*BE*, p.128). Like a pilgrim he had set forth from Whitelaw on 'a voyage of discovery, to end perchance in some unknown land among his spiritual kith and kin' (*BE*, p.103) and to so end his exile; whereas, 'he had achieved nothing, and he was alone' (*PE*, p.128).

Sidwell Warricombe is a representative of Peak's 'typical woman' (*BE*, p.169), the type of womanhood he admires and praises. In Ruskinian, chivalric terms, he

describes her as 'a being of marvellous delicacy, of purest instincts, of unsurpassing sweetness' (*BE*, p.170). His words reveal his belief in the then current view that a woman's delicacy, refinement, even intelligence, was barely separable from the idea of superior social status. Peak's quest is odd, because he doesn't want to find the new; he wants to sustain the old, a chivalric ideal in terms of his praise of her, but by a new route. The devout and gracious middle-class girl becomes a bulwark against the vulgarities and anarchy of mass culture. Like the knight he is led on not by individual intimacies but by an imaginative idea, an image of Sidwell in his mind as the perfect expression of a type. He is preoccupied with the contemplation of qualities, birth and breeding, qualities which directly influence his actions in his relationship with her. Only later did it come 'to pass that he thought of Sidwell not only as the type of woman pursued by his imagination, but as herself the object of his converging desires' (*BE*, pp.244-5).

The exile motif which runs through Peak's life-story, wills him to ever greater effort to reach his 'ambition', his goal, his 'one supreme desire – to marry a perfectly refined woman'. As he defiantly explains to Earwaker, "I am a plebeian, and I aim at marrying a lady" (*BE*, p.140). Initially, Sidwell's attraction for him seems to be influenced by his quest to free himself from his sense of exile, his sense of isolation and alienation, and is, at the outset, a somewhat inverted emotion. 'Her influence had the effect of deciding his career, but he neither imagined himself in love with her, nor tried to believe that he might win her love' (*BE*, p.218). Sidwell represents, to Peak, his metaphoric 'promised land' of social approval and acceptance, where he could realise his ideals and end his social exile. Like Ruskin, he wants to restore to currency an image of womanhood as the guardian of domestic peace and the repository of the values the

husband believes in yet unlike Ruskin he pursues the ideal as a purely personal need, an aesthetic as much as a moral satisfaction.

Peak's 'confessions' are written as a series of both intellectual movements and physical movements in geographical space – the metaphorical quest journey leading him from Whitelaw to London, London to Exeter, Exeter to Bristol, followed by a journey north and, finally, overseas to Europe. Gissing presents him in the archetypal role, the isolated, discontented seeker, proudly battling with his intellect against two enemies the bad faith of modernising theologians like Bruno Chilvers and the conventional liberalism of his friend Earwaker and the Moxeys. Yet his quest is antithetical to that of the quester of Romance, for he is not nobly dedicated only to the seeking and winning of a goal of honour. George Eliot's epic Romantic quester, Daniel Deronda, searches for a vision beyond the 'ordinary wirework of social forms'.¹⁶ His quest is 'fired' by the Romance associated with the aesthetic and moral values of his culture and his religious heritage. Peak, however, in his argument with Earwaker, attempts to justify his acting within that 'ordinary wirework of social forms' and in defence of a religious dogma he does not actually believe. He claims a moral right to emphasize the necessity of works rather than faith:

'Did I ever tell you that my people originally wished to make a parson of me? (. . .) I wish I had been a parson. (. . .) I should preach Church dogma, pure and simple. (. . .) There's a vast police force in them, (. . .) A man may very strongly defend himself for preaching them' (*BE*, p.136).

Yet both Deronda and Peak have to attempt to find and develop their own 'self', before each can know what he is capable of. And whereas George Eliot believes there is a self to be found, Gissing presents a man who has a powerful presence but whose identity is

reactive. As 'modern man', each struggles to discover his place in the world, find a vocation, and intellectually come to terms with a world in which the scientific discoveries of men like Darwin and Lyell have upset the old order. Though Peak, like Jefferies' quester, Felix, finds old world beliefs no longer tenable he cherishes them all the more for their social usefulness. He claims both to himself and to his London friends that he is free from supernatural dogma and that his intellectual quest is to seek for himself a moral order in accord with the new scientific order. The search leads him to try to make his intellect governor of the whole of his life, including his emotions:

Every circumstance affecting him started his mind upon the quest of reasons, symbolisms, principles, the 'natural supernatural' had hold upon him, and ruled his thought (*BE*, pp.74-5).

He relentlessly places himself under an intellectual microscope, 'this very process of self-study' (*BE*, p.71). Not a word he spoke but was analysed for its suitability to the pose he presents to the world; 'he could not utter the simplest phrase of admiration without criticising its justice, its tone' (*BE*, p.165). His chosen way is not Deronda's path of authentic belief but an attempt to live by the style and image he most covets and to end therefore in admiration of the church on what we would call sociological grounds. The paradoxical tensions within Peak, the individual who dislikes individualism and chooses an old model of the believing community, creates within him a state of ironic or 'negative' self-division. He had felt alone in Twybridge, alone in London, now in Exeter with the Warricombes he becomes more and more isolated as he inwardly struggles to assimilate the 'truths' of his intellectual journeying.

Yet Gissing's physical framework of quest, Peak's journeying in search of vocation and 'those who had the social air' (*BE*, p.51) lacks the confidence and

excitement of Homeric quest. At the beginning of the century, Tennyson's Ulysses speaks in true chivalric diction and tone of 'some work of noble note' which 'may yet be done'. With Romantic longing he yearns 'To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths / Of all the western stars'.¹⁷ Yet Ulysses is old, revising, impossibly, an earlier spirit of adventure to seek some work which is noble, intrinsically worthwhile, an example to all seekers at times of intellectual and emotional uncertainty. Peak, at the end of the century, like Hardy's Jude Fawley, challenges the idea of universal progress by not confirming any essential nobility or goodness, in late nineteenth-century aspirations, aspirations associated with the new scientific system of belief. He clearly dislikes Marcella Moxey, the new intellectual woman, and the doctor, Janet, middle-class though she is. He is a revisionist, in love on modern grounds with an older and threatened way of life and he will win his spurs by defending what the moderns, including himself, have contemptuously attacked.

Peak's relentless quest to end his exile leads him into deliberate deception, the breaking of ties of old friendship, the concealment of his scientific scepticism about the attempt to reconcile Genesis and Darwin, in effect, to take morality into his own hands. His philosophical belief may be modernist, 'truth is indeterminable' (*BE*, p.194) and 'we can be but what we are' (*BE*, p.171) but its consequences permit him to defend orthodoxy on the unorthodox grounds that he admires it as a style of life. Intellectually, he claims he is a modern thinker, yet ironically, he cherishes ideals of the Classical world, the world of Matthew Arnold's 'Hellenism', a Romantic, backward-looking ideal for one who claims he is a 'modern' man. Whilst at Whitelaw, he wins first prize in logic and moral philosophy. His later claim, that to reach his goal he will follow his convictions

'to their logical issue' (*BE*, p.439) involves his deliberate cultivation of life as a fiction, 'the existence promised as the reward of successful artifice'. The logical issue of his convictions is to involve himself in a scheme of deception, which, though his justification is that 'truth is indeterminable', the more conventionally modern Buckland condemns as immoral. The scientist in him claims the wish to improve society, partly by the removal of ancient prejudice and established dogma, and he considers himself, along with his Whitelaw friend, a reformer of thought. His stifled ambition aims for intellectual honesty and objectivity and hence his writing of the crucial article on 'The New Sophistry', for the *Critical Review*. In reality, his moral choice is to act in the way which will best satisfy his desires and achieve his goal of personal fulfilment. In his quest to marry Sidwell, he affirms the values of the class he aspires to more openly than any middle-class spokesman would care to do; 'I respect hereditary social standing', he says to Earwaker (*BE*, p.134). His quest links him to the very conservative ethos of conventional, traditional society, which on other grounds he has before so vociferously attacked, criticised and condemned in his inflammatory article for the *Critical Review*. Because Peak has accepted as gracious and good a certain way of life, he then proceeds to justify the beliefs held by that way of life though he does not himself hold them. The bitterness of his childhood experiences, his social humiliations at college affect his attempt to define himself as the self-made man who admires, haplessly, only the traditional man governed by inheritance. Kant would argue, that by obedience to the categorical imperative, we are delivered from the bondage of our inclinations.¹⁸ The will not to be a hypocrite is a categorical imperative; Peak could choose between his

inclination and his duty. But Peak is properly a Nietzschean, a believer, if only he can be, in the right of the inclinations.

That Peak is bedevilled by ambivalent emotions, reflected both in his actions and in his words, makes him, however eccentric he seems, representative of the late nineteenth-century intellectual. Gissing himself looked on at the culture of his own time as irremediably vulgar; 'It is my belief that the multitude was never more remote than now from true culture', he wrote in 1891 and the following year he referred to 'vulgarism – the all but triumphant force of our time'.¹⁹ He writes not to convert the reader but in order to show the extent to which he is cut off from a large part of his audience. The contempt expressed by the book is the contempt felt by its hero, Peak, and shared by many contemporary writers:

The novelist had metamorphosed himself into an Artist, and described himself proudly as such. His novels were works of art and hailed as works of art by discriminating critics but, for the vast majority of readers, entertainment they certainly were not. It was the age that took the blame, and that meant democracy.²⁰

Peak is the beneficiary of liberal democracy, the poor scholarship boy helped through college by philanthropic business men, who hates the system that has produced him. His life is a journey in search of upward mobility yet the whole ethos of education to that end, in his opinion, only fuels the vulgarity from which he seeks escape in a static, traditional society. The more he succeeds the more guilty he feels.

In the letter of 1892, alluded to above, Gissing is referring to what became his novel, *The Odd Women*, and adds after his fulmination against 'vulgarism', 'Women will be the chief characters'. In *Born in Exile* the intellectual women are no better than Peak

himself from Peak's point of view, pretends to an identity not properly their own. He cannot abide the new breed of intellectual women, like Marcella Moxey, whom he describes to Earwaker as 'asexual'. 'In the few females who have liberated their souls, was not much of the woman inevitably sacrificed (. . .)?' (BE, p.170). Though he recognises that he is the involuntary object of Marcella's desire, he fails to understand that her desire might endanger his quest. He clearly dislikes the modern, intellectually-ambitious woman's aspiration for cultural and social autonomy; his views on the intellectual woman having much in common with the nineteenth-century orthodox belief in male supremacy and the superiority of a patriarchally structured society. His admiration even when he was politically a Radical was for a vision of the superior woman, not unlike Felix's devotion to Aurora in *After London*. When the mob gapes at two women in a carriage in Hyde Park he identifies with 'those two ladies, in Olympian calm, seeming unaware even of the existence of the throng' (BE, p.129). He is totally at odds with the progressive views of women's rights as expressed by J.S. Mill in *On The Subjection of Women*. He is not liberal; he is closer to the Burke of the *Reflections* than the Mill of *On Liberty*, more in sympathy with the views expressed by Charles Kingsley to a female audience at the Queen's Hall, in 1848, nearly half a century earlier, that women must become 'worthy wives and mothers of a nation of workers'. The emphasis is placed firmly on the supporting role. Peak thinks, with pride, of the intellectual influence he will wield over Sidwell, if he wins her for his wife. How, Pygmalion like, he will adapt her to his ways, mould her opinions to suit his taste; 'Godwin had absolute faith in his power of dominating the woman he should inspire with tenderness' (BE, p.219). Yet his words betray a fear of the new emerging breed of intellectually

emancipated women, the fear which Gissing make his major object of concern in his later novel *The Odd Women*. Like many conventional nineteenth-century men but on unconventional grounds, Peak appears to read women as primarily sexual and emotional creatures, and seems troubled by the intellectual problem of the Mary Magdalene syndrome, as he appraises women in terms both idealistic and cynical. He accepts that some working-class women have to become wage earners; his sister works as a shop assistant, his aunt works in her shop, and he has various landladies. But the upper-class woman, whom he idealizes, he envisions as Ruskin's 'Queen' of the home, creator of a cultural paradise for her husband, the 'King'. The women who have broken from this mould, he does not consider to be truly successful women. Moxey's cousin, Janet, has become a doctor, but is soon to retire, as stress of work has adversely affected her health. Sidwell's friend, Sylvia, is an artist, a profession in which women were beginning to gain recognition from the Royal Academy, yet there is only minor reference to her work. There is no reference to the ubiquitous Victorian governess, but Buckland's wife-to-be is praiseworthy for her philanthropic work with the London poor.

Though Peak's quest aspirations lead him to an act of hypocrisy, then, the negation of 'noble honour' associated with the Romance quest, the life he envisages and the woman he idealises belong to a Romance world within his imagination, an enchanted realm he wants to enter. He identifies with the qualities nature has given him, 'large brain, generous blood, delicate tissues', and finds that they place him with 'the best in English society' (*BE*, pp.160-61). His heroism lies in rejecting the heroics of struggle and identifying instead with a life that fulfils his ideals: 'Heroism might point him to an unending struggle with adverse conditions, but how was heroism possible without faith?'

(*BE*, p.170). That faith he finds expressed in the life of the Warricombes. The rebellious man rebels against rebellion and chooses instead a life where 'he was humanised, made receptive of all gentle sympathies' (*BE*, p.170). His duty is to achieve that serenity for himself. The question of what duties attach to a life is not a matter of choice, therefore, but is dictated by the social conventions of the day. MacIntyre writes:

According to Kant, the rational being utters the commands of morality to himself. He obeys no one but himself. (. . .) Inescapably, each of us in his own moral authority. The autonomy of the moral agent 'is to recognise (. . .) that external authority (. . .) can provide no criteria for morality.'²¹

In his attempt to license behaviour which ordinarily he would abhor, Peak argues that the criterion which helped frame his choice and actions, is the criterion in the established social practice of late nineteenth-century life, the 'ordinary wirework of social forms'. 'Let the society which compelled to such an expedient bear the burden of his shame' (*BE*, p.169) comments the narrative voice, as Peak rationalises his feelings of guilt to himself, not by his questioning of what guilt is, for had not Darwin denied man's moral consciousness, but by the criticism of the social organization which forces men into class structures and makes the basis of human relationships too materialistic. 'As the unspeakable, entrepreneurial greed of materialism is allowed to pollute towns in the name of progress and 'getting-on', why, he argues, should not he pursue, in true entrepreneurial spirit, his own aim to belong to a culture that resists such vulgar ambition? And in added mitigation of his moral responsibility, he claims his action was determined, for it proceeded from what he was. Morality for Peak therefore, becomes a style of life. He

chooses to identify with the Warricombe life-style, in order to make concrete his quest ideal.

His reply to Buckland's question about the argument in Canon Grayling's sermon is not a question of compromising his intellectual honesty. He feels himself swept along before he has time to consider, 'without premeditation, almost without consciousness'. It is under the 'marvelling regard of his conscious self' that he enacts his new found piety (*BE*, p.157). His decision later to take Orders is a proposition which to Earwaker's astonishment he had raised during their last argument. To Buckland, who finds the change in Peak's views 'incredible', because his own 'attitude in essentials is unchanged' (*BE*, p.175) and because he thought he knew Peak, the announcement is a great shock and that desire to resist easy summary and oppose the triteness of Buckland's agnosticism also influences Peak's decision. To Peak, however, who ascribes his acceptance by the Warricombes 'to a singular chance which had masked his real being (. . .) with scarce an effort of his own', comes the consequent realization, 'he was now playing the conscious hypocrite (. . .) fate had brought it about' (*BE*, pp.168, 169). Yet Buckland does in part understand the decision:

It did not seem impossible that a nature like Peak's – intellectually arrogant, vehemently anti-popular – should have been attracted by the traditions, the social prestige of the Anglican Church, nor at all unlikely that a mind so constituted should justify a seeming acceptance of dogmas, which in the strict sense it despised (*BE*, p.202).

The irony of the book is that this daring adventure by Peak into middle-class conformity should come to seem to him at moments a hypocrisy and betrayal of intellectual truth prompted by his own low origins, a baseness of which the admired

Warricombes would themselves never have been guilty. On the very night after he has declared his orthodoxy he regrets that 'he, he who had ever prided himself on his truth-fronting intellect, and had freely uttered his scorn of the credulous mob!' (*BE*, p.179) should be so tempted that he should fall from the standard of his intellectual ideals. That he, a militant free-thinker, should bend his mind to dogma, as a necessity of social compliance to the life of high culture, sickens him. His intellectual solution is to make the scientific system a means whereby he can justify his deceit. Yet in his debate with Buckland, it is Buckland who vulgarly thinks Peak is on the make; 'There could be no doubt that Peak had decided to go to Exeter because of the social prospects recently opened to him' (*BE*, p.202).

In an effort to lessen his sense of self-loathing, Peak attempts to distance himself from the reality of his action, by adopting an ironic viewpoint. He tells himself it was a 'mad dream', a 'comedy', a 'monstrous folly'; he had 'played' a 'character', an 'extraordinary influence had guided his tongue' (*BE*, p.178). And yet, as again his reason asserts itself, he claims some absolution, 'a hypocrite was not necessarily a harm-doer'. He seeks to blame the scientific element, the 'ancestral vice in his blood' (p.179). The irony is, that in trying to be free from baseness, he becomes base. He wrestles with his conscience, in the knowledge that the world for which he once waited, where science would have 'completely broken with tradition' (*BE*, p.50) was not this world of orthodoxy for which he was prepared to perjure himself. In the manner of the archetypal religious quester, he suffers the pangs of his guilt and descends to suffer the torments of a metaphysical hell of 'self-pity and self-contempt' (*BE*, p.179). In his struggle with his guilt, his experience of descent, 'Down, down' (*BE*, p.179) mirrors the descent into

despair experienced by questers for religious truth, before their recorded experiences of wondrous, uplifting conversion. For Peak, however, the experience of descent leads to an experience of guilt-ridden, anti-conversion. His 'descent', not as deep as that of the religious quester, is more easily arrested for was he not 'wearied of the famished pilgrimage' (*BE*, p.170) of his merely sceptical life? Had he not 'surveyed a rich field of possible conquest' (*BE*, p.168) and, like the chivalric knight of the tourney, to whom he is linked in the imagery of the language, could he not fight for his prize, not with the sword, but with an affectation of religious orthodoxy? The affectation would enable him to both fight for high ideals and 'attack sham ideals' (*BE*, p.201). The paradox of Peak, the avowed agnostic, using the word 'thrice', with its religious connotation of Peter's denial of Christ, underlines not only the immeasurable shame he feels at his betrayal of the Warricombes' friendship, and his hypocritical 'denial' of the scientific system, but also the anguish of his betrayal of his own integrity.

Yet as his quest proceeds, he continues to flout his conscience, intellectually trying to justify his instinctive and unconscious decision by reference to fate, to heredity, to the Schopenhauerian blind striving of the will where the individual has no value, to the fixity of class, all of which in turn seem as valid arguments as the criticisms of morality. In his support of Martin Warricombe's trembling faith, he advances the argument that religious truth belongs to a different order of consciousness from that of the natural sciences, a consciousness possessed by some men but manifestly lacking to others. It is the argument in fact advanced by the future Archbishop Temple in his Bampton Lectures of 1884, *The Relations between Science and Religion*.²² Yet to Peak even while he argues in this way 'it sounded so futile, so nugatory' (*BE*, p.250). The reader is first of

all given tenable arguments which are then almost in the same breath disavowed by the man uttering them. In the end it is the incapacity of Peak to bear this self-division which breaks him rather than any specific piece of self-criticism; 'Whom was he in danger of wronging? The conventional moralist would cry: Everyone with whom he came in slightest contact! But a mind such as Peak's has very little to do with conventional morality' (*BE*, p.216). The admiration in the diction there is that of the novel itself. Because he uses religion as a method of achieving his goals, as an expedient, however, in his belief that the end, his reaching of his goal, is justification of the means, he can only sustain his serious arguments on behalf of Church dogma at specific moments; his private reasons keep interfering with his capacity for orthodox polemic. Peak is like Hardy's Jude Fawley, in *Jude the Obscure*, who views the church in terms of personal advancement, yet, unlike Jude, he does believe specifically in the usefulness of the church socially. Formerly, Peak's new beliefs had appeared 'as remote from him (. . .) as the age of the pterodactyl' (*BE*, p.48) yet now the survival of the church becomes a heroic struggle against the forms of destruction; 'Roused to combat by the proletarian challenge' (*BE*, p.217). The arguments in his mind sway back and forth. In a world where too many ideas and possibilities beckon to him, Peak's problem is that no sooner has he committed himself to an objective than he begins to fight against it himself.

His need is not for the physical and moral courage of the quester in Romance but for the existential 'courage to be' at the end of a century in which Nietzsche claims 'God is dead', and with his death, the death of the whole system of values and meanings in which men lived. Peak rejects Earwaker's advice about marriage and Browning's 'Respectability' message (*BB*, pp.140-141) claiming that his acceptance of society's

mores will not interfere with the integrity of his 'untouched' mind, although his enlightened scientific views can also be seen as basically a rationalization of his antagonistic feelings towards a society from which he feels exiled. His emotions he always attempts to control for they must not be allowed to interfere with the success of his quest to live a purely constructed life, free from moral prejudice.

His relationship with family and friends appears to be governed by his 'scientific' reading of them, as either useful to the furtherance of his quest or as a hindrance. J.S. Mill, in his *Autobiography*, describes the pernicious effect of scientific self-analysis – a habit which so undermined the emotional in his life, that he suffered a mental breakdown. Mill was able to discover salvation in the works of the Romantic poet Wordsworth. Peak, however, retreats further into his own ego, continually restraining any natural impulse of emotion, even when, after his exposure, Sidwell reveals an interest in him as a human being in his own right, an interest tinged with emotion. His earlier measuring of Sidwell against the standards of his ideal woman may have been a form of ego protection, in case of rejection, but Peak calculatingly continues to play the role of 'controlled', domineering, male suitor, both at the time Sidwell shows signs of caring for him, and later, during their brief correspondence, when he feels he must exercise control over his image in Sidwell's heart and mind. His quest to marry Sidwell fails, partly because she proves incapable of separating herself from her family with exactly that gentleness of feeling and loyalty to those she loves that he had always admired in such women. Ironically, Peak fails because his choice to follow the path of the old system creates an outer image of him in Sidwell's eyes, which later she finds to be false. The mocking voice which tells him, too late, that to have remained faithful to the way of the new

scientific system might have led Sidwell to accept him, thereby leading him to his desired goal, torments him with the suggestion that his dishonour, his hypocrisy, 'had been superfluous' (*BE*, p.441).

What breaks Peak's will to persist is not in the end his inability to live by the new morality of role-playing, though the fact that he must play at being sincere in the old way on the new ground of expediency is difficult enough. Nor is it simply the fact that he begins to fall actually in love with the woman he had decided on intellectual and aesthetic grounds alone was his ideal partner. It is rather that he, the dissident from every position, the man who is led always by reaction against what others predict of him, meets again the man who ever since his college days he has resented as a smooth charlatan and finds that he is a parody of himself. What he has been undertaking as a moral and intellectual adventure has simply been adopted as a career by his enemy. After Bruno Chilvers' visit to his lodgings, Peak realizes that 'all his conscientious scruples about entering the Church were superfluous' (*BE*, p.353) and he becomes 'conscious of positive ideals by no means inconsistent with Christian teaching' (*BE*, p.354). Chilvers' conversation suggests that he, Chilvers, has successfully combined the new scientific spirit with the old dogma. His 'fantastic liberality' (*BE*, p.348) the 'breadth' on which he prides himself, is evidenced in the energetic delivery of his opinions:

'It behoves us to go in for science – physical, economic – science of every kind (. . .) we have to construct a spiritual edifice on the basis of scientific revelation (. . .) The results of science are the divine message to our age; (. . .) Less of St. Paul, and more of Darwin! Less of Luther, and more of Herbert Spencer!' (*BE*, pp.348-349).

Chilvers' parishioners were 'not to think that Jesus of Nazareth teaches faith and conduct incompatible with the doctrines of Evolutionism' (*BE*, p.349). Though his brother clergy held him in slight esteem and Mr. Lilywhite, the local vicar, reported that his wife told him that Chilvers' 'sole object just now is to make a good marriage' (*BE*, p.456), honest Mrs. Warricombe 'regarded him as a gleaming pillar of the Church' (*BE*, p.456) and welcomed him as a possible suitor for Sidwell. Finally, and for Peak ironically, Chilvers' successful career as a 'broad', liberal clergyman, is crowned by his own social climbing-marriage to the daughter of a Baronet. By contrast, Peak's 'devotion' for Sidwell, which had 'grown (. . .) month by month' (*BE*, p.405) until his final admission that he 'loved her' (*BE*, p.438) is blighted. 'Fate had used him as the plaything of its irony' (*BE*, p.398).

Peak is constantly tempted in his solitary route by the old morality of honesty to the single mind, as though there was now any single truth to which a mind such as his could owe allegiance. When he has to leave the field, however, and despite the fact that he has changed his opinion about his action many times, he defends his behaviour to his friend Earwaker in a sustained speech which deserves quotation at length for its appeal to the ethic of adventure, moral courage:

You know that I have only followed my convictions to their logical issue. An opportunity offered by achieving the supreme end to which my life is directed, and what scruple could stand in my way? (. . .) 'Here' are the facts of life as I had known it; 'there' is the existence promised as the object of my being. I could not feel otherwise; therefore could not act otherwise (. . .) Yet the hope began in a lie (. . .) Of course I understood the moralist's position. It behoved me, though I knew that a barren and solitary track would be

my only treading to the end, to keep courageously onward. If I can't 'believe' that any such duty is imposed upon me, where is the obligation to persevere, the morality of doing so? That is the worst hypocrisy. I have been honest, inasmuch as I have acted in accordance with my actual belief. (. . .) I have been racked, martyred. (. . .) Conscience is the same in my view as an inherited disease (. . .) I wanted to win the love of a woman – nothing more. (. . .) What I insist upon is that by deceit only was it rendered possible (*BE*, pp.439-440).

The man apparently without convictions has all along been acting upon them, acting upon the deepest desires of his being. This is a more serious and risky equivalent to Wilde's defence of lying. It is presented in the heroic terms of the quest; beliefs have been 'followed', scruples not allowed to 'stand in my way' and the 'barren and solitary track' courageously pursued to the point where he has suffered the hero's penalty, 'I have been racked, martyred'. Ironically, it is that 'barren and solitary track' which Peak finally treads for a much more old-fashioned reason when Sidwell refuses to marry him and go forth herself, into exile.

Peak is left alone, not with a conscience struggling with the loss of belief in the old system, but suffering the bitter, pessimistic sense of life's ironies. He has to listen to the woman he now loves using the old moral language that he respects, not as true but as socially useful to tell him that she no longer believes in the old pieties that he has respected though not believed. 'But here is the proof how much better it is to behave truthfully! (. . .) I understand the new thought' Sidwell says (*BE*, p.397). At the bitter end he tells himself that because Sidwell will not leave everything for him she is not 'the heroine of a romance (. . .) But neither was he cast in heroic mould' (*BE*, pp.479, 480).

Gissing's *Born in Exile* explores the scope of Peak's individual decision and individual responsibility, offering no easy solutions to the problems facing the intellectual quester searching for a principle of coherence and order in the late nineteenth-century. In the novel, Gissing's solution for Peak's inner and outer sense of isolation and alienation, his sense of exile, is death. The inevitability of the cycle of life followed by death provides the one certainty in an uncertain system and brings Peak's life full circle, as the man who is 'born in exile' becomes the man who is 'dead (. . .) in exile!' (*BE*, p.506). Peak's letters to Earwaker from the continent, reveal the anguish of his quest to end his sense of exile. 'I am miserably alone, want to see a friend (. . .) I never in my life suffered so from loneliness (. . .) Ill again, and alone. If I die, act for me' (*BE*, p.505).

Virginia Woolf claims that the experiences of Gissing's 'fictitious people'²³ are patterned on a claim supported by Gissing's confession to his friend, Bertz, 'Peak is myself – one phase of myself.'²⁴ To this extent we can understand the fictional autobiography of Godwin Peak in *Born in Exile* as part of the story of Gissing's own spiritual autobiography – the story of his own quest for vocation for both intellectual and social status, in late Victorian society. As the struggles of Browning's quester, Childe Roland, to reach the Dark Tower, can be seen as mirroring part of Browning's intellectual struggles both to create poetry and to understand himself, so Peak's intellectual dialectics which examine his place in the social order can be interpreted as a reflection of Gissing's own quest to understand the meaning of his life, in an age of scepticism, and to make his mark as a novelist. From Exeter January 20th, 1891. Gissing wrote the following in a letter to his sister: 'I have the feeling of being deserted by all who ought to be my companions. I remain unseen and unheard of'.²⁵

Browning's poem is preoccupied with Roland's struggles for great ends; the goal, when it is reached, is hardly recognised. Browning was writing in the middle of the nineteenth-century, for an age which felt the need for ideals in a time of doubt and uncertainty. His was the view of men like Kingsley, that what was good for society was the action of aspiring. For they believed that the act of Romantic aspiration itself had laudable connotations of chivalric quest-heroism, self-sacrifice, nobility – ideals essential to a society if man were not to succumb to despair. The frenetic activity associated with a quest like Roland's was seen, therefore, as promoting such ideals as values associated with effort, with hard work – with in effect, the work ethic. Peak's struggle is a restless, intellectual quest to find a new scientifically based system of moral values, derived from what was socially admirable, to replace the old code offered by the metaphysics of orthodox Christianity. Peak's concern to invent himself and his project of alliance with the Warricombes becomes a kind of experiment. The attempt is Nietzschean but on ironically non-Nietzschean grounds; he is simultaneously the free-spirit and the man of bad faith. No character more clearly displays the double identity of the quest-hero, the courageous defender of threatened meanings and values who is also pursuing an entirely different ethic of self-fulfilment and private dreams.

Joseph Conrad, 'Heart of Darkness' (1902)

There is something in the heart of everything
if we can reach it, that we shall not be inclined
to laugh at.²⁶

Ruskin's comment, with its serious Victorian sense of a search for meaning that is capable of being successful and which lies beyond the triviality and mockery of everyday

experience, is both shockingly at odds with Conrad's point of view in his most substantial novella and in its actual wording ironically in key with it. Marlow's quest in 'Heart of Darkness' is an attempt both to recollect the experience of his African journey, and to decipher its meaning. It is a quest which develops out of the casual, the small problem of being at a loose end, into an intense and frustrated search for self-understanding and identity which, retrospectively, he claims as 'the culminating point of my experience. It seemed somehow to throw a kind of light on everything about me – and into my thoughts.'²⁷ Yet Marlow can only claim 'a kind of light', his colloquial 'kind of', used adjectivally, implying that only to some extent did his quest journey 'throw a light', even if only 'a darkness visible'. Meaning, as in his yarns, appears to have been brought out 'only as a glow brings out a haze' (*HD*, p.8). Marlow's apparent need, as he probed his consciousness, was to share the burdens of his revelations with his fellow passengers aboard the 'Nellie'. To share with them his story, and in a communal experience, 'trace the pattern, however disconnected and incoherent its appearance, which each sight or incident stores upon the consciousness.'²⁸ Marlow desires a sense of fellow-feeling, understanding and sympathy from his captive audience, the Lawyer, the Accountant, the Director of Companies and the first Narrator himself. Conrad's employment of generic names for the men aboard the yacht effectively depersonalises them, making them into symbolic representatives of sections of society, with implicit involvement in the social structures and systems which his narrative will implicitly criticise.

Through the viewpoint of the narrator Conrad describes the Thames-scape scene against which he significantly presents Marlow, the explorer, in a symbolic 'Buddha-like' pose, as he embarks both on an exploration of his memories and on his intellectual

journey into the meaning of consciousness which, we have already been warned, he will turn into a haze. The implication of the Buddhist analogy may well be that the purpose of the voyage would be to surrender consciousness itself, as in Schopenhauer:

For the goal of orthodox Buddhism is not the continued affirmation and maintenance of the personal self, in whatever form, but instead its total dissolution in Nirvana (actually meaning 'waning away'). And Schopenhauer expressly connects his doctrine of the denial of the will with this Buddhist conception.²⁹

Conrad's linking of Marlow's quest for moral enlightenment to the traditional, spiritual quest throughout history, parallels the narrator's historical linking of the sailors aboard the yacht to 'the great spirit of the past upon the lower reaches of the Thames' (*HD*, p.6). That spirit, as he proudly claims, transformed journeys into quests by 'the great knights-errant of the sea' who have carried Promethean enlightenment abroad, 'bearers of a spark from the sacred fire' (*HD*, p.7). The anonymous narrator's Romanticised view of the Thames as a source of illumination is immediately undermined, however, by Marlow's opposing pessimistic claim, 'And this also, has been one of the dark places of the earth' (*HD*, p.7). The inclusive 'also' reminds Marlow's audience of another perception of 'reality', that civilization is not a stable and normal condition, but rather a very brief interlude in the customary rule of darkness. Marlow's words are designed to undermine the progressive reading of history inherent in the narrator's words for Marlow sees talk of enlightenment as a smokescreen for appalling brutalities and hypocrisies. His reference to 'nineteen-hundred years ago' as 'the other day' (*HD*, p.8), reveals a Darwinian perception of the menacing transience of man's life on this planet and turns the historian's measurement of time into too small a gauge. Marlow's claim, 'we live in the

flicker!' (*HD*, p.8) emphasises not only his philosophical concept of the place of man in the realm of life but also his Darwinian rejection of the concept of man as a special creation. Marlow's introspective monologue springs from his awareness that the Thames had been a place of darkness for the Romans as the Congo had been for him. It increases the sense of temporal paralysis for the reader that Marlow utters his conclusions before he actually tells his story, that only in retrospect can we see the Romans as the present-day 'Pilgrims of the Congo. Only with hindsight do we, the readers, understand that his reference to the 'hearts of wild men (. . .) the fascination of the abomination (. . .) the surrender, the hate' (*HD*, p.9), is actually a synthesis of his own experience in Africa. It is with obvious admiration that Marlow reminisces about the Romans, who had to live in the midst of 'the incomprehensible which is also detestable' (*HD*, p.9). 'They were men enough to face the darkness' (*HD*, p.9). Marlow is often described as a modernist knowing in advance the emptiness into which he will, at the end of the story, be left staring. But throughout he is more interestingly divided between a belief in the value of strenuous activity, which was his trust as a young man, and also a detached contemplation of the futility of human action, which was the fruit of his African journey.

Conrad's narrative method, the ambiguity with which he not only surrounds the start of Marlow's quest, so that only with hindsight do we realise the quest has begun, forces his readers to quest for their own meaning. The narrator finds no difficulty in conflating the two kinds of exploration, 'hunters for gold or pursuers of fame' (*HD*, p.7) but he recognises astutely Marlow's difference from most other sailors. Men aboard actually long for fixity and take their home with them, letting thoughts of it protect them from foreign perceptions, but Marlow 'was a wanderer too' (*HD*, p.8) and that

'too' implies that Marlow is a different kind of traveller from the adventurer or the hero. If the Romans were 'men enough to face the darkness' (*HD*, p.9) it is because they did it 'without thinking much about it' which impresses Marlow, that they accepted 'the incomprehensible' without fuss. For the narrator darkness is a less metaphysical concept and it is his account which frames the perplexities of Marlow's commentary on the same occasion, nightfall on the Thames. The narrator's account is a written recollection of the evening but Marlow's narration is in the older oral form, creating both a tension between the two and the 'misty halo' (*HD*, p.8) of the relativity of meaning. Where the narrator saw adventure, Marlow sees mainly greed and a superiority based primarily on force, values precisely at the opposite end from the narrator's allusions to knight-errantry. Yet Marlow, himself, almost involuntarily wants to rescue colonialism from mere rapacity and justify exploration by making it subject to an idea:

What redeems it is the idea only. An idea at the back of it; not a sentimental pretence but an idea; and an unselfish belief in the idea – something you can set up, and bow down before, and offer sacrifice to . . . (*HD*, p.10)

The hiatus at the end is surely Marlow catching himself out speaking like Kurtz. Authentic hope is overtaken by irony, as it is to be so often in Marlow's narrative; he tries to distinguish pure idealism from self-deceit and then ends his sentence by turning it into idolatry. Yet, paradoxically, at the start of his quest, the power of an idea clearly interested Marlow. It is a sense of certainty which Marlow desires for his idea of the solidarity of common humanity.

Human beings in Conrad achieve solidarity in the performance of some task (on which their lives may depend), most commonly sailing a ship, but the task itself may

have a purpose which then exposes the solidarity to cynicism, as here or with the silver mine in *Nostramo*. Far from the individualism of Peak or even Felix, Marlow attempts to share his quest story with his listeners and, in his emphasis on the common experience of work, to join with both the boiler-mender foreman and the 'cannibal' crew. When at the Central Station he listens to the brickmaker speaking of Kurtz as 'an emissary of pity, and science, and progress' (*HD*, p.36) it is in Kurtz as a man of ideas that he becomes interested, and 'curious to see whether this man, who had come out equipped with moral ideas of some sort would climb to the top (. . .) and how he would set about his work when there' (*HD*, p.44). Although Kurtz's language seems to involve precisely that sense of solidarity to which Marlow himself appeals, he suspects its emptiness from the start and when he finally reaches him at the Inner Station he has long been sceptical. It could be only another form of ambition, of getting 'to the top'! As Marlow penetrates into what Simmel refers to as the 'deep structure of the soul and the world',³⁰ into the Conradian heart of darkness, he begins to realise that what he had thought were Kurtz's 'ideas', were but sentimental pretences of Kurtz's imagination, 'magnificent eloquence' (*HD*, p.83) only, a surface covering for one who was discovered to be 'hollow at the core' (*HD*, p.83). In effect, Kurtz's 'ideas' were little more than a covering of 'pretty rags', which could easily fly off, idealised illusions only, as the postscriptum to his report on the Suppression of Savage Customs, 'Exterminate all the brutes!' (*HD*, p.72) ironically reveals. 'Kurtz's last disciple', the Russian Harlequin, a parody of the response Marlow was invited to hold, claims unrestrained admiration for 'a man like this, with such ideas' (*HD*, p.84), an admiration which leads to his reasoning 'a man like' Kurtz, is a man 'you can't judge (. . .) as you would an ordinary man' (*HD*, p.80). In Nietzschean

terms, Kurtz is 'beyond good and evil' but it is not exactly in Nietzschean terms that Marlow is eventually going to accept Kurtz in some sense as a quester, a guide. The journey starts then, as not simply a departure from, a by-path in, a life of marine sailing, but also potentially significant because the clarities of maritime rules have been lost.

Marlow employs the Romantic quest motif, the glamour of exploration to further man's knowledge both of the world and of himself, to explain what led him to his African quest. Rationally, he knew that the blank space, over which he had dreamed since boyhood, had 'ceased to be a blank space of delightful mystery' and 'had become a place of darkness' (*HD*, p.12) though he does not specify the source of the gloom. He knew, also, that his ideal of the exotic and remote would most likely be confronted with a stark reality different from any Romantic imagining with which he counteracted his ennui, nevertheless, he clung to the Romantic 'notion', personifying the great river with terminology resonant of the Old Testament, 'the snake had charmed me' (*HD*, p.12). The 'notion', however, is ambiguous. Not only is it presented ironically as temptation to a mind transformed into 'a silly little bird' (*HD*, p.12) but, on a more meaningful level, it can be seen as a need to test himself by the ancient heroic journey, a descent into hell. The narrative is consistently presented not as present disillusion with past ideals, but as, from the start, a sceptical critique of his own reason for the journey and of the enthusiasm or bad-faith of all engaged in the enterprise. As a sceptical critique of quest it can be seen to have some affinity with the scepticism Browning's Childe Roland expresses about his quest to the Dark Tower. The structure of the narrative itself seems also to strain towards the quest form; the tension created, between the content and the form, resulting in a disquieting sense of uncertainty for the reader. In effect, Conrad, forces the

reader to experience the constant flux experienced by Marlow himself. If the reader interprets the 'notion' as a 'need' for quest, then it is for quest without an object to project itself on to. Where Gissing's Peak flings himself into his adventure and then has to struggle with the consequential misgivings, Marlow is determined from the start to remain aloof and uninvolved.

Marlow does not narrate his experience linearly, though he patterns it on the archetypal quest journey. From the start his recollection of his Romantic 'fancy' (*HD*, p.12) for the post of skipper on a Congo river boat, is intercepted by later recollections of the sight of the murdered Fresleven for example, 'the grass growing through his ribs' (*HD*, p.13). It was Fresleven's murder, arising from an irrational misunderstanding about two black hens, which enabled Marlow to fulfil his 'Romantic' quest aspiration for adventurous exploration. The ironic implication of the adjectives in the phrases the 'glorious affair' (*HD*, p.14) and the 'noble cause' (*HD*, p.13), chosen by Marlow to describe the tragic, irrational relationship between the captain and the natives, a relationship which ended in senseless killing and devastation of a village, is further evidence that Marlow is looking not for the 'idea', but for the small bit of truth amid the pretensions not simply of others but of his own imagination. Not only does he reveal his growing awareness of human irrationality and its self destructive potentialities but he also ridicules and undercuts his own Romantic idea of quest for adventure.

In 1898 Conrad wrote to Cunninghame Graham expressing his feelings of acute despair: 'If you believe in improvement you must weep, for the attained perfection must end in cold, darkness and silence'.³¹ Marlow's desire to penetrate through the masks and facades to a hidden 'reality' redeems him from illusion, from what Schopenhauer, using

the Sanskrit term, calls Maya, the surface illusion, in order to accept the darkness beyond it. Where Arnold could express belief in a buried self still presiding over life though utterly unknown, Marlow's fear, inscrutably borne, is that there may be only a 'heart of darkness'. For although Conrad defined truth as 'NOTHINGNESS' in his 1897 letter to Cunninghame Graham referring to the merciless knitting machine which 'knits us in and knits us out' (*LL I*, p.216) and, in an earlier letter to Edward Noble, 1895, can say 'another man's truth is only a dismal lie to me' (*LL I*, p.184), his quest is for the truth of one person's being, that of Marlow.

In his 1897 'Preface' to *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, Conrad states that his aim was for a narrative form which would draw the listeners and readers into a 'shared' category of understanding and judgement, the word 'shared' inferring a community and supporting a belief in the value of communal experience.³² Many late nineteenth-century intellectuals, Peck among them for example, found the breakdown of shared categories of understanding and judgement left them with no hope of any genuine communion with another's intellectual or moral centre, only with a sense of anguished isolation. Conrad's avowed aim in that 'Preface', leads him to explore in the narrative form 'Heart of Darkness' how far he can join his readers in a community of 'non-understanding'. What is left to share may be only an ironic distance from the bad faith of other men's beliefs, evidenced in Marlow's flux of impressions, as he offers 'that glimpse of truth for which you have forgotten to ask'. It is a truth which shocks and hurts in the process of self-recognition but awakens the sense of solidarity with others, that sense which Marlow claims 'you see me, whom you know' (*HD*, p.39), but solidarity only in the act of writing, speaking or sailing. It remains, however, only a glimpse, for Conrad presents

reality as very private and individual; 'We live, as we dream – alone' (*HD*, p.39). Indeed, he seemed almost anxious to ensure that a reader who thought himself sympathetic would, in the end, feel lost. Certainly the original audience in the novella are only doubtfully in communication with Marlow by the end. Whilst the story was appearing in serial form, Conrad wrote to Cunninghame Graham to dampen his enthusiasm; 'There are two more instalments in which the idea is so wrapped up in secondary notions that you – even you! may miss it' (*LL I*, p.268).

As Marlow searches for a fixed standard of conduct, which would make his life meaningful, in a secular world devoid of metaphysical meaning, where ethics are seen as variable, partial and relative, the reader finds he/she becomes drawn, imaginatively, into a problem of ethics. Hegel argued that without a metaphysical belief there could be no definite metaphysical goal to quest for. And the lack of any metaphysical belief in 'Heart of Darkness', clearly negates the archetypal, religious quest goal. George Simmel claims that nineteenth-century man was left with a need for a:

Definitivum of life's movement, which has continued as empty urge for a goal which has become inaccessible (. . .) the tendency of existence towards a final goal and the simultaneous denial of the goal are projected into interpretation of reality ('Gensamtweltanschauung') (. . .)
Contemporary culture is also aptly described through its desire for a final goal in life, a goal which is felt to have disappeared and is gone for ever (Simmel, p.5).

'Heart of Darkness' can be interpreted as Conrad's demonstration of Simmel's claim. For it is a narrative form which repeatedly denies that for which it seems to strive, the truth of being. Marlow's claims deny the idea of the journey as a revelation of 'truth', unless that truth be a recognition that the world is not prescribed by definitive

'truths' – a recognition which negates any possibility of 'truth' being a goal to be pursued. Marlow recalls his sense of 'the silent wilderness' as 'something great and invincible' yet, paradoxically, 'like evil or truth' (*HD*, p.33). The two words become ironically synonymous. As the journey proceeds, he claims 'The inner truth is hidden – luckily, luckily. But I felt it all the same; I felt often its mysterious stillness' (*HD*, p.49). This paradox at its centre justifies the teasing ponderousness of Conrad's style as the resounding phrases boom away into their own emptiness. Marlow tells his audience that 'the mysterious stillness' of the inner truth, 'did not in the least resemble peace' but the inner truth of the 'stillness' he can only comprehend as an inarticulate vague horror, as 'the stillness of an implacable force brooding over an inscrutable intention' (*HD*, p.48), the phrase which so exasperated F.R. Leavis.³³ Anthony Fothergill, however, suggests that 'Marlow's narrative mode seeks to render precisely that sense' . . . 'that something "means", carries import, without being able to say what quite that is'. And contrary to Leavis, he suggests:

This atmospheric evocation of the incomprehensible becomes, paradoxically, its (meaningless) meaning and function. What Marlow perceives as the 'inscrutability' of his surroundings is the degree to which it threatens him. He is threatened because at any time his thinking about it edges him towards the brink of realizing three disturbing features about it. First, despite its otherness, he feels a 'kinship' with it; second, he cannot comprehend and therefore cannot control or contain it; and third, it, not he, is the source of power and agency.³⁴

The power of the implacable force which Marlow perceives as inscrutable and therefore threatening is a force which will ultimately severely threaten his psychic equilibrium, when he meets it embodied in Kurtz.

Symbolically, the city of Brussels, 'grass sprouting' between the stones (*HD*, p.14), is united to the death of Fresleven and the 'grass growing through his ribs' (*HD*, p.13). The coincidence of such unlikely images deepens the sense of illusion and the omnipresence of death behind the scramble for wealth. In the eloquent conclusion to Book IV of *The World as Will and Idea*, Schopenhauer contemplates the life of the animals and 'The insight presses itself upon us that life is a business, the proceeds of which are very far from covering the cost'. The aphorism is only fully interpreted when he considers human effort:

In peace, industry and trade are active, inventions work miracles, seas are navigated, delicacies are collected from all ends of the world the waves engulf thousands, all strive, some planning, others acting, the tumult is indescribable. But the ultimate aim of it all, what is it? To sustain ephemeral and tormented individuals through a short-span of time.³⁵

Cupidity and sexual generation are related expressions of this blind will. Kurtz, himself, later gives Marlow 'some reason to infer that it was his impatience of comparative poverty that drove him out there' (*HD*, p.108). Colonialism, important though it is as an object of revulsion for Conrad, is the symptom of the blind will's operation in life. For the man who has read his Schopenhauer, the 'tumult' already seems deathly, the 'planning' in Brussels cursory, the 'acting' when he reaches the Congo lethargic and pointless.

Marlow symbolically links his mental impressions of his Brussel's interview, the start of his Congo quest, to both pagan and Christian traditions of a journey to the underworld. But this is to be a revelation not of what lies beyond the world, but of what is in it. The idea scarcely needs corroborating, but again Schopenhauer confirms in parallel if he does not influence:

For the world is Hell, and the men are on the
one hand the tormented souls and on the other
the devils in it.³⁶

With ironic self-importance, Marlow links himself, also, to historical parallels of ordeals, which proved dangerous or fatal to the protagonist. He is presented as a nineteenth-century Everyman, a composite of Western culture as Kurtz is to be later on, with images and references influenced by his cultural heritage. Yet his multiplicity of literary and historical association can also be understood as an attempt to elicit some purely relevant and personal meaning from his experience, a struggle to find some truth, a struggle which leads to his frustrated assertion of ego, 'I have a voice, too, and for good or evil mine is the speech that cannot be silenced' (*HD*, p.52). They are words which reveal Marlow's protesting desire for some possibility of moral certitude, of truth; a possibility which his two earlier claims, the 'incomprehension' of an experience which 'we could not understand because we were too far and could not remember' (*HD*, p.51) and, 'it is impossible to convey the life sensation of any given epoch of one's existence – that which makes its truth, its meaning – its subtle and penetrating essence' (*HD*, p.39), both deny. The inherent sense of flux and contradiction underlying Marlow's narration, create a very powerful sense of unease and uncertainty in the work. As in his much later tale, *The Shadow Line* (1917), also a story of darkness, and, as in the first Marlow story,

‘Youth’ (1902), the narrator presents himself as crossing some frontier of knowledge in his experience, and now, afterwards, unable to convey what it was like to realise it for the first time. Marlow has, after all, presented himself as not having any illusion to lose; yet his confidence in his self-sufficiency is precisely what is to be challenged by his descent into the abyss. He must descend alone since ‘we live, as we dream – alone . . .’ (*HD*, p.39) unlike Dante who in his descent into the abyss is able to take Virgil for his guide. Only late in the story, when he himself almost enters the world of shades, does he for one moment take Kurtz as his guide. Marlow must face a reality of darkness alone, a reality which provides him with a shattering test to the endurance of his human identity, to the value of his every thought and act as described in a letter to Cunninghame Graham of January 1898:

There is no morality, no knowledge and no hope; there is only the consciousness of ourselves which drives us about a world that, whether seen in a convex or a concave mirror, is always but a vain and floating appearance (*LL I*, p.226).

The sceptical, cavalier-type banter which Marlow adopts to recount his memories of the Fresleven incident, the payment of the ‘cannibal’ crew with pieces of brass wire, and the lack of restraint exhibited by Kurtz, have the effect of distancing the reality of the appalling impact of enterprises such as the Trading Company on both the land of Africa and its inhabitants. Phrases such as ‘whacked the old nigger’ (*HD*, p.13) involve no direct indictment of Fresleven, no overt judgement, no criticism, just the implication that Fresleven lacked any internalised moral resources with which he could govern his conduct when police restraint was removed. The fact that the ‘cannibal’ crew were paid

wages of pieces of wire which in their situation were useless to them is treated also by Conrad with sceptical banter. Marlow claims ironically:

Unless they swallowed the wire itself, or made loops of it to snare the fishes with, I don't see what good their extravagant salary could be to them. I must say it was paid with a regularity worthy of a large and honourable trading company. (*HD*, p.59)

Although the double irony of the 'ethical' situation, a crew who are 'cannibals' and an 'honourable' company which is blatantly fraudulent, is highlighted by the detached tone, Marlow makes no direct moral criticism either of cannibalism or company exploitation. The important effect of the sardonic tone, is to underline the restraint of the savage crew, in comparison to Fresleven's and Kurtz's blatant lack of restraint.

As Marlow's ship approaches Africa, like the archetypal quester he experiences a sense of loneliness and alienation. Understanding surrenders to sight which renders the events as not only hostile, 'dangerous surf', 'banks of rotting mud', 'waters thickened with slime' (*HD*, p.20) but touched also, with 'incomprehensible (. .) insanity'. A French man-of-war was firing into a continent where, it was claimed, a camp of 'enemies', natives, was hidden. Marlow's ironic claim, 'there was a sense of lugubrious drollery in the sight' (*HD*, p.20) reflects the abiding sense of unreality, as Conrad was to express it much later in a letter of 1919 to Sir Hugh Clifford; 'In human affairs the comic and the tragic jostle each other at every step' (*LL II*, p.217).

Though his bored scepticism acts as a kind of protection for Marlow, he is also, like other visitors to the underworld, seriously and increasingly in need of human food, that is, some point of positive sympathy or pleasure. He tries recurrently to find some point of reference that will offer relief from the delusions around him, 'something natural

that had its reason, that had a meaning' (*HD*, p.19), that was 'true' (*HD*, p.20); the sound of the surf and the 'intense energy and movement' (*HD*, p.20) of the natives in their boats, 'black fellows' who were perfectly adapted to their needs and habits with surrounding nature. In effect, he seeks respite in the reality of 'nature' uncontaminated by the bad faith of the European enterprise. Yet, as his journey proceeds, the 'truth' of his perception of the reality of nature is also questioned. The forest is not only 'great, expectant, mute' (*HD*, p.38) it is also a place of 'lurking death', 'hidden evil', 'with a profound darkness of its heart' (*HD*, p.47). Marlow's inconclusive perception of the 'truth' of the forest's reality, that it is either 'an appeal' or 'a menace' (*HD*, p.38) represents the indeterminacy of moral implication, an indeterminacy which becomes ever more apparent to him as his quest proceeds; 'The inner truth is hidden – luckily, luckily. But I felt it all the same' (*HD*, p.49).

His more usual resource for survival is his belief that he is really no part of the scene. Irony, as in Nietzsche, is a means of turning loneliness into isolation and Marlow increasingly insists on his aloofness. Hence, he claims that he was confronted by the stark reality, the truth of 'the merry dance of death and trade' (*HD*, p.20) immediately he arrived at the first company station. If he interprets the scene as a Dantean 'Inferno' (*HD*, p.24), like Virgil in Canto IV, stressing the horror of memories of 'black shadows of disease', 'black shapes (. . .) in all the attitudes of pain, abandonment, and despair (. . .) had withdrawn to die' (*HD*, p.24), the imagery continues his sense of being on a voyage to another world in which he has no part. If he is like Dante, then he at least knows that he does not belong in the hell he is visiting. He can look accurately at the souls in torment, 'black shapes' which like discarded tools had become 'inefficient', 'and

were then allowed to crawl away and rest' (*HD*, p.24). What most disturbs him however, appears to be his memory of the 'rascally grin' of the guard, who seemed to take him 'into partnership in (. . .) exalted trust. After all, I also was a part of the great cause of these high and just proceedings' (*HD*, p.23). Irony is directed at himself. By so doing, he reveals, however, a deepening awareness of his own hypocritical involvement in the torture chamber created by European 'enterprise'. 'I stood horror-struck' (*HD*, p.25) is the one direct account Marlow gives of his inner response to this 'gloomy circle of Inferno' (*HD*, p.24). The horror is that of a man who had intended to remain only a visitor but keeps meeting startling parodies of his own belief in the value of order and efficiency. The chief accountant, for example, had apparently managed to remain ordered and controlled, keeping his books in 'apple-pie order' (*HD*, p.26). Yet this control appears to have been achieved by the atrophy of any responsibility for the surrounding cruelty. Trust in the means becomes mere indifference to ends.

Marlow recalls his initial response of approval to the accountant's obsession with the facts of 'correctness'; his ordered attire and meticulous accounts, reading them as revelation of an inner admirable quality of 'backbone (. . .) of character' (*HD*, p.26). Only by ignoring the ignorable can he survive. "The groans of this sick person," he said, "distract my attention. And without that it is extremely difficult to guard against clerical errors in this climate" (*HD*, p.27). The accountant's efficiency serves as a psychological buffer, against impact from and insight into the suffering which surrounds him. Efficiency has become a disguise for unprincipled action. Just so, however, later on Marlow himself will fastidiously avoid the blood of the man on board the boat killed by a native spear. Marlow sees work as a restraining force, not as an end in itself. He claims

'I don't like work' (*HD*, p.41) but recognizes its value lies in the commitment to and identification with a role or calling which gives a man the chance to find his own inborn strength, 'the innate strength' (*HD*, p.70) to restrain the onslaught of private fears. The accountant, also, has such beliefs, at least by implication, yet seems to another honest worker to become a part of the nightmarish futility of the whole enterprise.

At the start of his quest, Marlow's morality and point of view are the unquestionable, conventional, Victorian concepts of honour, integrity, discipline and the value of hard work, though expressed as criticism of a world which is not observing them. But Marlow repeatedly claims that his principle of action, in a world without real value, is work, which implicitly raises the issue of what purpose such work really serves. At first the argument is personal; work gives you the chance 'to find yourself (. . .) what no other man can know' (*HD*, p.41). That is, it provides the consciousness of ourselves. But it is a value which Marlow is forced to question, as his quest leads him further into the heart of darkness. For he becomes aware that the work ethic inevitably involves one in the surrounding corruption because, even worse, it is really a saving illusion, hiding the inner reality, the 'inner truth' (*HD*, p.49). Yet if those who journey into peril, regarded by the Brussels' doctor as sheer madness, are inspired by greed rather than vision, the ironic use of 'pilgrim' throughout may imply that there is also an authentic use of the term. That would be to justify Marlow's initial appeal to the 'unselfish belief in the idea', the alternative idea of the explorer's voyage undertaken in the interests of truth.

Gradually, the name Kurtz is introduced as the claimant to this role by the efficient clerk, first, as his unseen ally, then by the manager of the Central Station, as an 'exceptional man' and then by the unidentified 'first class agent' as 'a prodigy'. The

devil's advocate who equally praises but evidently despises Kurtz's claim of secular missionary is only a "papier-maché" Mephistopheles', of such insignificance, that Marlow 'could poke (my) finger through him' (*HD*, p.37); his evil of little threat to the quester. It is he, however, who mockingly cites Kurtz's lofty aim to be a worthy 'emissary of pity, and science, and progress' (*HD*, p.36). The manager, whose self-congratulatory smile reveals he has learnt only the lesson he preaches and claims, 'Men who come out here should have no entrails' (*HD*, p.31), still refers to Kurtz as a man of lofty ideals, a special man, whose claim was that 'each station should be like a beacon on the road to better things (. . .) for humanising, improving, instructing' (*HD*, p.47). The brickmaker adds to this chorus a traditional, imperialist viewpoint; 'we want for the guidance of the cause intrusted to us by Europe (. . .) higher intelligence, wide sympathies, a singleness of purpose' (*HD*, p.36). Marlow's response to his aunt's earlier glorification of his work with the Company, that he would be 'something like an emissary of light, something like a lower sort of apostle', had been 'to hint that the Company was run for profit'. He excuses her with the silent comment 'there had been a lot of such rot let loose in print and talk' (*HD*, p.18). Marlow can, therefore, invoke his own assumptions about Kurtz to squash the agent's illicit reading of the Company's private correspondence; 'when Mr Kurtz (. . .) is General Manager, you won't have the opportunity' (*HD*, p.37). His choice of 'nightmare' at this stage is to ally himself with the idealised Kurtz. As compared with the sordid hypocrisy and rapacious materialism of the trading station's gang of the 'fleshy devil', Kurtz seems to offer some hope of meaning and moral purpose.

Marlow instinctively allows a misconception to remain, that he is of Kurtz's 'gang of virtue' (*HD*, p.36) although he does not outrightly lie to the bricklayer. It is a misconception, however, which in his present state of mind he is forced to defend as though it were a lie:

You know I hate, detest, and can't bear a lie, not because I am straighter than the rest of us, but simply because it appals me. There is a taint of death, a flavour of mortality in lies – which is exactly what I hate and detest in the world – what I want to forget. It makes me miserable and sick, like biting something rotten would do (*HD*, pp.38-39).

In terms of what is to happen later, it is significant that Conrad gives Marlow his first extended self-reflection since the start of the narration at the point where we first realise how important Kurtz is to become. He lies on Kurtz's behalf because Kurtz is to become, in effect, a lie, which forces on Marlow, at last, the truth that the 'unselfish' belief in the 'idea' is itself a probable delusion. The Romance journey becomes not an ever-developing progress into truth but an unravelling of even those 'truths' with which Marlow had started. Conrad claimed the relativity of truth in a letter of 1895 to Edward Garnett; 'truth is no more mortal than any other delusion' (*LL I*, p.174). Marlow is never able to feel certain that the 'truth of things' (*HD*, p.19) for which he searches is not an illusion. As Schopenhauer claims, 'the immediately given reality is a deceptive glimmer, a dream of lost souls, and a veil that obscures true reality and is destined to be torn away' (Simmel, p.18). What for Gissing's Peak had been a primary assumption is for Schopenhauer and Conrad's Marlow a tragic discovery.

The turbulent emotions which sweep through Marlow are his present response to his recollections, not only of his 'pretence', his tacit lie to the brickmaker, but, more

importantly, to his later involvement with Kurtz, the real not the idealized Kurtz his imagination had been fed with. The strength of his emotions forces him to break the continuity of his account, aggressively to challenge his listeners aboard the 'Nellie', with the question, 'Do you see him? Do you see anything?' (*HD*, p.39). In his anxiety to convey his experiences, his desire to believe that his journey to rescue Kurtz should have been worthwhile and his later disillusion with it, he is faced with the difficulty of communication. Unlike Dante in the *Inferno*, 'so heavy and full of sleep'³⁷ when he leaves the true path in his own dark wood, Kurtz cannot play the role of Virgil for Marlow. Such values as Marlow holds, he has to define to himself and maintain alone, despite his initial yearning that Kurtz might be his mentor. The singleness of the experience of living in an era when philosophical voices, even when in opposition, seemed to substantiate individualism as all that was left, when earlier notions of credal consensus had collapsed, created for many writers in the nineteenth-century a very acute sense of 'aloneness'.

The symbolic third stage of Marlow's journey he describes as 'like travelling back to the earliest beginning of the world'. Again, the narrative idea of quest progress as the forward momentum, is described as 'like travelling back' (*HD*, p.48). He is to struggle with the Schopenhauerian 'will', 'the dark fate of being inaccessible to intellectual cognition and articulation' (Simmel, p.xxxi). The often criticised over-statement of the style really belongs to this third section of the book and intensifies, properly, the sense of approaching the unutterable though central silence, the attempt to articulate which drives Marlow into his dangerous oxymorons. Marlow's understanding of and thought about reality has become very different from that of the metaphoric 'silly little bird' who had

been 'charmed' by the snake' (*HD*, p.12) and attracted by thoughts of adventure. He now feels both a spiritual and physical exile. The origin of the word 'pilgrim' in the Latin, 'peregrinus' implies a wanderer, even a stranger. The result of exploration is to leave the traveller not so much a citizen of the world as the man belonging nowhere, separated from home by what he has found abroad. Marlow is more like Gulliver in his final state.

The steamer, we are told, toiled along slowly on the edge of a black and 'incomprehensible frenzy' (*HD*, p.51). Marlow's struggle with the instinctive fears of the past, dread buried deep in his unconscious but becoming increasingly powerful as his quest proceeds, must be battled against with all the strength of his conscious and rational aversions. It is a battle as fierce as any quester's battle with his devil. For this devil of buried instincts presents far more of a threat to Marlow's psychic equilibrium than did the 'fleshy devil' of greed which he merely despised. The fear is that of Darwin's sight of the savages of Tierra del Fuego:

Viewing such men, one can hardly make oneself believe they are fellow-creatures, and inhabitants of the same world. It is a common subject of conjecture what pleasure in life some of the less gifted animals can enjoy: how much more reasonably the same question may be asked with respect to these barbarians!³⁸

That fear of cannibalism, which haunted Darwin, is used by Conrad to signal the censored fears of Marlow's mind, that the incomprehensible blacks might not actually be so far in their motives from the European 'pilgrims'. Qualities attributed to the 'savages' are shared by the civilized.

The wild noises of the Africans hidden in the forest force him to acknowledge in his integrity a kind of deep-down recognition and kinship:

It was ugly enough, but if you were man enough you would admit to yourself there was in you just the faintest trace of response to the terrible frankness of that noise, a dim suspicion of there being a meaning in it which you – you so remote from the night of the first ages – could comprehend. (*HD*, pp.51-2)

In his first encounter with them he had admired the Africans' unity with their environment as they rode the waves but this new experience threatens his security about his categories of judgement. His increasing sense of unreality, the 'dream-sensation that pervaded all my days' (*HD*, p.59) is shattered only by his sympathetic identification with the 'cannibal' crew who have become his fellow workers. He now recognises that his fidelity to work had not only given him the means by which he could realise his 'own inborn strength' but had also, for him, provided 'surface-truth enough (. . .) to save a wiser man' (*HD*, p.52) from knowing the truth of the darkness of his inner reality. Freud, in a discussion of the significance of work, claims; 'No other technique for the conduct of life attaches the individual so firmly to reality as laying emphasis on work'. Not only does it attach man to 'reality', acting as a veil which cloaks the truth of the 'inner' dark reality but, for Freud, it is also a positive 'path to happiness'.³⁹ Marlow's work, his steering to 'get the tin-pot along' (*HD*, p.52) saves him from the dark aspect, the fascination of evil which he finds in the hidden 'reality', the hidden 'truth' in the heart of darkness. In his quest for truth, Marlow is linked not only to the archetypal questers of the underworld but to questers of the unconscious like Freud and Jung, who claims, 'the dark aspects' are still there 'in reality' in 'the unconscious'.⁴⁰

When Marlow thinks that Kurtz, who has become his symbolic goal, may be dead, he experiences a sense of alienation, as if he had been 'robbed of a belief or had

missed my destiny in life' (*HD*, p.68). His bitter disappointment was that he would not hear Kurtz's words, his voice, for he had sustained himself, in part, by a qualified sympathetic identification with Kurtz and his residual idealism. In effect, Marlow reaches his symbolic goal, only to discover 'very little more than a voice' (*HD*, p.69) and actually to hear more than enough of Kurtz's egotistical claims of possession. Marlow's eventual recognition of the sinister, impenetrable depths of Kurtz's egoism drives him to challenge the self-complacency of those who cannot see that Kurtz's actions, like the egotistical actions of the pilgrims, the brickmaker and the manager, are demonstrations of some obscure and awful attribute of human nature, an inherent, primeval 'attribute' which Jung refers to as not being so very far under the surface as we like to think; 'Man's own hidden and apparently harmless "shadow" has qualities whose dangerousness exceeds his wildest dreams' (*FA*, p.147). For Schopenhauer, who postulates the doctrine of existence as will, Marlow's awful attributes of human nature, Jung's 'shadow', are perceived as the 'reality that rests in itself' (Simmel, p.18), the core of being, 'the dark fate of being' which 'cannot be elucidated and cannot be made accessible to our rationality and, therefore, is unspeakably frightening to the point of being unbearable to a metaphysical sentiment' (Simmel, p.47). His belief that will is 'the absolute One [which] does not have anything outside itself to quench its thirst and to put an end to its ceaseless quest', a quest which 'cannot have a definitive goal', turns egoism into an expression of will which can never be satisfied, for 'will as the absolute reality of being can only satisfy its absolute longing as a whole and never through a part alone' (Simmel, pp.43-44). 'The natural and logical consequence of the individualization of will into a specific ego, is that this ego wants everything for itself (. . .) and the more

robust ego will interfere with someone else's sphere of will, therefore engendering evil' (Simmel, p.106). Schopenhauer's interpretation of the ego as unquenchable, 'wanting everything for itself' and thereby, 'engendering evil', can be seen as an apt description of the ego of Conrad's Kurtz. Marlow recounts how Kurtz egotistically asserted 'everything belonged to him' and how the 'powers of darkness claimed him for their own' (*HD*, p.70) as his insatiable, instinctive appetite overwhelmed all conscious restraint. The all pervasive egoism Marlow encounters on his journey towards the heart of darkness, the egotistical instincts of individuality, the drive for freedom from all restraint, is the egoism Schopenhauer claims as the 'natural and logical consequence of the individualization of will into a specific ego' (Simmel, p.106).

Marlow claimed, 'All Europe contributed to the making of Kurtz' (*HD*, p.71), a man ironically of Arnoldian culture but Conrad, in effect, denies the Arnoldian faith in the ability of the man of culture to carry 'from one end of society to the other, the best knowledge, the best ideas of their time'.⁴¹ The recollection of his experiences of disintegrating order, custom and morality lead Marlow to assert 'without a policeman (. . .) no warning voice of a kind neighbour (. . .) whispering of public opinion (. . .) you must fall back upon your own innate strength, upon your own capacity for faithfulness' (*HD*, p.70). His words, like Jung's 'The shadow is only waiting for a favourable opportunity to re-appear' (*FA*, p.147), attempt to communicate a self-challenging, in effect, a self-disintegrating insight, into what his quest reveals, the vulnerability of man's personal and communal identity before the destructive inner 'reality that rests in itself', the Schopenhauerian 'core of being' that cannot be ordered (Simmel, p.19 and p.47).

Marlow's initial rage and contempt in his disillusion with Kurtz as guide through the wilderness is to undergo a transformation. His deliberate obscurity, his anxious piety, can be seen as a form of self-defence, in his struggle to avoid awareness of the disturbing primitive darkness of his consciousness, into which Kurtz has cast a shadow. His appeal to the values of 'faithfulness' and 'devotion (. . .) to (. . .) back breaking business of work' (*HD*, p.71) is intermixed with anxiety about the ominous nature of his experience. His professed values of duty and decency, which at times he claims sustain him, would appear shallow and vulnerable if they were not the result of his tense battle with the demons raised in his mind by Kurtz. It is a truth which Marlow can only claim for himself and for that occasion, if we are to accept the sceptical view expressed by Conrad, in a letter of 1895 to Edward Noble:

No man's light is good to any of his fellows (. . .)
That's my view of life – a view that rejects all
formula, dogmas and principle of other people's
making. These are only a web of illusions to me.
Another man's truth is only a dismal lie to me. (*LL I*,
p.184)

It is a view which probably explains the irony of Kurtz's painting of 'the blindfolded (women) carrying a lighted torch' (*HD*, p.36).

The process of self-defence in Marlow seems to accompany that of self-discovery; 'I am not trying to excuse or even explain – I am trying to account to myself for – for Mr. Kurtz' (*HD*, p.71). But this initial exposition soon retracts into appalled criticism; what is wrong with Kurtz is that 'he had no restraint' (*HD*, P.73), 'he was hollow at the core' (*HD*, p.83), 'avid of lying fame, of sham distinction' (*HD*, p.98). In his discussion of the result of the over-riding egotistical impulse in man, the reactionary thinker Max Nordau claims, 'he who places pleasure above discipline, and impulse above

self-restraint, wishes not for progress, but for retrogression to the most primitive animality'.⁴² Kurtz's retrogression to 'primitive animality', his surrender to 'the whisper' which 'had proved irresistibly fascinating' (*HD*, p.83) is realised by Marlow, when the ornamental balls on the poles around Kurtz's house are revealed as human heads. Marlow himself had become aware of the whisper of the wilderness as he 'penetrated deeper into the heart of darkness' (*HD*, p.50) and he, too, had responded, although his was only 'the faintest trace of a response (. . .) a dim suspicion of there being a meaning in it' (*HD*, pp.51-52). His response arises from the unconscious level to which Kurtz has already descended and to which he unconsciously appeals in Marlow, the level of unrestrained violence. It is this identification of his unconscious self with Kurtz's that leads Marlow to affirm his support for Kurtz; 'It was ordered I should never betray him – it was written I should be loyal to the nightmare of my choice' (*HD*, p.92).

Marlow wants both to protect Kurtz from outright condemnation, and hence he is 'beguiled', and yet to preserve a sense of values, the existence of which, however, goes merely into the adjectives, 'unlawful soul', 'permitted aspirations' (*HD*, p.95). Marlow is no easy Bohemian relativist, yet when put to extremes he has, in fear, to turn law and what is permitted into assertions that cannot be made more specific.

His recollection of the emaciated Kurtz, struggling back to join his savage followers, convinces the reader that Kurtz did, indeed, live beyond the limits; 'I saw the inconceivable mystery of a soul that knew no restraint, no faith, and no fear, yet struggling blindly with itself' (*HD*, pp.95-96). The force of Marlow's adverb 'blindly', underlines the impossibility of Kurtz's seeing, discerning, with the rational truth of 'surface reality', that his actions were determined through and with the force of

mysterious and irresistible impulses, the Schopenhauerian inner being of will, 'unitary will, inaccessible to intellectual cognition and articulation' (Simmel, p.xxxi). In the egotistical power of his illusions of godhead, it seemed to Marlow that Kurtz 'had kicked himself loose of the earth' (*HD*, p.95). Yet Marlow's loyalty to the nightmare of his choice leads him to the spontaneous ethical impulse of struggling with Kurtz's unlawful, 'mad' soul and 'for my sins' going 'through the ordeal of looking into it myself' (*HD*, p.95). There is a hint of Dante's *Purgatory*, after the earlier *Inferno*, in Conrad's choice of the words 'struggled', 'sins', 'ordeal', but there is also an analogy with Christian's battle with Apollyon, in Bunyan's archetypal quest, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, and with Augustine's battle with his own soul in *The Confessions*. In his soul's agonised struggle, Augustine's faith enabled him to decry 'Things so sordid and so shameful',⁴³ but Kurtz's soul struggles 'blindly with itself' as it battles with the inimical contradiction inherent in its recognition of 'both the diabolical love and the unearthly hate of the mysteries it had penetrated' (*HD*, p.98). In his combat with the darkness of Kurtz's psyche, Marlow's realization that Kurtz is struggling with a darkness which he cannot penetrate because he either cannot or will not acknowledge its existence leads him to affirm, 'his (Kurtz's) was an impenetrable darkness' (*HD*, p.99). The novella's title has many different points of identification but one of them is certainly the character of Kurtz who has the constant capacity to evade the truth of his being and Marlow can only listen as Kurtz contrives 'to hide in the magnificent folds of eloquence – the barren darkness of his heart' (*HD*, p.98). Kurtz's understanding of his darkness, however, comes to him not slowly, like Marlow's, but suddenly, as if in a revelation, a revelation heroically claimed by Marlow as Kurtz's 'supreme moment of complete knowledge' (*HD*, p.100).

The detail in which Marlow remembers his recollected sight at that moment of Kurtz's 'expression of sombre pride, of ruthless power, of craven terror – of an intense and hopeless despair' (*HD*, p.99), reinforces his recognition not only of the irreconcilability of the emotions which Kurtz revealed but, more importantly, of the irreconcilability of the nature of human reality, of the dark force of irrational will with a surviving desire for the rational. That Kurtz's revelation had an immediate and dramatic effect is apparent in his tone of voice for his whisper of awe is in dramatic contrast to Marlow's description of it, ringing 'deep to the very last' (*HD*, p.98). Unadorned, unembellished, in contrast to Kurtz's usual discourse, the 'magnificent folds of eloquence', Kurtz's penetration to the truth of his darkness is rendered as a whisper; 'The horror! The horror!' (*HD*, p.100). It is less a confession of guilt than a sudden realisation of what has taken possession of his life. In his reflections on Schopenhauer, Simmel claims, 'Schopenhauer sees in the abhorrence of life the tip of the iceberg of horror which fills some natures in the face of brute existence' (Simmel, p.6). That 'brute existence' reveals not only the absolute non-rationality of man's dark force of will but also the dark force of the Darwinian 'flood of unrestrained instinct'.⁴⁴ The reality of a Schopenhauerian unsatiated will can never be satisfied and therefore guarantees that man can never find peace in the world. The reality of a world of Darwinian random variation makes the selection of the fittest act ruthlessly in the struggle for assertion and ascendancy. What makes mankind tragic, claims Conrad, is not that they are 'the victims of nature; it is that they are conscious of it' (*LL I*, p.226).

The distance Marlow wants to maintain, emphasised by his insistence that the listeners knew he 'had not much time (. . .) because he was helping the engine driver' and

was struggling with 'ratchet drills' (*HD*, p.99), takes him so far as to absent himself from Kurtz's burial. The visual effect of the paragraph is striking:

But I am of course aware that next day the
pilgrims buried something in a muddy hole.
'And then they very nearly buried me.
'However, as you can see, I did not go to
join Kurtz there and then (*HD*, p.100).

Distance is followed by recovered analogy with Kurtz. Marlow, who feared the taint of death in life, manages a kind of conversion in the experience of dying without the act of it. The record of his own near burial is the only single line paragraph other than direct speech in the book and the voice that continues is that of the resurrected man whose perspective is changed. For in his struggle with death, Marlow had explored the landscape of his own self, as a pilgrim or errant knight explores the wilderness of his own soul. Interpreted in terms of his personal journey of discovery, the comments that follow reveal his vision of a world akin to Kurtz's final whispers; 'a vision of greyness without form' (*HD*, p.101), 'some inconceivable world that had no hope in it and no desire' (*HD*, p.102); 'life is that mysterious arrangement of merciless logic for a futile purpose. The most you can hope from it is some knowledge of yourself – that comes too late' (*HD*, p.100). What Georg Simmel criticises as the basis of Schopenhauer's pessimism might fairly be attributed to Marlow's perception at this moment:

The cornerstone of metaphysical pessimism – the unavoidable futility of a world-will which seems to take away any sense or meaning from existence, must be absolutely and uniformly general, and dissolves all specific forms in its oneness – cannot be a basis for value judgements, because it is an *idem per idem* that predicates the uselessness of the will by eliminating use and end in the process of construing the concept of will. (Simmel, p.50)

But it is precisely the perception, that the value, truthfulness, might lie in the provisionality of all value judgements that Marlow is given by Kurtz's death. Marlow freed by his own death recalls how he 'found with humiliation that probably [he] would have nothing to say' were he to be given 'the last opportunity for pronouncement' (*HD*, p.101). 'Humiliation' because Kurtz had 'something to say. He said it (. . .) he had summed up – he had judged' (*HD*, p.101). Marlow remembers with admiration how Kurtz had expressed:

Some sort of belief; it had candour, it had conviction, it had a vibrating note of revolt in its whisper, it had the appalling face of a glimpsed truth (*HD*, p.101).

In contrast to Marlow's own 'tepid scepticism' – his neutral 'vision of greyness without form', a meaningless existence in which he was unable to make any value judgement, Kurtz's positive judgement, 'The horror!', is interpreted by Marlow as:

An affirmation, a moral victory, paid for by innumerable defeats, by abominable terrors, by abominable satisfactions. But it was a victory! (*HD*, p.101)

The ambivalence of his feelings towards Kurtz is apparent in his selection of specifically value terms to describe him; Kurtz was both a man of 'abominable satisfactions' and a man whose 'supreme moment of complete knowledge' was 'a moral victory!' In the affirmation of his ego, Kurtz had pronounced judgement on the primeval darkness of 'abominable satisfactions'. He had glimpsed the true reality of brute nature, penetrated 'all the hearts that beat in the darkness' (*HD*, p.101) to reveal 'truth stripped of its cloak of time' (*HD*, p.52). It was a moral victory because he was man enough, as he faced death, to affirm the truth of his experience of the horror of brute existence, the nature of

unrestrained instinct. Yet as Conrad made clear, in a letter he wrote to Arthur Symons in August 1908, 'Mr. Kurtz had' – 'a heart of darkness' and an 'unlawful soul' (*LL II*, p.73). It is the exploration of Kurtz's 'heart of darkness', the darker side of human nature, which Conrad attempts to explore and morally question. Although Marlow's repeated use of the adverb 'perhaps' suggests the impossibility of fully understanding because of the incompleteness of experience, since he, unlike Kurtz, 'had not made that last stride' (*HD*, p.101), he manifestly admires the kind of awareness and exploration of self which he perceived in Kurtz's judgement.

The every-day reality of the immediately given world of conventional life, its rational, civilized values, its ideal of work, duty and restraint, which for Marlow had presented a kind of precarious resolution, ironically, on his return to Brussels, appears 'an irritating pretence' (*HD*, p.102). He finds:

The bearing of commonplace individuals going about their business in the assurance of perfect safety, was offensive to [him] like the outrageous flauntings of folly in the face of a danger it is unable to comprehend (*HD*, p.102).

In his perception of the 'sepulchral city' as unreal, absurd, Marlow maintains Kurtz's deceptive pretence of idealism with a series of untruths. His sense that people in their stupid ignorance did not understand life's real precariousness leads him to respond with lies and evasions to those who question him about the 'truth' of Kurtz's life and death. Marlow consciously lies in order to maintain the self-delusion of a civilization which he has discovered is itself a lie. Against the people 'whose knowledge of life was to [him] an irritating pretence' (*HD*, p.102) his only defence, he finds, is a lie.

Marlow's visit to Kurtz's Intended, 'to surrender personally all that remained of him with me' (*HD*, p.105), ambiguous words, serves to intensify rather than diminish his analogy with Kurtz. As he approaches the house Kurtz is again present to him; 'he lived there before me (. . .) as much as he had ever lived' and he 'seemed to enter the house with me' (*HD*, p.105). Confronted by the girl herself, however, he feels the need to protect her from the truth he dramatically envisions as entering 'in an invading and vengeful rush' (*HD*, p.10-5). His lack of irritation with her ignorance is in sharp contrast to his contempt for the complacent individuals in the sepulchral city who, he admits, 'could not possibly know the things I knew'. His reaction to their ignorance had been a desire to laugh 'in their faces' (*HD*, p.102). It is not simply that he protects the lady from danger in the role of chivalrous knight. Marlow suffers the challenging tension between the dark truth acknowledged in his visions, and memories of Kurtz, and his compassionate recognition that the need of the girl is to remain ignorant of his own dark knowledge. His final lie, whilst a denial of the truth, yet saves the girl her illusions, the dangerous idealism inherent in love itself, 'something you can set up and bow down before, and offer a sacrifice to' (*HD*, p.10); it enables him to feel not only compassion for the girl's suffering, but also to see that her illusions are necessary for her survival and that of civilised society in general. Although Marlow claims that he, 'alone' would have to keep back the vengeful rush of memories and knowledge 'for the salvation of another soul' (*HD*, p.105), it is the faith in her own 'saving illusions' (*HD*, p.108) which defends her from the 'triumphant darkness', a darkness from which Marlow 'could not even defend [himself]' (*HD*, p.109). To maintain the Intended's 'saving illusions', he

ironically finds himself supporting her practice of idealising, whilst believing that idealism generates dangerous illusions, and dangerous excesses.

Marlow at the end has to exist simultaneously in two types of reality, the ethical imperative and the metaphysical reality of darkness. The Narrator describes how Marlow 'sat apart, indistinct and silent, in the pose of a meditating Buddha' (*HD*, p.111). Journeys bring knowledge but it is knowledge itself which is redefined here as meditation, a form of knowing that ends not in further discourse but in pure silence. The listening narrator has himself realised that much, as he comments on the transformation of the Thames into a road to nowhere; it 'seemed to lead into the heart of an immense darkness' (*HD*, p.111). Explorers' narratives have always been divided between different motives, to bring the hidden to light, to increase the collection of knowledge on the one hand and on the other an economically driven motive to increase, instead, personal and national wealth. The very title of Sir Walter Raleigh's account of Guiana in 1596 shows the constant need of the explorer to combine the two, making his capacity to pursue knowledge dependent on his capacity to convince others that it is also profitable; *The Discoverie of the Large, Rich and Beautiful Empire of Guiana, with a relation of the Great and Golden City of Manoa (which the Spaniards call El Dorado)*. Conrad's 'Heart of Darkness' involves a central figure, Marlow, who is caught up in just such a process of discovery which takes him, however, to the heart of darkest Europe in the end rather than Africa. What is still darker is the centre of his own beliefs. The quest on which the 'pilgrims' were engaged, the discovery of the rich empire, is revealed not simply as wasteful and futile exploitation but an enterprise that has exposed even their ideals as

sham and delusory. It is consciously 'fin de siècle', a nemesis for the nineteenth-century journeys of intellectual exploration, which it both exemplifies and defeats.

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- ² Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*, ed. Marilyn Butler (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p.183.
- ³ Richard Jefferies, *The Story of My Heart: My Autobiography*, 4th ed. (London: Longmans Green, 1894), p.203; hereafter referred to as *SH*.
- ⁴ Thomas Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus and Selected Prose*, introd. Herbert Sussman (London: Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1970), p.182; hereafter referred to as *Sartor*.
- ⁵ Alfred, Lord Tennyson, *In Memoriam*, 1850, 'Epilogue', ll.135-37 in *Poems*.
- ⁶ *The Philosophy of Nietzsche*, ed. Geoffrey Clive (New York: Mentor Books, 1965) p.257.
- ⁷ Thomas Hardy, 'In Tenebris' ll. 1.14, in *Collected Poems* (London: Macmillan, 1965), p.154.
- ⁸ Matthew Arnold, 'Rugby Chapel', ll.85 and 86 in *Poems*, ed. Kenneth Allott (London: Longmans Green, 1965), p.448.
- ⁹ Richard Jefferies, *After London or Wild England*, intr. John Fowles (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), p.123; hereafter referred to as *AL*.
- ¹⁰ Thomas Carlyle, 'Signs of the Times', 1829, in *Selected Works, Reminiscences and Letters*, ed. Julian Symons (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1955), pp.22-3.
- ¹¹ Basil Willey, *Nineteenth-Century Studies: Coleridge to Matthew Arnold* (Harmondsworth: Chatto & Windus, 1964), p.188; hereafter referred to as *NS*.
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- ¹⁴ Edward Bulwer Lytton, *England and the English*, 1833 (London: G. Routledge & Sons, 1874), p.281.
- ¹⁵ George Gissing, *Born in Exile*, 1892, introd. Gillian Tindall (London: Hogarth Press, 1985), p.51; hereafter referred to as *BE*.
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- ¹⁷ Alfred Tennyson, 'Ulysses' ll.52 and 60-61, in *The Poetical Works* (London: Longmans Green, 1969), p.95.
- ¹⁸ Alasdair MacIntyre, 'Kant' in *A Short History of Ethics*, 1967 (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980), Ch.14, pp.190-198; hereafter referred to as MacIntyre, *Ethics*.
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- ²⁰ Peter Keating, *The Haunted Study* (London: Fontana, 1991), p.387.
- ²¹ A. MacIntyre, *Ethics*, pp.194-5.
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- ²⁵ George Gissing, *Letters to Members of his Family*, eds. Algernon and Ellen Gissing (London: Constable, 1927), pp.312, 313.
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- ²⁸ Anthony Fothergill, 'Virginia Woolf's Critical Essays', in *Modernism*, ed. Peter Faulkner (London: Methuen, 1977), p.31.
- ²⁹ Patrick Gardiner, *Schopenhauer* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1963), p.295.
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- ³⁴ Anthony Fothergill, *Open Guides to Literature, Civilization and Savagery in Heart of Darkness*, (Milton Keynes: Open University, 1989) , pp.73, 74.
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- ⁴³ Saint Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. R.S. Pine-Coffin (London: Penguin Books, 1961), p.176.
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Chapter 4

Exploration and Discovery, Darwin and Speke

The value of Darwin's *Journal* lies in its being the work of a man who is in the process of making a great discovery but has no idea yet what it is or where it is leading him. That process by which a purpose emerges in the course of the journey is much closer to a modern idea of exploration, where the result turns out to be different from the original intention. It is the life of John Hanning Speke which in its pursuit of one great objective, pursued with fortitude and an oblivion to the personal cost, fulfils the traditional idea of the quest. Speke was the successful equivalent to all the failures of discovery undertaken by the men sent out by Sir John Barrow. Felix in Jefferies' deliberately archaicising Romance sets forth to find the ruins of London and survives the dangerous event, like Speke. Marlow, more like Darwin, thinks he's going to explore darkest Africa but makes instead a discovery about the still greater darkness at the heart of everyman and especially in the drawing room of a 'civilised' Western city.

The difference lies in the shift of attention from the thrill of the physical endurance, 'the man who ate his boots', to the admiration for a purely intellectual fortitude, the persistence in tracing an idea to its causes, from the physical to the intellectual hero. When Speke had received his grave wound during his first expedition into East Africa, he still went off to fight in the Crimea and afterwards, as the *Dictionary of National Biography* puts it, 'meditated exploration in the Caucasus'.¹ He was in love with danger itself, fired by a need constantly to test himself but also inspired by the ambition to know what his own countrymen had not known before he revealed it. The

intellectual purpose was involved intimately, as with Tennyson's Ulysses, with the desire to become 'a name'. Darwin in his *Autobiography* looked back at the voyage of *The Beagle* and realised that it was not just the origin of *The Origin* but of his scientific thinking as a whole:

I have always felt that I owe to the voyage the first-real training or education of my mind.²

For all his selfless concern to follow where the idea leads him, for Darwin in the end the value of the exploration lies in the preparation and training of the individual mind. For all his neurotic obsessiveness and his desire for glory, in the end all that mattered to Speke was the discovery itself.

Charles Darwin, *Journal* (. . .) During the Voyage of HMS *Beagle*, 1839

There is in Darwin's mind when he sets out, no single objective which would give him heroic status in the intellectual world. Sir Humphrey Davy had wanted to be the Newton of chemistry³ and Darwin's fictional contemporary, Lydgate, had nurtured comparable ambitions:

we are apt to think it the finest era of the world when America was beginning to be discovered, when a bold sailor, even if he were wrecked, might alight on a new kingdom; and about 1829 the dark territories of Pathology were a fine America for a spirited young adventurer.⁴

By the end of the century, Darwin's co-discoverer of the theory of Natural Selection, Alfred Russell Wallace, could write of him that *The Origin of the Species* 'places the name of Darwin on a level with that of Newton.'⁵ Yet at the start of the journey he sees himself modestly as a naturalist with an amorphous interest largely concerned with

taxonomy, the identifying of new species and varieties, and the description of the influence of varied habitats on the flora and fauna. He goes out like Roger Hamley in *Wives and Daughters*, as described by Lady Harriet: 'a man, with a thousand fine qualifications, to make a scientific voyage, with a view to bringing back specimens of the fauna of distant lands, and so forming the nucleus of a museum'.⁶ Yet the result of the voyage was totally to change the intellectual map. The model is not that of a man who makes his discovery in a single blind moment of revelation but for whom the idea is a slow process of reflection, in quiet and at home, upon what he has already seen without realising its implications. The facts his journey revealed remained for some time too complex for him to integrate with any theory. In the *Journal* he is, in fact, more often concerned with the physical consequences of travel.

In the 'Preface' to the *Journal*, Darwin states that the *Journal* is a history of his journey of exploration, as naturalist, aboard the survey ship H.M.S. *Beagle*, during its voyage round the world. The *Journal* records, in meticulous detail, accounts of his extensive geological and natural-history observations of the countries visited. The observations were intended to increase 'the general stock of knowledge', his own aim as expressed in a letter of June, 1833 to Catherine Darwin, his sister; 'And it appears to me, that doing what "little" one can do to encrease the general stock of knowledge is as respectable an object of life as one can in any likelihood pursue'.⁷ Yet paradoxically, in the *Journal* he very modestly claims the work to be merely 'a sketch of those observations in Natural History and Geology, which I think will possess some interest for the general reader'.⁸ To his sister Caroline in April 1832 he claims his *Journal* 'is not a record of facts but of my thoughts' (*Corr*, pp.226-7). In actuality, these 'thoughts' based

on the multitude of his carefully annotated observations and the equally carefully detailed accounts of his experiments, were indeed the 'facts' which enabled him to develop his revolutionary idea.

Darwin had learnt about scientific method from Adam Sedgewick, the Cambridge Professor of Geology, whom he had accompanied on a three week field trip through Wales and, like Sedgewick, he aimed to be scientific in his approach. In *The Autobiography*, he makes explicit the principles which guided his quest for knowledge, asserting his allegiance to Bacon, claiming that he too worked inductively, from a 'wholesale' mass of empirical data; 'I worked on true Baconian principle and without any theory collected facts on a wholesale scale'.⁹

T.S. Kuhn, in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* writes of the value of early fact gathering:

early fact-gathering is a far more nearly random activity than the one that subsequent scientific development makes familiar. Furthermore, in the absence of a reason for seeking some particular form of more recondite information, early fact-gathering is usually restricted to the wealth of data that lie ready to hand.¹⁰

From *The Journal*, *The Diary*, and *The Letters*, we learn that Darwin faced many physical challenges on his journey. Sea-sickness proved to be a great burden, so severe that he was frequently confined to his hammock. A letter from Henslow, 6th February, 1832, praises Darwin's courage and fortitude; 'You have a stout heart to resist the inclination which must necessarily have come over you not to go on whilst you were in such a wretched state of sickness as you are described to have suffered' (*Corr*, I, p.199). Not only was there the trial and danger of storms at sea, but on land Darwin had often to

face a hostile environment. There was the challenge of marauding bandits, 'a traveller from Monte Video had been found dead on the road with his throat cut' (*Journal* p.58) and warring Indians, 'I thank Providence I have returned with an uncut throat' (*Corr*, p.344) or the danger of earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. However, like many young men of the nineteenth-century, Darwin looked upon a voyage of exploration as a wonderful opportunity for both adventure and the acquisition of knowledge which might further his career. He certainly hoped that a journey in pursuit of knowledge about the natural history of different areas of the world would bring him recognition in a time avid for discovery; 'a sudden thirst arose in the 1830's for massive amounts of factual material'.¹¹ The following Autobiographical entry shows that Darwin viewed the voyage as a challenge:

As far as I can judge of myself I worked to the utmost during the voyage from the mere pleasure of investigation, and from my strong desire to add a few facts to the great mass of facts in natural science. But I was also ambitious to take a fair place amongst scientific men.¹²

The distinction was maybe clearer in 1880 than it had been in 1831, but the modesty of the aim 'to add a few facts' is carefully distinguished from the quester's desire to prove himself and find 'a fair place'. The status of 'scientific men' is different from those who merely make a few additions to what is already known.

In the writing of this time, however, including *The Journal*, it was a thirsty response which motivated his entries and fired his enthusiasm; awe in the presence of wild and unfamiliar nature, a Romantic delight in the unknown. Optimistically, Darwin held on to his Romantic ideals, his quest to discover 'hidden' knowledge, his wonder

when confronted with mountain scenes, his sensual response to the grandeur of nature, especially the luxuriant beauty of the tropical forest. His joy in the luxuriousness of nature he describes in a letter to Henshaw dated May 18, 1832; 'In all its sublime grandeur – Nothing, but the reality can give any idea, how wonderful, how magnificent the scene is. I never experienced such intense delight' (*Corr*, p.237). Darwin's descriptive language, his frequent use of the adjective 'sublime', 'the sublime forest' (*Corr*, p.233), 'the sublime solitude of the forest' (*Corr*, p.249), communicates both the strangeness of the scene and its effect upon his emotions. It is the language of the young Darwin, excited language in contrast to the precise words of the practical scientist who later wrote of the three species of armadillos in Bahia Blanco, 'namely the *Dasypus minutus* or "picky", the *D.villosus* or "peludo", and the *apar*' (*Journal*, p.122). The Darwin who, when older, complained that he had lost all aesthetic pleasure in the arts, in music and in poetry, was manifestly a different man on the voyage.

The Romantic aura Darwin clearly associated with his journey may have been due to the influence of his favourite travel writer, Humboldt, for he claimed that all his 'force of impression (. . .) were taken from the vivid descriptions in the Personal Narrative' of Humboldt.¹³ (*Diary*, p.427); 'I formerly admired Humboldt, I now almost adore him; he alone gives any notion, of the feelings which are raised in the mind on first entering the Tropics' (*Corr*, p.237). The aesthetic sensibilities Darwin's language reveals, the wonder, the lure of 'sublime' nature, are akin to the sensibilities of Tennyson's Romantic literary quester, Ulysses, who embodies quest Romance in unfathomable oceans and unexplored lands and whose spirit still is:

yearning in desire
To follow knowledge like a sinking star
Beyond the utmost bounds of human thought.¹⁴

Darwin, too, embodies quest Romance in unexplored lands, explaining in a letter to Catherine of July 5th, 1832, 'I long to put my foot, where man has never trod before.'¹⁵

Yet, like the literary quester, Darwin suffered misgivings. There were the usual doubts of the traveller relying on private means and family support about drawing bills against his father's account for additional expenses as discussed in a letter to Susan dated August 3rd, 1835 (Barlow, pp.126-8), but, more importantly, doubts about his lack of skill as a scientist. He can accumulate data but where it is leading him, he remains in 1833 uncertain; 'It is disheartening work to labour with zeal & not even know whether I am going the right road' (*Corr*, pp.344-5). Though from the start he was sceptical of such mere speculation as Lamarck had offered, he also knew that to understand and interpret what he saw, he must have an idea about it in his mind; 'I have not one clear idea about cleavage, stratification, lines of upheaval – I have no books, which tell me much & what they do I cannot see.' However, in the latter part of this letter to Henshaw of March 1834, his intellectual resilience shines through, for he concludes, 'In consequence I draw my own conclusions, & most gloriously ridiculous ones they are' (*Corr*, p.370).

Both *The Journal and Correspondence* reveal that his skill and imagination as an observer and an experimentalist were constantly challenged. Not only had he to determine the significance, if any, of his fact finding but he had also to try to match the facts with theory and attempt to articulate that theory. His protestation about having 'no books' was not entirely correct for he refers on several occasions whilst aboard the

Beagle to his reading of Lyell's *Principles of Geology*, a work which set a standard of method, yet the issue here is seeing what he reads, 'I cannot apply'. The fear he expresses in a letter to J.M. Herbert is of remaining a pure accumulator of data; 'I am nothing more than a lion's provider; I do not feel at all sure, that they wi(II) not growl & finally destroy me' (*Corr.* p.320). As a collector of specimens for the learned experts at home, he fears they might, in the end, be critically dismissive of his choice. His sense of a lack of specific direction in which to guide the direction of his investigation reveals his underlying uncertainty about the credentials of his scientific thinking. These fears he expresses in a letter to Henslow:

My Geology; what little I knew, I have learnt in such a curious fashion (. . . [and] . . .) I do so wish I was a better hand at dissecting: I find I can do very little in the minute parts of structure.

What happens in the course of the voyage, however, is an increasing confidence in himself in terms of the primary image, the scientist as quester in the realm of ideas and speculative claims. For this letter to Henshaw, July 24, 1834, shows also a developing confidence in his scientific thinking and practice:

I believe I can show good reason for supposing it (the valley S. Cruz) to have been once a Northern St^s, like that of Magellan (. . .) I have already seen enough to be convinced that the present families of Corallines, as arranged by Lamarck, Cuvier &c are highly artificial (*Corr*, p.399).

Darwin discovered facts about Coralline families, which did not fit with the currently held theories presented by Lamarck and Cuvier and indeed made their arguments seem problematic. Kuhn, in his discussion of scientific revolutions claims:

Scientific training is not designed to produce the man who will easily discover a fresh approach. But so long as somebody appears with a new candidate for paradigm – usually a young man or one new to the field – the loss due to rigidity accrues only to the individual (Kuhn, p.166).

Darwin was both young and new to the field. As such, therefore, he was more likely to perceive and to explore areas of anomaly, less constrained than the older scientist by an accumulated body of interlocking theoretical and methodological beliefs.

In an earlier letter to Catherine dated July 20th, 1834, Darwin had written:

Amongst Animals, on principle I have lately determined to work chiefly amongst the Zoophytes or Coralls: it is an enormous branch of the organized world; very little known or arranged & abounding with most curious, yet simple, forms of structures (*Corr*, p.391).

The randomness of the voyage and its attendant observations, forced him to recognise a priority of interest by which to identify himself as a scientist. But the breadth of its scope also produced, by chance, a cross-referencing that was to produce incalculable results. He was to transcend the thinking of his teachers and contemporaries on a wide front. As Philip Sloan notes:

the investigation of zoophytes (coralls, etc.) began in Edinburgh was to remain a major focus of attention throughout the voyage, leading Darwin eventually to a new position in the relationship between the plant and animal kingdoms.¹⁶

Because the multitudinousness of Darwin's observations prevailed over any single line of research, because he had no one goal at which to direct his scientific exploration, he seems to have been unaware at the time that some of the facts he noted

and questioned were to prove relevant to his later great theory of evolution by natural selection. In terms of his own later theory, the chance of the *Beagle* voyage produced the environment that led to his selection among the biologists of the day as pre-eminent. Like Newman, however, he thought he was travelling in a different direction from where his intellectual process eventually took him.

Darwin had begun his scientific quest aboard the *Beagle* fully aware of the current intellectual ideas about evolution. Naturally, therefore, he viewed his findings in the intellectual background which he had absorbed from his youth. He appears to have started out on his quest journey with a belief in God's planning, a creationist's view that all the species were coeval. We learn from his *Autobiography* that he had read *Zoonomia* in which his grandfather, Erasmus Darwin, expressed his theory of evolution. Initially, Charles had been impressed by Erasmus's theories but later he found them to be too speculative, like the evolutionary theories of Lamarck. Darwin referred to Lamarck's speculative theorising when he wrote about the strange phenomenon that 'any animal should possess an organ frequently subject to be injured' (*Journal*, p.71). He continued, 'Lamarck would have been delighted with the fact, had he known it, when speculating (Philosoph. Zoolog., tome 1., p.242)', adding ironically, '(probably with more truth than usual with him) on the gradually – *acquired* blindness of the aspalax, a gnawer living underground' (*Journal*, p.71). Darwin's emphasis on the verb 'acquired', by his placing the word in italics, infers that a gradual physical adaptation of the aspalax to a new environment has taken place; there is a hint of evolutionary change. Darwin had read Lamarck's views whilst he was training for medicine at Edinburgh but he had not been totally convinced by Lamarck's theory. Indeed, as D.R. Oldroyd points out, 'Darwin had

a very low opinion of Lamarck's work, which he criticised in the strongest terms in his private correspondence'.¹⁷

In the early stages of Darwin's voyage, however, it can be seen that Darwin's views contained strong Lamarckian elements, with the assumption that varieties occurred in direct response to the environment and the effect of geographical isolation. In Maldona, Darwin discovered a prolific rodent, the tucutuco, which had adapted to tunnelling like a mole and was invariably found blind. Evidence of organic change in the tucutuco was apparent but the reasons for it could be explained in terms of survival. At this moment in the development of his ideas Darwin did not relate the tucutuco's blindness to his final, revolutionary theory of natural selection. In *The Origin of Species*, Darwin claims:

The passage from one stage of difference to another and higher stage may be, in some cases, due merely to the long-continued action of different physical conditions in two different regions; (a Lamarckian view) – but I have not much faith in this view; and I attribute the passage of a variety, from a state in which it differs very slightly from its parent to one in which it differs more, to the action of natural selection, in accumulating . . . differences of structure in certain definite directions.¹⁸

Darwin's observations were finally to lead him to the belief that disuse was the principle cause of atrophical and rudimentary organs. He considered that descent with modification could make sense of the widespread existence of rudimentary organs, ideas he considered, later, in both the *Origin* and the *Descent of Man*. He argued that organs in a rudimentary condition, such as the eyes of the tucutuco, plainly show that an early progenitor had the organs in a fully developed state. To accept that the tucutuco as a

species had been modified by organic change, change which apparently causes no 'inconvenience to the animal' (*Journal*, p.71) was to accept a fact antithetical to a belief in special creation by supernatural means, and the fixity of species. Darwin claimed that Lamarck, 'no doubt . . . would have said that the tucutuco is now passing into the state of the aspalax and proteus' (*Journal*, p.71). The phrase, 'passing into', implying an independent development on the part of the creature shows the boundary where Darwin is to quarrel with Lamarck'. If he did not think primarily in terms of older ideas of evolution, however, neither did he think in terms purely of Creation.

Whilst a student at Cambridge, Darwin was influenced by the arguments of the Rev. William Paley, the doctrine of special creation. Belief in God based on the argument from design of the universe had evolved during struggles with the Deists in the eighteenth-century and culminated in Paley's work. But although Paley interested Darwin, as his quest progressed he discovered that it became exceedingly difficult if not impossible for him to equate the evidence of his investigation with the special creationist thesis. As he became aware that the 'hidden' knowledge, the 'hidden' evidence he was bringing 'to light' seemed to suggest the modification of organisms by some as yet 'hidden' means, but not by separate supernatural acts of creation, he found himself questioning the progressionist's man-centred, Romantic evolutionism.

Only gradually did Darwin come to realise the effect of the vast periods of geological time described by Lyell upon his own field of natural history. The interest of the *Journal* lies in its being the record of a man observing more than he at the moment knows how to interpret in terms of the ideas available to him. The big new idea behind the theory of natural selection was that evolution was powered by death, the extinction of

species not adapted to the struggle for survival in a given habitat. In that he differed from Lamarck, who had argued that only specific organs of the animal subject to evolutionary doctrine, 'progressively diminished its functional capacity until it finally disappears'.¹⁹ He was also eventually to differ from Lyell who had slightly whimsically argued that, if the climate were to change, iguanadons might return to the British Isles,²⁰ like the dinosaur on Holborn Hill in Chapter I of *Bleak House*. The lucky accident of the *Beagle* voyage meant that Darwin's interest in extinct species, fossils, overlapped with his observation of living species new to him and so seen with special clarity. In a letter he wrote to Fox from the Rio Plata, November, 12-13th, 1832, he claims: 'During these last months, the only source of enjoyment, & it has been a large one, has been from Nat: History'. He continues, almost as an afterthought, 'I have principally been lucky in Geology & amongst pelagic animals. – An old piece of ambition of mine has been gratified, viz finding the remains of large extinct animals. I think some of them are new' (*Corr*, p.286).

Darwin explains in the *Journal* that at first he was much surprised by the presence of large fossils in the Pampean geological formation, fossils which seemed to bear some mysterious resemblance to their existing relatives. He notes the discovery of 'a large animal, with an osseous coat in compartments, very like that of an armadillo', significantly, in the region where the armadillo is found. He writes of this creature, the *Toxodon*, as:

Perhaps one of the strangest animals ever discovered. In size it equalled an elephant or megatherium; but the structure of its teeth, as

Mr. Owen states, proves indisputably that it was intimately related to the Gnawers, the order which at the present day includes most of the smallest quadrupeds (*Journal*, p.106).

That he considered these fossil finds and the relationship they revealed to be of great scientific importance is clear from the exclamation with which he follows his description; 'How so wonderfully are the different orders, at the present time so well separated, blended together in different points of the structure of the toxodon!' Darwin was clearly excited about the evidence he had unearthed for structural change occurring in the fauna over long periods of time. Yet, although he hinted cryptically that the phenomenon of successive related fauna in a given region was of great significance, he either chose at this moment in time to remain silent, or he failed to recognise just how significant the phenomenon was to prove in the later development of his theory of evolution by natural selection. That he was puzzling over the apparent 'mixture' of some of the specimens he observed is clear but whether their true significance became apparent only with hindsight is a matter on which Darwinian scholars appear to disagree.

In October-November of 1832, Darwin noted a moderate amount of varied distinction among animals upon a single time level, different only in their geological locations. In a rather self-deprecating letter to Henshaw, he expresses his bewilderment at a species of bird he has discovered:

A poor specimen of a bird, which to my unornithological eyes, appears to be a happy mixture of a lark pidgeon & snipe (. . .) I suppose it will turn out to be some well-known bird although it has quite baffled me (*Corr*, p.280).

The same period he wrote to Caroline, 'I am become quite devoted to Nat:History – you cannot imagine what a fine miserlike pleasure I enjoy, when examining an animal differing widely from any known genus' (*Corr*, p.278). The interest in the variability of species in the fossil record coincided with his growing awareness of the modifications a given creature had undergone in its local environment because he was engaged in a voyage, seeing different locations in succession. The mental journey in which he was beginning to be engaged depended on the physical movement to which he was subject. He was, maybe unconsciously looking for a universal law which would harmonise the different impressions the journey was producing. He noted, for example, that on La Plata the domesticated 'common cat, altered into a large and fierce animal, inhabits rocky hills' (*Journal*, p.150). Equally, he observed alteration in the flora:

It (the cardoon) occurs in these latitudes on both sides of the Cordillera (. . .) where these great beds occur nothing else can now live. Before their introduction, however, the surface must have supported, as in other parts, a rank herbage. I doubt whether any case is on record of an invasion on so grand a scale of one plant over the aborigines (*Journal*, p.150).

He noted both beetles and the kiwi with rudimentary wings. He noted the horse and ox had rudimentary toes like Buffon's pig. Later, when he visited the Galapagos Islands, he noted the variety in the species, between the different islands, both of the fauna and the flora.

In his account of 'the more interesting birds which are common on the wild plains of Northern Patagonia' (*Journal*, p.115), he observes 'that the *Struthio rhea* inhabits the country of La Plata as far as a little south of the Rio Negro' whilst the *Struthio Darwinii*

(the name it was given in honour of Darwin), the smaller of the two rheas, the petise – ‘takes its place in Southern Patagonia’ (*Journal*, p.119). He discusses his zoological discovery in a letter to Henshaw dated March 1834 from the East Falkland Island; ‘But what is of more general interest is the unquestionable (as it appears to me) existence of another species of ostrich, besides the *Struthio Rhea*’ (*Corr*, p.370). In his *Journal* he wrote, ‘It was remarked that this bird did not expand its wings when first starting at full speed, after the manner of the northern kind’ (*Journal*, p.119). In fact not until it was pointed out to him had Darwin realized that at the Rio Negro, in Northern Patagonia, there was a very rare ostrich, one the Gaucho called ‘avestrug petise’. Although one might expect that Darwin’s great interest in variation in species would have constantly alerted him to be on the look out for it, the accidental way in which he stumbled across such examples reveals that variation, although frequently noted, was not yet his single, main concern. Modern readers of the *Journal* constantly find themselves reading it in the light of *The Origin of Species* and see Darwin as almost conscious of having to resist his later theory so apparent as it now seems to us and so inconceivable to him at the time. Whilst travelling across the ancient Cordillera, for example, in an expedition to survey its geological structure, he claims he was:

Much struck with the marked difference between the vegetation of these eastern valleys and those on the Chilian side; yet the climate as well as the kind of soil is nearly the same, and the difference of longitude very trifling (*Journal*, p.394).

On his later visit to the Galapagos Archipelago, he adds a footnote to a comment on the variability of species:

This is merely an illustration of the admirable laws, first laid down by Mr. Lyell, on the geographical distribution of animals, as influenced by geological changes. The whole reasoning, of course, is founded on the assumption of the immutability of species, otherwise the difference in the species in the two regions might be considered as superinduced during a length of time (*Journal*, pp.394-5).

The footnote is extremely important, for it is the first direct hint that Darwin may be questioning the validity of the immutability of species.

He began, that is, like any scientist, according to Thomas Kuhn, by working within the accepted paradigms:

Scientists work from models acquired through education and through subsequent exposure to the literature often without quite knowing or needing to know what characteristics have given these models the status of community paradigms (Kuhn, p.46).

For Kuhn, Darwin was one of those revolutionary discoverers who altered the paradigm and the interest of the *Journal* is that the reader can see the new 'truth' slowly beginning to emerge in his mind in a kind of debate between Lamarck, whom he thinks he rejects, and Lyell, whom he thinks he agrees with. But still older paradigms persisted in his mind. When in Australia, he observed an ant clearly belonging to the same genus but to a different species from the European kind, he asked of himself the question:

Now what would the *Disbeliever* say to this? Would any two workmen ever have hit on so beautiful, so simple & yet so artificial a contrivance? It cannot be thought so. The one hand has surely worked throughout the universe.²¹

But what did Darwin's words, 'The one hand' infer? Are we to assume that he was still a deist? It would appear that his mind moved in a series of partial insights. There is no one moment of revelation, of conversion. Rather he experienced a number of interlocking insights which only later, after his journey ended, was he able to fit together, like the pieces of a difficult jigsaw, as he worked towards his theory of natural selection and transferred his allegiance from one paradigm to another.

What complicates Kuhn's historical model is that in the earlier nineteenth-century new theories in biology and geology were being produced in such numbers that there was a kind of collective and conscious search for a new explanation to account for a host of related phenomena and even those thinkers themselves making massive contributions, like Lyell, who were also mistaken in other areas, could offer positive support to Darwin by their example. In his quest to bring the hidden to light, Darwin constantly tested the history of ideas within which he worked against his own field observations. He undoubtedly accepted the uniformitarian geology of Lyell and his receipt in Monte Video of the second volume of Lyell's *The Principles of Geology* undoubtedly influenced his further theorising. Yet this admiration for the work did not prevent him developing his own views on the formation of coral reefs, as an excerpt from a letter to Caroline in 1836 explains; 'The idea of a lagoon Island, 30 miles in diameter being based on a submarine crater of equal dimensions, has always appeared to me a monstrous hypothesis' (*Corr*, p.495). A footnote to this letter informs us: 'This was the generally held view, shared by Charles Lyell (*Principle of geology* 2: 290-1)'. Having presented in the *Journal* a carefully detailed account, with diagrams, of the 'three great classes of reefs' he proceeds to explain his 'views on their formation', concluding, 'we see in each barrier-reef a proof

that the land has there subsided, and in each atoll a monument over an island now lost' (*Journal*, p.576). Typically melancholy, this account is recognised as being one of Darwin's major theoretical discoveries. A new kind of life is established on the ruins of a previous existence. 'As mountain after mountain and island after island slowly sank beneath the water, fresh bases would be successively afforded for the growth of the corals' (*Journal*, p.560). In a footnote on the same page, even though disagreeing here totally with Lyell, he handsomely implies that his mentor at least knew the facts of the case, even though drawing the wrong conclusion:

It is remarkable that Mr. Lyell, even in the first edition of his *Principles of Geology*, inferred that the amount of subsidence in the Pacific must have exceeded that of elevation, from the area of land being very small relatively to the agents there tending to form it – namely, the growth of coral and volcanic action.

At the time he wrote in his *Diary*, 'throughout the whole group of Islands, every single atom, even from the most minute particle to large fragments of rocks, bear the stamp of once having been subjected to the power of organic arrangement' (*Corr*, Appendix V, p.570). The issue is important, as being the first of Darwin's intellectual victories where a combination of observations and daring thought produced a new theory. On his return to England, Darwin reported his idea to Lyell who appears to have been immediately convinced by it, for in a letter to John Herschell, on 24th May, 1837, he admits:

I must give up my volcanic crater theory for ever (. . .), the whole theory is knocked on the head & the annular shape & central lagoon have nothing to do with volcanoes nor even with a crateriform bottom (. . .) Let any mountain be submerged gradually & coral grow in the sea in which it is sinking & there will be a ring of coral & finally only a lagoon in the centre (*Corr*, pp.570-571).

Yet Darwin 'did not publish a fully developed statement of the theory until 1842, after intensive reading and correspondence with observers of coral reefs in other parts of the world' (*Corr*, p.571).

The idea that Lyell contributed to Darwin's mind most positively, was what Stephen Jay Gould has called 'deep time'²² and without the older man's imaginative invocation of the vast ages involved in the laying down of the earth's surface, the younger man would never have thought out the stages of natural selection. Darwin's geological examination of La Plata and Patagonia led him to agree with Lyell's theory, that 'all the features of the land result from slow and gradual changes' (*Journal*, p.214). Lyell's claim that the earth never experienced any geological forces that were greater in intensity than those acting today and that 'all features of the land result from slow and gradual changes' (*Journal*, p.214), was accepted by Darwin as an explanation for what he was able to observe for himself on his journey.

His excitement in the *Journal* comes from his belief that he is seeing a theory justified at first-hand. When travelling in Patagonia, 1834, his interest was captivated by the sea-shells he found on the uppermost plains. He considered them to be proof of land elevation, providing some indication of 'what a history of geological changes (. .) the simply-constructed coast of Patagonia' reveals (*Journal*, p.212). His carefully annotated details of the thickness of each bed of shells, together with its exact position, shows not only his keen interest in the geological changes he believed he was witnessing but also the careful, meticulous methodology he practised. He discovered evidence to prove that the coast of S. America had been elevated during the tertiary and more recent geological periods and he was amazed to find that shells of still-extant species were buried alongside

the fossils of extinct animals which he unearthed. The eruption of a volcano and a major earthquake in Concepcion, which had the 'remarkable effect of causing a permanent elevation of the land' (*Journal*, p.374) provided him with evidence for the continuity of geological change.

Ideas and problems grew with his travels; he became increasingly intrigued by the problem of the causes of extinction. After vacillating between ideas of catastrophe and uniformitarianism for the first two years, he discovered that all his geological studies led him to agree with Lyell's uniformitarian principles of extinction, rather than Cuvier's theory of catastrophe. He paralleled the evidence of slow and gradual geological change which he had witnessed in S.America; the distribution of the sea shells in Patagonia, the discovery that the coastal flats of Chile were composed of the same Tertiary rocks as one entire range of the Cordillera, to a theory of slow and gradual extinction, as an action barely appreciated yet going on on every side of us. Darwin famously acknowledges, both in his *Autobiography* and in *The Origin*, that the reading of Malthus was a crucial element in the discovery of the process of natural selection.

Because he is so delightedly confirming the truth of other men's ideas, however, he takes time to find his own theory. The Galapagos archipelago proved to be far more of a challenge than Darwin expected. His preconception that there would be little variation in the fauna and flora of islands spatially close and placed under the same physical conditions prevented his noticing, at first, that the greater number of the archipelago inhabitants, both animal and vegetable, were 'found nowhere else'. He did not discover, until it was pointed out to him, that the tortoises differed according to which island they lived on. We can only assume that Darwin did not initially observe the

apparent differences because he was not specifically searching for difference. His thoughts were clearly not directed by his later revolutionary theory, 'the complex action of natural selection entailing extinction and divergence of character' (*Origin*, p.171). As he failed to notice the divergence of character, the specimens he collected were not tagged as having come from different islands. He unwittingly overlooked evidence which, with hindsight, he recognised as being a major factor in enabling him to develop his great idea.

When Darwin realised that 'wonderful' facts were before him, he began to question what they could mean. He reasoned:

The distribution of the tenants of the archipelago would not be nearly so wonderful if, for instance, one island had a mocking-thrush and a second island some other quite distinct genus, (. . .); or if the different islands were inhabited, not by representative species of the same genera of plants, but by totally different genera, as does to a certain extent hold good; (. . .) But it is the circumstance, that several of the islands possess their own species of the tortoise, mocking-thrush, finches, and numerous plants – these species having the same general habits, occupying analogous situations, and obviously filling the same place in the natural economy of this archipelago – that strikes me with wonder (*Journal*, pp.476-7).

Darwin did not believe that individual variations died off but that varieties were species in the process of becoming. Later, he theorized that varieties are a natural process by which a variety could evolve into a new species as chance variations emerge and are inherited in the universal struggle for survival. The facts relating to the Galapagos Islands were striking, were 'wonderful', yet Darwin had to admit:

The only light which I can throw on this remarkable difference in the inhabitants of the different islands is, that very strong currents of the sea running in a westerly and west-north-westerly direction must separate, as far as transportal by the sea is concerned, the southern islands from the northern ones; and between these northern islands a strong north-west current was observed, (. . .). As the archipelago is free to a most remarkable degree from gales of wind, neither the birds, insects, nor lighter seeds would be blown from island to island (*Journal*, p.478).

He was still, that is, trying to explain variation as a local phenomenon by which species were confined to areas by geographical factors, as for Lyell.

His *Diary* entry for Sept. 26th & 27th reads, 'It will be very interesting to find from future comparison to what district or "centre of creation" the organised beings of this archipelago must be attached' (*Diary*, p.334). In his 2nd and 3rd 'Transmutation Notebooks', his C. & D. notebooks for Feb-Sept. 1838, Darwin only later worked out his new mechanism of species change. He supposed that habits an animal might adopt to cope with a shifting environment would slowly become instinct, during the course of many generations; that is, they would become innately determined patterns of behaviour. He then supposed that instincts, in their turn, would gradually modify the anatomy of an organism and by so doing would produce an adaptation favourable to its surroundings. By considering that habits become innate Darwin was able to fit his mechanism to Lyellian uniformitarianist principles of gradual change, whilst simultaneously rejecting the Lamarckian concept of conscious effort of will through mysterious 'power of life' (Oldroyd, p.32).

The problem was that he still thought of nature in terms of intention and design, as with the variety of finch on the islands. He writes in the *Journal*:

The most curious fact is the perfect gradation in the size of the beaks in the different species of *Geospiza* (. . .) Seeing this gradation and diversity of structure in one small, intimately related group of birds, one might really fancy that, from an original paucity of birds in this archipelago, one species had been taken and modified for different ends (*Journal*, p.456).

Charmingly, he imagines nature taking pity on the birdless Galapagos to supply this full ornithological range out of a single species. When later, in London, he discovered that the birds were distinctly separate species, he began to wrestle with the question of what this fact must mean for theoretical natural history. In his 'Ornithological Notes' he explains:

When I see these Islands in sight of each other, (. . .) tenanted by these birds, but slightly differing in structure & filling the same place in Nature, I must suspect they are only varieties. The only fact of a similar kind of which I am aware, is the constant asserted difference between the wolf-like Fox of the East & West Falkland Islds. If there is the slightest foundation for these remarks the zoology of Archipelagoes will be well worth examining; for such facts would undermine the stability of Species.²³

With the benefit of being wise after the event, in this case 1859, the reader of the *Journal* can, therefore, see why the visit to the Galapagos Islands was critical to Darwin's mental adventure. Yet the immediate response recorded in *The Journal* itself was bewilderment.

Only with hindsight, did Darwin realise that his quest 'to encrease knowledge' by voyaging aboard the *Beagle*, had led to a goal, the theory of natural selection. In a letter to Hooker, 1844, he admits:

I am almost convinced (quite contrary to the opinion I started with) that species are not (it is like confessing a murder) immutable. Heaven forbid me from Lamarck's nonsense of a 'tendency to progression'; 'adaptations from the slow willing of animals,' etc! But the conclusions I am led to are not widely different from his, though the means of change are wholly so (*Origin*, 'Editor's Introduction', p.32).

By 1838 Darwin had become convinced that the species were mutable but he still lacked an explanation for it, an explanation not based, like the suppositions of Lamarck, on speculation. He confesses to Hooker, 'the conclusions I am led to are not widely different from his "Lamarck's"; though the means of change are wholly so!'

Subsequently, the voyage of the *Beagle* seems almost to have been arranged by design to produce the idea of natural selection yet, in practice, the places called at were accidental to the naval charting which was its primary purpose. In a letter to Wallace, 1859, Darwin explains, 'Geographical distribution and geological relations of extinct to recent inhabitants of South America first led me to the subject: especially the case of the Galapagos Islands.'²⁴

In a much later letter to Moritz Wagner, written 1876, he admits:

It would have been a strange fact if I had overlooked the importance of isolation, seeing that it was such cases as that of the Galapagos Archipelago, which chiefly led me to study the origin of species.²⁵

On Keeling Island, after observing a crab opening a coconut, Darwin comments in his *Journal*:

I think this is as curious a case of instinct as ever I heard of, and likewise of adaptation in structure between two objects apparently so remote from each other in the scheme of nature as a crab and a cocoa-nut tree (*Journal*, p.554).

Darwin saw the cocoa-nut eating crab as an example of Cuvier's supposition that an accidentally changed environment might indirectly create adaptations, by inducing animals to acquire new habits which would produce heritable modifications in their structure. However, he extended Cuvier's proposition, by adding his own uniformitarian ideas of the alterations accumulating slowly, over many generations, so effecting a gradual transformation of species.

Step by step, Darwin attempts, in *The Origin*, to lead his readers to an intellectual understanding of his theory of 'natural selection', as the controlling and directing 'will' behind the process of evolution – the 'will' of nature. Darwin's intellectual quest 'to increase the general stock of knowledge' was his intention, his quest when he began his journey aboard the *Beagle*. At the end of his journey, however, he discovers that his reasonings on the observations he has made have led him to a theory of revolutionary significance.

To read the *Journal* to discover the birth-pangs of natural selection is, however, also to simplify the origin of ideas in the mind of Darwin. Natural selection was one idea certainly not in his mind at the time, whereas many others were. His political or social ideas, rudimentary elements of what would later be called anthropology, show a series of liberal and progressivist ideas in search of authenticating evidence, for example. He

commented on the strikingly different races of people he met on his travels – their differing customs, their differing sense of morality. Whilst travelling in Maldonado, 1832, he noted variations in national behaviour:

It is curious how similar circumstances produce such similar results in manners. At the Cape of Good Hope the same hospitality and very nearly the same points of etiquette are universally observed. The difference, however, between the character of the Spaniard and that of the Dutch boer is shown by the former never asking his guest a single question beyond the strictest rules of politeness (*Journal*, p.61).

Darwin was shocked when he learnt at Bahia Blanca of the atrocities committed 'in a Christian civilized country'; the massacre of 'Indians – Men, women and children about 110 in number were all taken or killed' and adds in dismay 'all the women who appear above twenty years old, are massacred in cold blood' for 'they breed so!' He noted the callousness of the dominant social group and the effect of the war on the Indian tribes. They had become 'more barbarous; instead of living in large villages, and being employed in the arts of fishing as well as of the chase', their behaviour had been modified by the atrocities to which they were subjected; 'they now wander about the open plains, without home or fixed occupation' (*Journal*, p.132). Yet, although Darwin noted the 'entire immorality' of the Indians in the Spanish Colony, he noted also the three 'remarkably fine men', fair young Indians, who refused to betray their comrades, choosing, instead, to die. The third Indian claiming nobly, 'Fire! I am a man, and can die!' (*Journal*, p.130). His suspicion of Spanish colonization reinforced his assumption that Northern Europe was the centre of progress.

Yet his concept of the 'civilized', at this moment of time, appears to be one of historical evolution, from a state of original savagery to one of civilization. Through contact with the civilized European, despite the occasional massacre, he believes the savage is enabled to develop into the 'civilized'. Darwin later describes his first shocked sight of Fuegian savages:

Their very attitudes were abject, and the expression of their countenances distrustful, surprised, and startled. (. . .) The language of these people, according to our notions, scarcely deserves to be called articulate (*Journal*, p.251).

To Caroline, in April 1833, he wrote 'the difference between a domesticated & wild animal is far more strikingly marked in man' (*Corr*, p.303), and in his *Beagle Diary* he explains, 'they are such thieves and so bold cannibals, that one naturally prefers separate quarters' (pp.129-31). Darwin describes one group who seemed particularly 'wild and savage'. 'They were absolutely naked, and their long hair streamed about their faces; (. . .) and (they) sent forth the most hideous yells' (*Journal*, p.266).

During the previous voyage of the *Beagle*, the Captain, Robert Fitzroy, had seized some Fuegians as hostages for stealing a boat. He had returned to England with these natives, 'determining to educate them and instruct them in religion at his own expense' (*Journal*, p.252). Fitzroy believed that to Christianise aboriginal populations, in order to bring civilization to them, was his duty. And he was now on this voyage, settling the Fuegians in their own country 'accompanied by a missionary, R. Matthews' (*Journal*, p.252). Darwin was very interested to observe the conduct of the savages towards Jemmy Button, their returned relative. He noted, in amazement, their lack of any sense of family affection, when Jemmy Button was reunited with his family, 'animals when

they meet show far more animation and anxiety than was displayed at this meeting' (*Beagle Record*, p.108). In the *Journal* itself he added, 'There was no demonstration of affection; they simply stared' (*Journal*, p.270).

Darwin believed that the Fuegians' savage state resulted from their lack of a hierarchical structure which would have enabled some members of the group to attain more authority, power and possessions than others. He believed such a structure would prove beneficial to the progress of the group as a whole. Darwin's concept of encouraging those actions of the individual which are considered good for the progress of the group is a concept he develops later, in his work *The Descent of Man*, where he claims that, at its most developed, the moral sense:

becomes a highly complex sentiment –
originating in the social instinct largely guided
by the approbation of our fellow men, veiled
by reason and self-interest and (. . .)
confirmed by instruction and habit.²⁶

Yet, the strong anti-individualism exhibited in the behaviour of the Fuegians, for example their sharing of even a small piece of ribbon, Darwin saw as uniformity carried to absurdity and, as such, antithetical to the development of a social structure encouraging struggle. 'The perfect equality of all the inhabitants will for many years prevent their civilization, even a shirt or other article of clothing is immediately torn into pieces' (*Beagle Record*, p.116). He was quick to claim:

Our three Fuegians, though they had been only three years with civilized men, would, I am sure, have been glad to have retained their new habits; but this was obviously impossible. I fear it is more than doubtful whether their visit will have been of any use to them (*Journal*, p.275).

He reasons, that the influence of the environment in which they have once again to learn to survive will, by necessity, override their acquired civilized forms of behaviour. The explanation he offers shows a belief in the predominance of environment over education or even desire and there is in this a kind of providence at work. The Fuegians have adapted to living in one of the most inhospitable countries; 'nature, by making habit omnipotent and its effects hereditary, has fitted the Fuegian to the climate and the productions of his miserable country' (*Journal*, p.264). Alongside this historical evolutionism, the *Journal* also insistently attributes intuition to Nature.

Darwin often personified the word nature, as here. In effect he turns it into the expression of the Divine Will as, when referring to the primeval forests of Brazil and Tierra del Fuego, he calls them 'temples filled with the varied productions of the God of Nature:- no one can stand in these solitudes unmoved, and not feel that there is more in man than the mere breath of his body' (*Journal*, p.600). In many such observations he takes for granted a natural piety, partly a habit of speech, which nevertheless implies a belief in an intelligent Creator. The endless, beautiful adaptations he observed, seemed, as for Paley, to point towards an architect Creator. Later, however, in his *Autobiography*, he wrote:

The old argument of design in nature, as given by Paley, which formerly seemed to me so conclusive, fails now that the law of natural selection has been discovered. We can no longer argue, that for instance, the beautiful hinge of a bivalve shell must have been made by an intelligent being like the hinge of a door by man (*Auto*, p.87).

The idea is the source of a kind of aesthetic in the *Journal*, precisely the feelings he acknowledges in the *Autobiography* that he had lost, 'a curious and lamentable loss of the

higher aesthetic tastes' (*Auto*, p.139). At Keeling Island when he observed that the island would have no plants if it were not for seeds being floated about, he mused on the fact that 'the seeds before germinating must have travelled between eighteen hundred and two thousand, four hundred miles' (*Journal*, p.545). His observations and deductions were leading him to propose a natural, mechanical explanation of a seeming harmony and ruthless selection in place of Paley's thesis of design. Yet he is still close to the assumptions of eighteenth-century Deism.

That awe of Nature was, however, quite distinct from his valuing of Christianity as the expression of European culture. Whilst travelling in New Zealand, at a place called Waimate, Darwin observed, with admiration, the effect which the daring and persistent energy of the missionaries had wrought on the appearance and morality of the New Zealanders. He noted that the young women were 'clean and tidy' with a 'healthy appearance, like that of dairy maids in England' and 'formed a wonderful contrast with the women of the filthy hovels in Kororadika' (*Journal*, pp.510-511). This civilizing progress had been achieved 'in the centre of the land of cannibalism, murder, & all atrocious crimes!' (*Journal*, p.511). Cannibalism, as in the case of the Fuegians, is at the opposite pole of human behaviour from European standards. The actual working assumptions of the *Journal* often produce comforting reassurances of this rather Lamarckian kind while all the time, though unacknowledged, a different idea is secretly coming into being which will have very different implications. The *Beagle* took him to no new place, nowhere that was not known by European geographers, and he took with him conscious attitudes and beliefs that he shared with many Englishmen of his background and education. As Philip Sloan has written, 'Darwin's reflections are but the

culmination of concerns that arose in the middle of the eighteenth-century'.²⁷ Yet, without at the time realising it, he was noticing facts which refused to fit into those concerns and would lead his mind in a different direction. Though physical detail at times almost overwhelms the book, the *Journal* is in the last analysis a record of intellectual adventure.

John Hanning Speke, *Journal of the Discovery of the Source of the Nile* (1863)

Journals of exploration provided not only the excitement of discovery but, according to many intellectuals of the time, including Carlyle, Arnold, Ruskin and Kingsley, they could produce a mood of excited aspiration, a vitalising image, filling the youthful imagination with pictures of heroic men and heroic action. Joseph Conrad, in his essay, 'Geography and Some Explorers' (1924), discusses his boyhood admiration for 'militant geographers'. He describes the 'first homage' he paid to the prestige of the 'first explorers' of the Great Lakes (Burton and Speke):

In entering laboriously in pencil the outline of Tanganyika on my beloved old atlas, which, having been published in 1852, knew nothing, of course, of the Great Lakes. The heart of its Africa was white and big.

He explains how he put his 'finger on a spot in the very middle of the then white heart of Africa' and 'declared that someday I would go there'; and how his reading of accounts of explorations, affected and influenced his own life:

The study of geographical discovery lies in the insight it gives one into the characters of that special kind of men who devoted the best part of their lives to the exploration of land and sea

(. . .) it was they and not the characters of famous fiction who were my first friends.²⁸

The admiration must have been intense since he repeats the story in *A Personal Record* and attributes it to Marlow in 'Heart of Darkness'. In his obsession with a specific goal to which he dedicated his life, principal among the 'special kind of men' in the nineteenth century is John Hanning Speke. His *Journal of the Discovery of the Source of the Nile* is a record of his East African quest journey in 1859, to prove the accuracy of his prediction that on the 30th of July, 1858, he had solved the mystery of the Nile's origin; he had discovered the source of the Nile.

Public curiosity in the source of the Nile had been aroused by current reports of enterprises by missionaries of Mombasa and Gondokora, together with the publication in England of a detailed map by Erdhart of the country between the coast and the inland sea. The desire of the Royal Geographical Society to be in the forefront of a major geographical discovery, had led to their decision, in 1856, to fund a plan submitted to them by Captain Richard Burton, to explore the lake region of central Africa. On this expedition, Burton and his party eventually discovered the great lake which he named The Tanganyika but he failed to discover the Nile Sources. Ironically, it was the junior member of this party, John H. Speke, who, eager to push forward to explore the region of the N'yanza and curious to discover whether the Arab travellers' tales of a 'great-sheet' of water were true, was finally able to claim the victory of solving the Nile Source mystery. For thousands of years the Nile 'secret' had fascinated and puzzled distinguished minds and its discovery had thwarted and baffled its many 'Romantic' questers. Yet Speke, a young, thirty-one year old Indian Army Officer, exploring the lake area of East Africa on his second African expedition under Burton's command,

claimed that whilst standing on the shore of the N'yanza, near Mwanza, he 'no longer felt any doubt that the river at [my] feet gave birth to that interesting river the source of which has been the subject of so much speculation, and the object of so many explorers'. He later appended a footnote emphasising the strength of his conviction. 'This I maintain was the discovery of the Source of the Nile'.²⁹ Speke's ambition lay not so much in exploration, in understanding and explaining a hitherto unknown region, but in discovery, in attaining a specific goal and his response on reaching it could not differ more from the confusion and half-heartedness of Childe Roland; 'The pleasure of the mere view vanished in the presence of these more intense and exciting emotions (. . .) called up by the consideration of the prospect before me' (*WL*, p.367). Yet the inexpressive style in which Speke records his discovery undercuts the ideals of the Romantic quest no less than Browning's poem. His 'exciting emotion' is his response to thoughts of the practical rather than the Romantic attributes of his discovery. It is the style in which he mainly wrote his *Journal*, a surprisingly unemotional style for a quest associated from the time of Ptolemy with much historical mystery and glamour. Speke's claim came as a bitter blow to Burton who had decided to rest at base camp because he was still recovering from a serious illness. Burton refused to accept the validity of Speke's claim. Writing later about his expedition, Speke describes the frustration of not being able to continue his exploration of the N'yanza area; 'Had I but had a little more time, and a few loads of beads, I could with ease have crossed the line and settled every question' (*WL*, p.326). Both in writing and in public address, he constantly asserted he had 'no doubts' that: 'the Victoria N'yanza, which he discovered on the 30th July, 1858, would eventually

prove to be the source of the Nile'.³⁰ Burton, however, continued strenuously to dispute Speke's claim and publicly slighted him by asserting that Speke's:

Reasons were weak, were of the category alluded
to by the character Lucetta –

I have no other but a woman's reason.
I think him so because I think him so.³¹

As a result of Burton's derogatory verbal and written attacks on Speke's integrity, 'an unfortunate rivalry'³² developed between the two explorers.

To 'settle every question' was thus the overriding mission of Speke's third African expedition. The crucial question of the directional flow of the water from the northern end of the lake he had settled earlier, by careful observations of the height and latitude of the surrounding land and he believed, without any doubt, that the water from the lake flowed in a northerly direction, proof that the lake must form the great reservoir of the White Nile. Yet some, like Sir John Barrow, one time President of the Royal Geographical Society, who 'had set a benchmark for exploration',³³ still firmly believed what Herodotus had asserted, that the parent stream of the Nile was formed by waters descending from Mount Atlas and flowing through Africa to the Nile; 'Of the sources of the Nile no one can give any account (. . .) it enters Egypt from the parts beyond'.³⁴ To 'settle the question' Speke had to return to Africa. To his delight, the Royal Geographical Society, hearing his theory soon after his return to London, immediately invited him to lead a new expedition to explore the area, viewing the expedition as a great and noble enterprise, one deserving of government support. Diplomatically, when applying to the government for funding, the Royal Geographical Society 'had mentioned the advantages which might eventually accrue to "commerce and civilization"'³⁵ from

such a quest. The procurement of accurate data, that could be used to supply accurate maps was presented as an important scientific motive.

The conquest of Africa, the dark continent, was seen as a great opportunity by explorers both to achieve fame and to make a career from their exploits. Irrespective therefore of Burton's doubts and contrary to his promise to Burton in Aden not to publicly declare his belief until Burton, too, had reached England, the fear of losing the fame and honour of his discovery drove Speke to announce his 'findings' before Burton returned. Not only did Speke declare his discovery to the President of the Royal Geographical Society but, unlike Darwin on his return from his *Beagle* voyage, he attempted to rush straight into print by writing to Blackwoods the printers:

I have just returned from Central Africa having mapped the whole of these regions and discovered what I consider (. . .) the true source of the Nile, and I have fixed the true Mountains of the Moon.³⁶

It was known that the solution of the Nile secret would undoubtedly bring honour and prestige to its discoverer, acclaim which Burton, as the renowned African explorer who had just discovered Lake Tanganyika, believed should be his.

In contrast to Darwin's claim of an unspecific quest goal to 'encrease knowledge', to add generally to the knowledge of the world's scientific community, Speke knew exactly what his goal was and he directed all his energy and intelligence to achieve that one end, the proof of the truth of his earlier discovery. His *Journal* records how relentlessly he drove himself to achieve his purpose, his quest being for him, not so much an exploration as a pushing forward obsessively to his known goal. His concentration on the physical aspect of the task whilst revealing little of his own feelings and insights

displays the narrowness of his field of vision. *The Journal* implies that all his actions were influenced, directed, by this one all-consuming passion. Suffering the dangers of starvation, illness, fatigue, warring tribes, savage animals and hostile climate, he seemed able to accept as inevitable consequences of his quest journey, dangers to be combatted physically, but without reference to his own response and feelings. It is no surprise to read that he wrote a letter to his publishers declaring his preference for reading material which was practical and scientific, rather than imaginative; 'I like political, statistical or scientific reading better than any other (. . .). Frivolous reading (novels) are refreshing when they come accidentally'.³⁷ Although both Darwin and Speke describe their journeys with an intensity of detail, the style of Speke's description of his experiences is never reflective and rarely involves the emotions. Notable is his frequent use of dull epithets, such as 'pretty'. The overall effect of his style is to create a pace which is often pedestrian though his journey across Africa was dangerous, startling and at times exhilarating. For, although he set out confidently, never appearing to doubt, as did Darwin, his own competence to achieve the goal he had set himself nor his physical fitness to cope with the rigours of the journey, he still had to brave his mythical quest dragons, 'The risks of failure by disease, by war, by famine, and by mutiny' (*Journal*, p.70), on a trek he referred to ironically as his 'tug-and-pull wilderness-march' (*Journal*, p.89). Unemotionally, he communicates his constant battle to move the caravan of men from Zanzibar to Gondokora. Out of a complement of one hundred and seventy-six men, almost one hundred and fifty men deserted in the course of the journey. Speke was writing the literal truth when he referred to his journey as the 'wilderness march'. It certainly revealed his great courage; the explorer, Samuel Baker, reporting his meeting

with Speke and Grant, at the end of their journey, recalls, 'Speke had walked the whole way from Zanzibar, never once having ridden during that wearying march'. Both he and Grant 'had a fire in the eye, that showed the spirit that had led them through'.³⁸

Captain Grant, the companion Speke had chosen, was responsible for making observations of the climate and, like Speke, for collecting information on the flora and fauna. However, although Speke frequently remarked that he and Grant were 'able to have a good laugh' (*Journal*, p.171) Grant's presence does not figure prominently in the *Journal*. Because of Grant's illness, Speke claims he alone 'set out on the march' to 'settle the great Nile problem forever' (*Journal*, p.240) leaving Grant in the care of Rūmanika. He justified this return to heroic solitude with the claim that, 'To get on as fast as possible was the only chance of ever bringing the journey to a successful issue' (*Journal*, p.239).

Under Burton he had been only second in command and the *Journal* is anxious to justify his abilities as leader; the careful, sensible and efficient way in which he organised the expedition, the skill and diplomacy he had to extend in order to keep together the nucleus of able and intelligent freedmen until they reached Bungorō and the amicable working relationships he achieved with the African Chiefs over whose territory he had to travel; 'patience, thank God, I had a good stock of' (*Journal*, p.120). He was determined to organise carefully, and not to make the mistakes of his expedition with Burton. As successful explorer, he thought his objective was to minimise the danger of the unknown, to reduce the force of chance by careful preparation. From his previous expeditions he had learnt the need for extensive supplies. Yet, ironically, Burton claimed that Speke had but to tread in his, Burton's, footsteps in order to achieve success. He knew what beads,

wines, cloths, escorts and porters were required and also what facilities were likely to offer themselves, for example the support of Arab trading stations. He was able to anticipate obstacles; physical in the form of the terrain and warring tribes, Dr. Roscher had been 'murdered by some natives in Uhiyow' (*Journal*, p.37); the Frenchman, M. Maizan, 'barbarously murdered by the sub-chief Hembé', when guiding an expedition (*Journal*, p.53); and psychological, in the negotiations with African chiefs over 'the thousands of differences of settling hongo' and in his negotiations with Bombay and Baraka to keep the caravan moving forwards. Robert I. Rotberg claims:

Explorers as a class, traveled in search of themselves (. . .) with a certitude of vision, an abundance of self-confidence, and a heightened awareness of the proportions of his deed. (. . .) Speke (. . .) too moved with a not unworthy sense of creativity. Their motives (. . .) derived from the same common source of human purposefulness that nourished the mid-Victorian evangelical reformers, systematic thinkers, and, indeed, captains of industry. In the case of the explorers, however, their deeds and their drives were unambivalently acclaimed by a welcoming public which was stirred and uplifted by the real or imagined drama of their seeming valor, derring-do, and idealism.³⁹

Speke's habitual course of action, as he battled to reach his goal, might best be described by Matthew Arnold's definition of Hebraism, 'this energy driving at practice, this paramount sense of the obligation of duty, self-control and work, this earnestness in going manfully with the best light we have'.⁴⁰ Not only did Speke reveal qualities of 'purposefulness' when he continued to struggle forward on his quest, though sick, and the road ahead dangerous; 'nothing in the world could ever induce me to give up the journey' (*Journal*, p.145). But he was sustained also not by an open-ended sense of enquiry but

the obsessive's belief that he already knew the answer and was seeking the evidence to sustain it. He revealed a sense of 'purposefulness' directly related 'to the solution of the great problem he went to solve' as his following comment on his prolonged four and a half months' stay at Mtésa's court demonstrates:

It will be kept in view that the hanging about at this court, and all the perplexing and irritating negotiations here described, had always one end in view – that of reaching the Nile where it pours out of the N'yanza, as I was long certain that it did. Without the consent and even the aid of this capricious barbarian I was now talking to, such a project was hopeless (. . .) It was not my policy to make our object seem too important to ourselves, so I had to appear tolerably indifferent (*Journal*, pp.389, 390).

Although Speke implies, in the *Journal*, that his presence was an important factor in local political situations, his contempt for the local people underestimated the extent to which Africans realised the nature of his quest and its international significance. The excerpt which follows is from an account given in 1934 by a former page at Mtésa's court, Isaya Kasakya, and it reveals how seriously the court treated Speke as a threat:

'Lord, let us kill this prodigy!' The call came from the chiefs, officials, and priests at the court in the royal palace of Buganda in February 1862. The 'prodigy' was John Hanning Speke, who had recently arrived in the country to search for the source of the Nile. The Lord was Mutesa, I, *kabaka* of Buganda. Fortunately for the explorer, the *kabaka* refused to execute a man whom he had already welcomed as a friend.⁴¹

Speke stressed rather the darkness of the continent, that his journey was through a land where 'no laws prevail' (*Journal*, p.61). Ukūlima, 'a very kind' man, 'did stick the hands

and heads of his victims on the poles of his boma as a warning to others' (*Journal*, p.132) and 'the poles' of Rūhé's boma 'were decked with the skulls of his enemies stuck upon them' (*Journal*, p.138). He recorded horrific tales at second hand, not only of cannibalism but of magic ritual involving human sacrifice.

Intellectually and emotionally, Speke, like Darwin, judged Africa by the ethical norms of Western civilization. In his 'Introduction' to the *Journal* he writes:

Judging from the progressive state of the world, one is led to suppose that the African must soon either step out from the darkness, or be superseded by a being superior to himself. Could a government be formed for them like ours in India, they would be saved; but without, I fear there is very little chance; for at present the African neither can help himself nor will he be helped by others, because his country is in such a constant state of turmoil he has too much anxiety on hand looking out for his food to think of anything else. As his fathers ever did – so does he. He works his wife, sells his children, enslaves all he can lay hands upon, and unless when fighting for the property of others, contents himself with drinking, singing, and dancing like a baboon, to drive dull care away (*Journal*, xxiv).

In his criticism of the African Speke was implicitly contrasting him with his own sense of purposeful journey. Where primitive man cannot step out of darkness or advance beyond his ancestors, the rest of the world is 'progressive'. The African's only response is to dance 'like a baboon', in popular science the common human ancestor. As Darwin judged and criticised the Fuegians' lack of any form of social structure which might enable them to 'progress', Speke, likewise, believed that progress would not be possible until a 'strong protective government' could be developed in Africa. Like Darwin, he claimed that the introduction of missionaries to teach Christian ethics would

provide African society with a moral framework, such work as Livingstone's, at that very moment a few hundred miles to the south. The Africans Speke met on his journey he clearly considered amoral, describing them as having 'no love for truth, honor, or honesty' (*Journal*, xxviii), and as living 'in a land where every man, in his own opinion, is a lord, and no laws prevail' (*Journal*, p.61).

Much of the business described in the *Journal* has less to do with physical discovery and hardship that the explorer is best suited to but with negotiation and diplomacy. We note Speke's forced close contact with the two despotic African leaders, Kabaka Mtésa, King of Uganda, and King Rūmanika,. Indeed, his fame as discoverer of the source of the Nile conceals that he was also the European discoverer of Uganda itself. As a visitor to these courts, he was in a very delicate position. To achieve his goal he had to learn to function in a different world order. Justice, as perceived by modern European standards, was an unknown concept. Rūmanika ascertained how many of his subjects were loyal by holding a 'New-moon Levée' (*Journal*, pp.221-3). And he explained to Speke that 'No one in Africa (. . .) doubted the power of magic and spells' (*Journal*, p.237). At Mtésa's court Speke found death for some slight misdemeanour to be an every-day occurrence; 'during this one day we heard the sad voices of no less than four women, dragged from the palace to the slaughter-house' (*Journal*, p.402). The sight of the apparent despotism made Speke vividly aware of the civilization he had left behind. However, he dared not reveal how shocked he was, but had to be patient, friendly and attempt to be understanding. In his desire to maintain a friendly relationship with both Mtésa and the Queen Mother, and to be seen at court to be doing some good, Speke agreed, at the mother and son's request, to administer medicine to them. Diplomatically,

he decided not only to give advice whenever it was asked for but to give numerous presents also to the 'avaricious' pair, who constantly and unashamedly asked for more.

The explorer's single concern was to move forward on his quest to reach the Nile source. And his hope was that Mtésa would exercise his power and finally 'settle the road question' (*Journal*, p.409). Earlier, at Rūmanika's court, when Rūmanika referred to Speke's quest and asked him 'what we did it for' Speke had replied:

We have had our fill of the luxuries of life (. . .) and seek for enjoyment the run of the world.' To observe and admire the beauties of creation are worth more than beads to us (. . .) But what led us this way we have told you before; it was to see your majesty in particular, and the great kings of Africa, and at the same time to open another road to the north, whereby the best manufactures of Europe would find their way to Karagūé (*Journal*, p.207).

Significantly, he does not put first the pious admiration of God's handiwork but the sporting man's desire for action in place of luxury. From the British Government's point of view, Speke's quest was seen as an opportunity to open up Africa to British Trade. Rūmanika's 'opening up the road' for Speke, to enable him to reach his goal, could lead to the later 'opening up' of roads for British trade and British influence. Speke realised, wisely, that Rūmanika might be encouraged to welcome foreigners, if he thought that men of knowledge would visit his court. For Rūmanika was not only a man of charm but a man possessed of a mind 'so quick and enquiring' (*Journal*, p.204) who enjoyed engaging in 'long theological and historical discussion' (*Journal*, p.207).

Speke's close contacts with the courts of Rūmanika and Mtésa certainly offered him a deeper understanding of Africa. The man who set out knowing what he wanted to

find, was in fact making other discoveries along the way, without quite realising it. He records his impatience with details of African life the reader finds valuable:

[the] hanging about at [Mtésa's] court, and all the perplexing and irritating negotiations here described, had always one end in view – that of reaching the Nile where it pours out of the N'yanza, as I was long certain that it did (*Journal*, p.389).

Nevertheless, Speke describes Mtésa's court in great factual detail, its daily ceremonies, how its people were treated, how the despotic Mtésa saw himself as a deity and how he barbarously caused 'fifty big men and four hundred small ones to be executed', claiming his subjects were too 'bumptious' (*Journal*, p.263). Though Speke records that he suffered much loneliness and boredom, there were enjoyable shooting parties with Mtésa, events always liable to raise Speke's spirits; pombé drinking sessions with the Queen Mother, who alternately flattered and ignored him, and flirtatious walks with one of the women from the king's harem. To impress Mtésa with his importance, as the first white man to visit his court, Speke presented himself as a royal prince whose rank merited different treatment from that extended to Arab traders. Yet it took months of patience, communications being relayed through four interpreters, and great diplomacy, before Speke was able, finally, to pressurise Mtésa into promising that he would 'settle the road question in the morning' (*Journal*, p.409). Finally, however, came 'The moment of triumph (. . .) and suddenly the road was granted!' (*Journal*, p.410).

Yet even before this detention at the Kabaka's court, Speke's account of exploration rarely involves a response to hill, river, grassland or the animals and birds of Africa (except as objects for sport). In contrast, Darwin, in his *Autobiography*, writes of his changed attitude toward shooting:

During the first two years my old passion for shooting survived in nearly full force, (. . .) but gradually I gave up my gun (. . .) as shooting interfered with my work, more especially with making out the geological structure of a country. I discovered (. . .) that the pleasure of observing and reasoning was a much higher one than that of skill and sport.⁴²

Exploration is a list of the practical difficulties of moving forwards at all, and especially his own physical condition. For days in July 1861, he had been wracked by a 'bad hitching cough' (*Journal*, p.146), bullied constantly by chief Makaka, unanimously opposed by the whole camp in his plan to move his quest forward and deeply distressed by the defection of Būi and Nasib, whom he had relied on as interpreters and who had 'promised [him] faithfully they would go with Bombay (. . .) and bring back porters' (*Journal*, p.147). The torments of his illness which then developed, Speke describes in precise detail:

I became deadly cold; (. . .) the cough that had stuck to me for a month then became so violent, heightened by fever succeeding the cold fit, that before the next morning I was so reduced I could not stand. (. . .) the heart felt inflamed and ready to burst, (. . .) The left arm felt half paralyzed, (. . .) and on the centre of the left shoulder-blade I felt a pain as if someone was branding me with a hot iron. (. . .) in addition, I repeatedly felt severe pains – rather paroxysms of fearful twinges – in the spleen, liver, and lungs, while during my sleep I had all sorts of absurd dreams (*Journal*, p.155).

The least introspective of men, physical pain almost makes him write graphically. The vocabulary is startlingly aggressive though purely physical and his state of mind

dismissed in the phrase 'absurd dreams'. His crisis of despair, the nadir of his journey, was the moment when he learned that Bũi and Nasib had 'bolted':

The shock nearly killed me. (. . .) I knew not what to do, for it appeared to me that, do what I would, we would never succeed; and in my weakness of body and mind I actually cried like a child over the whole affair. I would rather have died than have failed in my journey, and yet failure seemed at this juncture inevitable (*Journal*, p.158).

To cry is to behave like a child whereas a man, apparently, prefers to die rather than fail. Quickly, Speke began to fight his Giant of Despair. Not with a quester knight's sword, however, but with a 'packing-needle, used as a seton', which, in a violent attempt to cure his disease, Speke had 'tried to stick (. . .) into [his] side' (*Journal*, p.159). Although he and Baraka both failed to penetrate his skin with the packing-needle, Speke's undoubted courage, his dedication to his single objective, led to his overcoming this trial and to stoically asserting, 'I must die or go on with the journey, for shame would not allow me to give way' (*Journal*, p.165).

Shame, his responsibility to his self-image, confirms the specificity of his role as explorer. The account of his fever, his guides' disloyalty, his captors' incessant demands and the absence of Grant for companionship and advice, presents him as traditional hero, the man who fought and won a lone battle. He was aware that he was writing his journal for his English audience, an audience which would have read the critical assessment of him in Richard Burton's *The Lake Regions*. From Speke's comments at the time, it is clear he was furiously indignant at the news of Burton's accusations. His private correspondence shows that he was conscious of the audience for whom he wrote; when writing to his family, Alexander Maitland claims, 'he purposefully kept his letters (. . .)

light and optimistic'⁴³ but to Rigby, from Khoko in the region of Western Ugogo, his letter was far from 'light and optimistic':

We are scarcely knowing what to do. Before us is the desert of M'Gunda. M'Khali (. . .) all famished, and without a grain of food to sell us; yet these are not a quarter of the difficulties we have had to contend against.⁴⁴

After saying farewell to Mtésa, Speke and Grant travelled together only twelve days before 'Grant's leg was considered too weak for traveling fast'. It was decided, therefore, that Grant should travel with 'the cattle, and women' direct to Kamrasi's palace, taking with him Speke's letters 'and a map for immediate despatch to Petherick at Gani, while [Speke] should go up the river to its source or exit from the lake, and come down navigating as far as practicable' (*Journal*, p.420). Three days later, on the 21st July, 1862, at Urondogani, Speke at last sighted the White Nile – 'the holy river, the cradle of Moses' (*Journal*, p.422). Finally, on the 28th July, he 'arrived at the extreme end of the journey, the farthest point ever visited by the expedition' (*Journal*, p.426). It was a low line of rocks which lay 'on the same parallel of latitude as King Mtésa's palace, and just forty miles east of it. (. . .). The "stones" as the Waganda call the falls' (*Journal*, p.426) divided the water out of the Victoria N'yanza and marked the birthplace of the Nile. Although Speke's evidence to support his conclusion that he had reached the goal of his quest was, strictly speaking, insufficient, he asserts 'the "stones" (. . .) the falls, was by far the most interesting sight I had seen in Africa' (*Journal*, p.426):

The expedition had now performed its functions. I saw that old Father Nile without any doubt rises in the Victoria N'yanza, and, as I had foretold, that lake is the great source of the holy river, which cradled the first

expounder of our religious belief (*Journal*, p.429).

Having mastered his objective, the experience has to be translated out of the physical into cultural terms to give it its due significance. What is to European eyes a new sight is actually 'old Father Nile' and Speke is taken back in thought to the origin of the Judaeo-Christian religion.

G.M. Young, writing about the Victorian Age in England claims:

To any observant mind it was manifest that a revolution of far deeper and wider import than any shift of the balance of power in Europe, or the centre of electoral or social gravity in England, was impending. Such a change as had come over the human mind in the sixteenth-century, when the earth expanded from Europe to a globe, was coming over it again. Now space was shrinking, time expanding. The earth had given up her most mysterious secret when in 1865 Speke stood on the shores of Victoria N'yanza and saw the Nile pouring northward.⁴⁵

Speke's exploratory quest in East Africa, revealed not only the truth of his claim that he had discovered the secret of the source of the Nile in 1858, which, like the Holy Grail, had been shrouded in mystery for centuries, but also, that 'these highly saturated Mountains of the Moon', (noted centuries earlier on a map by Claudius Ptolemy) 'gave birth to the Congo as well as to the Nile, and also to the Shire branch of the Zambézé' (*Journal*, p.257).

Speke is the model for what has traditionally been understood as the life of an explorer. He found a solution to a geographical puzzle which had perplexed the West for centuries and he was the first European to enter an unknown African Kingdom and its territory, Uganda. Certainly his dedication to the duty of discovery is greater than

anything Darwin can show in his *Journal of the Voyage of the 'Beagle'*. Darwin goes to no unvisited place, endures no special hardships and made on that journey no one observation which, literally, changed the maps of the world forever. Yet it was Darwin's enquiring eyes, noticing so much, asking so many questions, starting so many speculations, disciplined by the respect for detail, which was to produce the intellectual discovery that changed the way in which man thought. It is that movement from trying to find an answer to knowing what question to ask which was fundamental to the Victorian model of the explorer. In *Middlemarch*, Lydgate is ambitious to pursue the enquiries and discoveries of the great French psychologist Bichat:

What was the primitive tissue? In that way Lydgate put the question – not quite in the way required by the awaiting answer, but such missing of the right word befalls many seekers.⁴⁶

The answer here follows from the right formulation of the question, just as the revelation of the Grail to the questers had depended on the use of exactly the right formula of enquiry.

¹ *The Dictionary of National Biography*, Compact, 2 vols. (Oxford : Oxford University Press, 1975), II, p.1967.

² Charles Darwin, *The Autobiography of Charles Darwin, 1809-1882*, ed. Nora Barlow (London: Collins, 1958), p.77; hereafter referred to as *Darwin Auto*.

³ David Knight, *Humphrey Davy: Science and Power* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p.72.

⁴ George Eliot, *Middlemarch*, 1871-2 (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1976), pp.176-7.

⁵ A.R. Wallace, *The Wonderful Century: Its Successes and Failures* (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1898), p.191.

⁶ Elizabeth Gaskell, *Wives and Daughters*, 1864-6, ed. Frank Glover Smith (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1986), p.405.

⁷ Charles Darwin, *The Correspondence: Vol. I, 1821-1836*, eds. Frederick Burkhardt, Sydney Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p.312; hereafter referred to as *Corr*.

- ⁸ Charles Darwin, *A Naturalist's Voyage: Journal of Researches into the Natural History and Geology of the Countries Visited during The Voyage of H.M.S. 'Beagle' Round the World* (London: John Murray, 1889), 'Preface' p.v; hereafter referred to as *Journal*.
- ⁹ F. Darwin, *The Life and Letters of Charles Darwin, including an Autobiographical Chapter*, 3 vols. (London: John Murray, 1887), I, p.83.
- ¹⁰ Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), II, p.15; hereafter referred to as Kuhn.
- ¹¹ David Elliston Allen, *The Naturalist in Britain* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1978), p.80.
- ¹² Darwin, *Auto*. p.80.
- ¹³ Charles Darwin, *Diary of the Voyage of H.M.S. 'Beagle'* ed. Nora Barlow (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1933), p.427; hereafter referred to as Darwin, *Diary*.
- ¹⁴ Alfred Tennyson, 'Ulysses', in *The Poems of Alfred Lord Tennyson* (London: Longmans Green, 1969), p.560, ll.30-32..
- ¹⁵ *Charles Darwin and the Voyage of the 'Beagle'* ed. with an introd. by Nora Barlow (London: Pilot Press, 1945), p.69; hereafter referred to as *Barlow*.
- ¹⁶ Peter J. Bowler, *Charles Darwin: The Man and His Influence* (Oxford: Basil Blackwood, 1990), p.51.
- ¹⁷ D.R. Oldroyd, *Darwinian Impacts* (Milton Keynes: Open University, 1983), p.29; hereafter referred to as Oldroyd.
- ¹⁸ Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species*, 1859, ed. with an introd. by J.W. Burrow (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1985), p.107; hereafter referred to as *Origin*.
- ¹⁹ The first law of nature, in *Philosophic Zoologique*, 1809, as quoted in D.R. Oldroyd, p.30.
- ²⁰ Charles Lyell, *Principles of Geology*, ed. James A. Secord (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1997), p.67.
- ²¹ Darwin, *Diary*, p.383.
- ²² Stephen Jay Gould, *Times Arrow, Times Cycle* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991), pp.143-44.
- ²³ *The Beagle Record*, ed. Richard Darwin Keynes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p.299; hereafter referred to as *Beagle Record*.
- ²⁴ *More Letters of Charles Darwin*, 2 vols. eds. Francis Darwin and A.C. Seward (London: John Murray, 1903), I, pp.118-119.
- ²⁵ F. Darwin, *The Life and Letters of Charles Darwin*, 3 vols. (London: John Murray, 1887), III, p.159.
- ²⁶ Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man*, 1871, 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), p.132.
- ²⁷ John Lyon and Phillip Sloan, eds. and trans., *From Natural History to the History of Nature* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), p.17.
- ²⁸ Joseph Conrad, 'Geography and Some Explorers', in *Tales of Hearsay and Last Essays* (London: J.M. Dent, 1980), pp.14-16.
- ²⁹ John Hanning Speke, *What led to the Discovery of the Source of the Nile* (Edinburgh [printed] & London; Nelson, 1864), p.298; hereafter referred to as *WL*.
- ³⁰ John Hanning Speke, *Journal of the Discovery of the Source of the Nile*, 1863 (London: Constable, 1996), p.31; hereafter referred to as *Journal*.
- ³¹ Richard Francis Burton, *The Lake Regions of Central Africa*, 2 vols. (London: Longmans Green, 1861), II, p.204.
- ³² Richard Francis Burton, *The Lake Regions: The Nile Basin Part I*, (London: Tinsley Bros., 1864), 'Prefatory Remarks', p.6.
- ³³ Fergus Fleming, *Barrow's Boys* (London: Granta Books, 1998), p.424.
- ³⁴ Herodotus, *The History*, II 25-34, trans. George Rawlinson, 2 vols. (London: Dent, 1910), I, p.128.
- ³⁵ Robert I. Rotberg, ed. *Africa and its Explorers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), p.135; hereafter referred to as Rotberg.
- ³⁶ Alexander Maitland, *Speke and the Discovery of the Nile* (London: Constable, 1971), p.102; hereafter referred to as Maitland, *Speke*.
- ³⁷ Maitland, *Speke*, p.116.
- ³⁸ Alan Moorhead, *The White Nile* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1978), p.70.
- ³⁹ Rotberg, p.5.
- ⁴⁰ Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*, ed. J. Dover Wilson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), IV, p.129.

⁴¹ Roy C. Bridges, 'John Hanning Speke' in *Africa and Its Explorers*, ed. Rotberg (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), p.97.

⁴² Darwin, *Auto.* p.78.

⁴³ Maitland, *Speke*, p.136.

⁴⁴ Maitland, *Speke*, p.125.

⁴⁵ G.M. Young, *Portrait of an Age: Victorian England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1953) 2nd ed. p.107.

⁴⁶ George Eliot, *Middlemarch* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1976), 1st. pub. 1871-2. Ch.15, p.178.

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