

Studies on  
Themes and  
Motifs in  
Literature

*Beautiful Sanctuaries  
in Nineteenth- and  
Early-Twentieth-Century  
European Literature*

*Hugo G. Walter*

This book is a collection of insightful and thoughtful essays that explore the theme of beautiful sanctuaries in nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century European literature. The book focuses especially on selected works by Percy Shelley, E. T. A. Hoffmann, Henrik Ibsen, and James Hilton. These sanctuaries of light, natural beauty, and tranquility comfort, nurture, and soothe the heart, mind, and soul of the individual, and inspire creative expression.

“Hugo G. Walter presents a brilliant, lucid, and deeply learned study of nineteenth- and twentieth-century European prose and poetry for the avid scholar and enthusiast of literature.”

*Luisa Ferreira, Berkeley College*

“This is a fascinating and an insightful examination of the artist’s triumph over the limitations of mortality. The breadth of scholarship in this excellent and important book is remarkable.”

*Richard Schultz, Berkeley College*

**Hugo G. Walter** has a B.A. from Princeton University, an M.A. from Old Dominion University, a Ph.D. in literature from Yale University, and a Ph.D. in interdisciplinary studies from Drew University. Walter is Professor of English and Humanities at Berkeley College, New Jersey, and Online. He has written widely on European literature, including *The Apostrophic Moment in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century German Lyric Poetry* (Lang, 1988), *Space and Time on the Magic Mountain: Studies in Nineteenth- and Early-Twentieth-Century European Literature* (Lang, 1999), and *Sanctuaries of Light in Nineteenth Century European Literature* (Lang, 2010). In addition, Walter has published ten volumes of poetry.

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# Studies on Themes and Motifs in Literature

Horst S. Daemmrich  
*General Editor*

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New York • Washington, D.C./Baltimore • Bern  
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This work is dedicated to my mother, Elli R. Walter, and to all individuals who appreciate sanctuaries of light, natural beauty, and serenity.





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## ✻ *Preface*

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In my previous monograph, *Sanctuaries of Light in Nineteenth Century European Literature*, I explored the theme of sanctuaries of light, serenity, and natural beauty in selected works of William Wordsworth, E. T. A. Hoffmann, Joseph von Eichendorff, and Charlotte Brontë.

In this monograph, *Beautiful Sanctuaries in Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century European Literature*, I discuss the theme of sanctuaries of light, tranquility, harmony, and natural beauty in various works of Percy Shelley, E. T. A. Hoffmann, Henrik Ibsen, and James Hilton. The chapter on Hoffmann in this monograph represents a revised version of the chapter in the previous monograph.

I would also like to add a personal note here which is relevant to my discussion of the notion of sanctuaries of light. I have been interested in literary studies and in the theme of sanctuaries in literature for many years, dating back to my youth growing up in Princeton, New Jersey. The natural beauty, the architectural magnificence and splendor, the luminescence, and the tranquility of the town of Princeton and of Princeton University have always attracted and appealed to me and have been consistently inspirational for me aesthetically, emotionally, and spiritually. The sense of a lovely sanctuary or refuge which I have felt in Princeton and in various other places in the United States, in Europe, in Canada, and in Asia is infused with the aura of the “healing Paradise” (355) of rejuvenating vitality which culminates Percy Shelley’s “Lines written among the Euganean Hills” and with the spirit of the “sense sublime” of which William Wordsworth speaks in “Tintern Abbey”:

And I have felt  
A presence that disturbs me with the joy  
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime  
Of something far more deeply interfused,  
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,  
And the round ocean, and the living air,  
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;  
A motion and a spirit, that impels

All thinking things, all objects of all thought,  
And rolls through all things. (93-102)

I have been fortunate to experience various places of sanctuary (as architectural interiors and as scenic and picturesque natural spaces) over the years (especially in beautiful areas of the United States, Europe, Canada, and Asia). College libraries, university libraries, museums, beautiful gardens, and historic houses in lovely natural settings especially exemplify for me sanctuaries of luminescence, harmony, and serenity in the spirit of the statement of Prometheus in Act III, Scene iii of Percy Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*. For these are extraordinary places where "lovely apparitions . . . / Then radiant—as the mind, arising bright / From the embrace of beauty" (III.iii.49-51) will inspire "the progeny immortal / Of Painting, Sculpture, and rapt Poesy / And arts, though unimagined, yet to be" (III.iii.54-56). These are beautiful places which have the capacity, in the sense of Wordsworth's statement in the "Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood," to signify "the fountain-light of all our day" (151) and the "master-light of all our seeing" (152) and to preserve perpetually the "power to make / Our noisy years seem moments in the being / Of the eternal Silence: truths that wake, / To perish never" (153-56).

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## ✱ *Introduction*

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In Act II, Scene v of Percy Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* Asia describes the "enchanted Boat" (II.v.72) of her soul wandering with the angelic guidance of her companion spirit through a "Paradise of wildernesses" (II.v.81) and subsequently through "Elysian garden islets" (II.v.91) where the spirit of love creates a dynamic aura of harmony in the earth and the heavens. Asia, a mythologically vital figure created, developed, and shaped in the spirit of Venus and Aphrodite, at whose birth the powerful radiance of love illuminated "Earth and Heaven / And the deep ocean and the sunless caves, / And all that dwells within them" (II.v.28-30), is also characterized in glowing adoration in Act II as the "Life of Life" (II.v.48), the "Child of Light" (II.v.54), and the "Lamp of Earth" (II.v.66). Asia has the extraordinary capacity to establish and to nurture sanctuaries of light and love in the world and to signify by her own presence in a particular existential context a sanctuary of perpetually vital luminescence, love, hope, and serenity.

As Act II, Scene v concludes Asia declares:

We have past Age's icy caves,  
And Manhood's dark and tossing waves  
And Youth's smooth ocean, smiling to betray; . . .  
Through Death and Birth, to a diviner day,  
A Paradise of vaulted bowers  
Lit by downward-gazing flowers  
And watery paths that wind between  
Wildernesses calm and green,  
Peopled by shapes too bright to see . . . (II.v.98-100, 103-8).

Such a "Paradise of vaulted bowers" (II.v.104) signifies a sanctuary of light, harmony, beauty, and tranquility. This is a sanctuary beyond the vicissitudes of death and mortality which can comfort, heal, inspire, and soothe the heart and the soul of the sensitive individual, the lyrical wanderer.

## 2 *Beautiful Sanctuaries*

In Act III, Scene iii Prometheus, after being unbound by Hercules, addresses Asia and asks her to dwell with him in a cave which contains various plants, is “paved with veined emerald” (III.iii.13) and secluded, contains a vital fountain, and represents a place where they can “talk of time and change / As the world ebbs and flows, ourselves unchanged” (III.iii.23–24). This is a sanctuary of profound peace and subtle radiance beyond the ravages and tribulations of mortality.

In a subsequent passage the Earth describes her cave as an extraordinary space:

There is a Cavern where my spirit  
Was panted forth in anguish whilst thy pain  
Made my heart mad, and those who did inhale it  
Became mad too, and built a Temple there . . .  
Which breath now rises, as among tall weeds  
A violet’s exhalation, and it fills  
With a serener light and crimson air  
Intense yet soft the rocks and woods around. (III.iii.124–27, 131–34)

The atmosphere of a special refuge which such a space instinctively possesses is further reinforced when the Earth calls forth a spirit who is portrayed as her torch-bearer to guide the present company to a beautiful natural place where there is a temple which is “populous most with living imagery— / Praxitelean shapes, whose marble smiles / Fill the hushed air with everlasting love” (III.iii.164–66). The temple is further defined as having once celebrated Prometheus. At the end of Act III, Scene iii the Earth proclaims that “the destined Cave” (III.iii.175) is beside the temple.

Edward Hungerford in *Shores of Darkness* argues insightfully that the temple “must be near Athens, for there the Attic cult of Prometheus celebrated the worship of the Titan” (197) and that the temple “must have reference to the Academy, the famous grove outside the walls of Athens” (197). Hungerford makes the following interesting observation about this site:

There were two places in ancient times connected with the Attic cult of Prometheus: one was his sanctuary in the Academy; the other was the sacred grove at Colonus, a deme outside the walls of Athens, about a mile and quarter to the northwest, and contiguous with the grove of the Academy. It is the spot where Plato once taught and where the action of Sophocles’ tragedy *Oedipus at Colonus* takes place.



Hungerford proceeds to argue effectively that the life of Prometheus and Asia in this refuge will represent not only “the enjoyment of the Promethean gift of love no longer enslaved to mutability” (201) but also “the cultivation of the capacities of the mind” (201) in a spirit of enlightenment. For Prometheus asserts in Act III, Scene iii to Asia, as he addresses her as “thou light of life” (III.iii.6), that they will create a healing space of exceptional natural beauty, divine harmony, and extraordinary effulgence where the arts of painting, sculpture, and poetry will be nurtured.

In this series of essays I will examine several sanctuaries of light (whether motivated by an inner effulgence or generated by an external radiance), natural beauty, creativity, harmony, and serenity in nineteenth-century and early-twentieth-century European literature which celebrate and exemplify the spirit of and some of the characteristics and qualities so vitally apparent in the places of luminescent refuge in Shelley’s *Prometheus Unbound*. I will focus on various descriptions, depictions, and portrayals of sanctuaries of light in the works of Percy Shelley, E. T. A. Hoffmann, Henrik Ibsen, and James Hilton. This collection of essays represents a continuation of the discussion of this topic which began with my previous monograph, *Sanctuaries of Light in Nineteenth Century European Literature*.

In Chapter 1 I will discuss various extraordinary sanctuaries of light, natural beauty, harmony, and tranquility in the poetry of Percy Shelley. The interest in the creation of and participation in sanctuaries of light in the works of Percy Shelley is intimately connected to his concern about and his quest to confront and transcend mortality. This endeavor to create luminescent sanctuaries which can assuage, mitigate, or vanquish the ravages and vicissitudes of everyday mortality begins with a strong awareness of transience in poems such as “Mutability,” “Ozymandias,” and “A Lament.” Such a dynamic and sensitive awareness is soothed and tempered by the conviction in the poet’s capacity to appreciate and to generate epiphanic moments of radiance and peacefulness which may counter and sublimate evanescence as in “Hymn to Intellectual Beauty” and “Lines written among the Euganean Hills.”

“Mont Blanc” initiates a new dimension in the quest for a transcendence of mortality by emphasizing the poet’s awareness of his creative vitality which in a sense creates the world around him and gives it meaning. This dimension culminates in the strategy of the transformational capacity of the lyrical self in “Ode to the West Wind,” “Song of Apollo,” and “The Cloud” where Shelley’s persona assumes the role, literally and symbolically, of the aspect of nature or mythological existence he is describing. Whereas Wordsworth aspires in

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various poems to challenge mortality by creating an orphically hermetic spatiality, Shelley counters mortality with a self-generated quest for the transformational moment—a moment or series of moments when the “I” assumes different roles or shapes of timeless vitality or relatively timeless strength, when the “I” forms himself anew. The transformation of the self and the recreation of a new self in Shelley’s poetry derives its power from an expansive, a diastolic, spatiality and an orphic temporality, a sense of time which is visionary in its expansiveness and open-endedness.

Shelley’s *Prometheus Unbound* offers not only epiphanic moments of luminescent vitality and sanctuaries of emotionally dynamic radiance but also an enduring vision of love and hope. In Act III, Scene iii two such extraordinary sanctuaries are the depiction of a temple with oracular capacities (lines 127–30), namely a representation of Delphi and its oracle, and the temple where the importance of Prometheus as the bringer of fire was annually celebrated:

And up the green ravine, across the vale,  
Beside the windless and crystalline pool  
Where ever lies, on unerasing waves,  
The image of a temple built above,  
Distinct with column, arch and architrave . . .  
And populous most with living imagery—  
Praxitelean shapes, whose marble smiles  
Fill the hushed air with everlasting love. (III.iii.158–62, 164–66)

In “The Sensitive Plant” Shelley continues his intensive reflections about mortality and the possibility of transcendence, arguing ultimately in its conclusion that death is evanescent and that love and beauty are eternal. The persona asserts in the concluding section of the poem that the beautiful forms and fragrances in the garden which is the semantic focus of the poem are perpetual dimensions of the landscape envisioned in the mind of the thoughtful observer. Shelley’s reflections on mortality and on sanctuaries of light and serenity to challenge, transform, or vanquish mortality and to heal and soothe his mind and soul in “The Sensitive Plant” and other poems are directly and intimately connected to his statements about time and eternity in such prose works as “A Defence of Poetry.”

As Wordsworth in *The Prelude*, so Shelley in various poems stresses the importance of lovely natural spaces, beautiful sanctuaries of light, which

comfort his heart and soul and inspire and generate his creativity. As Wordsworth in the “Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood” and in *The Prelude*, so Shelley in “Hymn to Intellectual Beauty,” “Ode to the West Wind,” “Song of Apollo,” *Prometheus Unbound*, and “The Sensitive Plant” affirms the importance of an emotional sensitivity and of a generous heart and spirit which would include in its perception and vision all aspects of the natural world, whether prominent, dynamic, and spacious or more fragile, subtle, and gentle.

In Chapter 2 I will explore sanctuaries of exceptional effulgence in several stories by E. T. A. Hoffmann. Whereas in the poetry of Shelley and Wordsworth the sanctuaries of light and serenity typically exist and thrive in the world of nature, in the stories of Hoffmann sanctuaries of light and tranquility are consistently present in interior environments and domestic interiors. For example, in “Ritter Gluck” the most vital sanctuary in the story is a sanctuary of radiance and musical harmony and vitality which exists in the private room of the composer Gluck. In “The Golden Pot” the most important sanctuaries throughout most of the narrative are present in the magnificent house of the Archivist Lindhorst. When Lindhorst takes Anselmus through his remarkable house there are several rooms, especially the library and the room which contains the golden pot, which exhibit not only an extraordinary radiance but also a rich array of colors, fragrances, and melodies. One might even claim that the house of Lindhorst itself signifies a refuge from the exigencies and idiosyncratic encroachments of the world of everyday mortality. The ultimate sanctuary of luminescence which Serpentina and Anselmus enjoy in Atlantis could be interpreted as a beautiful refuge in the natural environment or even as a lovely and spatially expansive “interior” which has the aura of an exceptional space in the external environment.

In “The Sandman” and “Mademoiselle de Scudery” the sense of sanctuary, although not as vibrantly abundant and dynamically effulgent as in “Ritter Gluck” and “The Golden Pot,” is also depicted in interior environments. In “The Mines at Falun” the sense of refuge is prominently displayed in an underground ambience. The world of the mine possesses an aura of crystalline exuberance and shimmering radiances which allures the protagonist. In this story the protagonist is thoroughly entranced by the sparkling jewels and rich stones which seem to be embedded in the profundity of the mine.

In Chapter 3 I will discuss the notion of sanctuaries of light and serenity in the works of Henrik Ibsen. One of the most dynamic attempts to create a sanctuary of light and tranquility occurs in Ibsen’s *The Master Builder*. Solness,

the master builder, has had a publicly and outwardly successful career, but is dissatisfied with himself and with his present existence. His discontent manifests itself in the tensions with Aline, his wife, and in his feeling of being threatened professionally by youth and by innovative architectural designs. The creative achievement of Solness is seen in his series of constructive efforts from ecclesiastical to domestic architecture. However, Solness aspires to achieve something greater and more enduring, the castles in the air, which he now believes are the only structures which can contain genuine happiness. The quest of Solness to achieve a castle in the air is the culmination of a developmental process to attain a beautiful, transcendent space beyond the confines and limitations of everyday mortality.

In various other works by Ibsen, for example, *Peer Gynt*, *A Doll's House*, *Ghosts*, *The Wild Duck*, and *When We Dead Awaken*, there are attempts to create sanctuaries of light and serenity. Typically, the sanctuary which is created or in which a character participates is fleeting and transient, despite its beauty and apparent vitality. In *The Wild Duck* and in *When We Dead Awaken*, as in *The Master Builder*, the death of a major character undermines or completely destroys any abiding sense of sanctuary. In *Peer Gynt* the devotion of Solveig to Peer and his image offers a semblance of a luminescent sanctuary at the end of the dramatic narrative. In *Hedda Gabler* the sense of sanctuary which is represented by the room where Tesman and Mrs. Elvsted will work together to rejuvenate Lovborg's manuscript is one example of a potentially dynamic refuge which will be sustained. The devotion of Tesman and Mrs. Elvsted to this literary labor which requires a meticulous attentiveness from the participants will presumably preserve the emotional and intellectual radiance of this sanctuary.

In Chapter 4 I will explore the idea of a sanctuary and a sense of expansiveness of space and time in James Hilton's *Lost Horizon*. This novel articulates and reveals a relatively timeless world—the world of Shangri-La—which is almost physically inaccessible and which one finds only by chance or fate. The Tibetan monastery which lures Hugh Conway, the protagonist, from the migratory life of the British consular service is a seemingly timeless world of subtly vital life at the fragile edge of eternity. Conway, intuitively interested in finding a relatively timeless space of intellectual, emotional, and spiritual vitality, shows a profound appreciation for Shangri-La and develops a diastolic conception of time (a sense of the open-endedness of time) in transforming a diastolic to an hermetic sense of space. What is especially unique about Conway's hermetic sense of space is that it is expansive and magnanimous in its inwardness—the aura of this space is dynamic, not static. The lovely

sanctuary of Shangri-La is pervaded by a rich serenity and a deep harmony which floats down to the valley and permeates the heights of the mountain and the heavens.

I will show that Hilton's protagonist in *Lost Horizon* affirms a Bergsonian life-philosophy (especially in the spirit of being able to create time freely from the present moment onward) in his quest for a sense of continuity with the world of Shangri-La. I will also show that Hilton's conception of Shangri-La is similar to the depiction of light, silence, and atmosphere in American luminist painting of the nineteenth century and similar to the conception of silence and light in various works by Odilon Redon.

For Hilton the mountain sanctuary of Shangri-La is a special place of cultural and intellectual vitality infused with a profound serenity. As for Wordsworth's persona in *The Prelude*, the mountain experience for Hilton's protagonist is most vital and stimulating when it is conceived of as a threshold experience at the interface of life and death, time and eternity. Unlike Wordsworth's mountain experience in *The Prelude*, which is characterized by an emotional and spiritual expansion of the self, Hilton's presentation of the mountain sanctuary in *Lost Horizon* is motivated by a preservation of the self, especially as a sensitive reaction to the violence of the early twentieth century and to the destructiveness of the first world war and its consequences.

As Arnold's persona in "Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse," Hilton's protagonist ultimately adopts a hermetic approach in his quest for a sanctuary of light and serenity. Conway feels very much at home in the aesthetically beautiful and softly enchanting atmosphere of Shangri-La. By virtue of his intellectual vitality, his compassion, his wisdom, and his visionary imagination, Hugh Conway is the perfect choice to be the successor of the High Lama. Conway is emotionally conflicted at the end of the novel, for part of him would enthusiastically remain in this lovely mountain sanctuary. However, he also feels a sense of professional obligation to Mallinson who wants to leave and return to the world of everyday mortality. The novel ends with Conway's attempt to return to the magic mountain, to the beautiful tranquility of Shangri-La, which he has left too abruptly in his attempt to be helpful and publicly responsible. Conway hopes to find the extraordinary mountain sanctuary once again, for he knows that Shangri-La represents a response of peacefulness, serenity, and calm wisdom to the world of everyday mortality with its destructive tendencies and negative inclinations. Conway realizes that Shangri-La signifies a blissful sanctuary of cultured peace, hope, and luminescence which may shape the foundation of a more humanitarian future.

The idea of a sanctuary and the desire to create or participate in a sanctuary are motivated to some extent, if not to a considerable extent, by a profound concern about and by an acutely sensitive response to time and the inevitability of mortality. From Shakespeare's sonnet "When I Have Seen By Time's Fell Hand," Thomas Gray's "Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College," William Wordsworth's *The Prelude*, Percy Shelley's "Ozymandias" and "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty," E. T. A. Hoffmann's "The Golden Pot," and Joseph von Eichendorff's "Abschied" and "Der Einsiedler" to Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, Emily Dickinson's "Because I Could Not Stop for Death," Walt Whitman's "Song of Myself," Thomas Hardy's "Hap," Tennyson's "The Poet," Ibsen's *The Master Builder*, Thomas Mann's "Death in Venice," and James Hilton's *Lost Horizon* just to name several works which are attentively, intimately, and sensitively aware of the flux of mortality, the protagonist in literary works dealing with mortality and transience may try to conquer time, to challenge it, to reshape it, to measure it, to eliminate it, to mask it, to transform it, or even to coexist in a complementary relation with it. The protagonist may even try to reaffirm or redefine his own existence through his relation to time and mortality.

There are multiple strategies of approaching and confronting the issue of time and mortality in a thoughtful and viable manner. One strategy is to believe in the eternity of the creative individual or the creative work as having the capacity to vanquish time and mortality. This philosophy of time is exemplified by Shakespeare's "Devouring Time." In this poem Shakespeare addresses time as a destructive force which can "blunt the lion's paws" (1) or "Pluck the keen teeth from the fierce tiger's jaws" (3). As negative and hostile as the presence of such a force is in the universe, the poet does not fear it because he believes in his immortality as a writer and in the creative eternity of his literary achievements. In the first quatrain of "Devouring Time" the persona describes some of the most destructive aspects of time. In the second quatrain of this sonnet the persona proclaims that time can do whatever it wants to the world, but he forbids it "one most heinous crime" (8). The crime which the poet forbids time, concisely described in the next four lines, is that time should not effect or age his love. The assertive plea of the third quatrain becomes the aggressive proclamation of the final couplet: "Yet, do thy worst, old Time: despite thy wrong, / My love shall in my verse ever live young" (13-14). The persona is so thoroughly confident of his creative vitality that he can challenge time to be as destructive as it chooses or wishes to be. Despite the evil which time (the persona addresses time here as 'old Time,' implying that time itself is subject to mortality) may and does inflict upon the world of

humanity, the poet is instinctively certain that the immortality of his love will be achieved and affirmed through the eternity of his poetry.

In “Not Marble, nor the Gilded Monuments” Shakespeare also discusses the theme of the challenge which mortality offers to his creative endeavors. This poem adds two corollary thematic emphases to the discussion of the theme of time which was offered by “Devouring Time.” In the first two quatrains of “Not Marble, nor the Gilded Monuments” the persona argues that his creativity, his poetry (and, by implication, any such vital poetic expression) is more powerful and more everlasting than any material object, even more than the marble and “gilded monuments / Of princes” (1–2). In the third quatrain the persona declares that the aesthetic and intellectual power of the poem and of its thematic object (the “you”) will be perpetuated in future generations of readers. The final couplet argues for the eternity of the poet’s love through the existence of the poem and through generations of lovers’ eyes who read and appreciate the poem. The final couplet also implies the capacity and the vitality of the effective and thoughtful literary work to transcend mortality. Shakespeare creates a sense of sanctuary in the poem itself. Or one might say that the poem represents an atmosphere of sanctuary against mortality which is perpetuated in the interpretive awareness and thoughtfulness of future generations of readers.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson’s “The Poet” depicts the poet as a visionary, a sage, and a supreme creator secure from the ravages of mortality and portrays the vital ambience of a radiant sanctuary. In the first stanzas of “The Poet” Tennyson describes the essential features of the poet—the golden, life-affirmative heritage, the capacity to experience a spectrum of human emotion, and the ability to develop and nurture a visionary imagination. These qualities are elaborated upon in stanza four which stresses the energy of his thought, in stanza seven which proclaims his capability to disseminate truth and to revitalize the world, and in stanza nine which implies the poet’s potential to create, or even recreate, a Garden of Eden-like existence.

The first lines of the poem suggest that the poet belongs to a favored world in the spirit of Friedrich Hölderlin’s statement in “Youth” that the poetic persona grew up in an aesthetically and emotionally privileged and refined environment:

In my days of boyhood  
 A god saved me often  
 From the shouts and the rod of mankind.  
 Then, safe and virtuous, I played

With flowers of the forest,  
 And the breezes of Heaven  
 Played with me.

In Tennyson's "The Poet" the persona not only experiences a similar upbringing but also reveals a capacity to participate in, and, by implication, to shape a world of light. The timeless quality of this aura is seen in the fact that the golden light pervades not only the day but the night as well, exemplified in the image "golden Stars" (2). Lines three and four of the first stanza of "The Poet" proclaim the capacity of the poet to appreciate and participate in a range of emotion while striving beyond hate and disdain to resolve such emotional tensions in "the love of love" (4). Tennyson's persona is endowed with the conviction, expressed so eloquently by Demogorgon in Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* that love folds over the world its healing and comforting powers.

Stanza two of Tennyson's "The Poet" presents the poet as a visionary who can see through life and death, through good and evil, and even into the depths of his own soul. This persona's vision is as powerful as the faith of Wordsworth's persona in the "Ode: Intimations of Immortality" who looks through death in shaping the philosophic and reflective mind. The capacity to appreciate the depths and intricacies of human emotion and thought enables the poet to understand the everlasting will of the universe and perhaps even help in forming and expressing it.

The visionary mind is so vital that its thoughts, "winged with flame" (12), fill with light and melodies the winds of the world. If we interpret the winds as manifestations of the Aeolian lyre, then Tennyson seems to be suggesting here the capability of the poet to inspire and to shape the creative energy and the healing power of the world. The emphasis on light is intimately linked to and reinforces the golden aura of the first stanza. The hermetic uniqueness of the visionary mind and its affinity for a sense of sanctuary is suggested in the image of the echoing feet threading the most secret walks of fame. That the poet is able to explore these hallowed corridors reaffirms his appreciation of the importance of a sanctuary and his differentiation from the world of everyday mortality.

Stanzas three through seven are permeated by a dynamics of development and growth. Not only does the verse of the poet have a melodic mellifluousness but his thoughts flow through the world by their own innate incantatory power. As Keats' poetic voice is heard in the music of nature in Shelley's "Adonais," so the voice of Tennyson's poet infuses nature with its luminescent, melodic energy. The imaginative thoughts, after moving



earthward from their lofty, majestic source, will continue to participate in a dynamic process of eternal cyclicity, growth, and renewal. As “arrow-seeds of the field flower” (19) they will take root and spring forth anew, culminating in a golden flower, in a bloom of effusively luminescent radiance. Such a flower, the symbolic representation of the poet, disperses the “winged shafts of truth” (26) and perpetually revitalizes a spirit of hope and youth. Stanzas three through seven, culminating in an image of expansive effulgence, emphasize not only the capacity of the poet to illuminate the world of everyday mortality with a powerful and an enduring aesthetic vision and to establish an intimate and sensitive association with nature but also to develop a vision of truth and to revitalize the emotional and the spiritual soul of humankind.

One might claim that Tennyson’s poet fuses Wordsworth’s and Shelley’s conceptions of the poet. He desires to be, in the spirit of Wordsworth’s assertions in the Preface to the Second Edition of the *Lyrical Ballads*, “a man speaking to men,” aspiring to fulfill the challenge of the open scroll, while sustaining and strengthening a unique emotional, aesthetic, and spiritual sensibility. Not only does this poet sing a song in which all beings can join, but he rejoices in the presence of truth and portrays poetry as “the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge.” Moreover, in his illuminating power Tennyson’s poet, in the spirit of Shelley’s “A Defence of Poetry,” lifts the veil from the hidden beauty of the world (as in stanza nine), turns all things to loveliness, as in stanza one, transforming hate and scorn to love, and enlarges the range of the imagination by infusing it with innovative images, with provocative ideas, and with radiant reflections.

The image of the poet as sage, as a harbinger of and a guide to truth, implied in stanza two (an individual who has the wisdom to see through the intrigues and the machinations of the world of everyday reality) and strengthened in stanza seven (in the facility of dispersing “the winged shafts of truth”), culminates in stanza nine where the vitality of truth is reaffirmed in the resplendent aura of a great garden. The dreams of desire of stanza eight are fulfilled in stanza nine in the creation of the Garden of Eden by expanding the range and intensity of the aesthetic-intellectual vision.

Tennyson’s Garden of Eden in “The Poet” is a garden of light, reinforcing the aura of the golden clime in which he was born and affirming a profound devotion to truth as an integral aspect of the holistically motivated luminescence. The sense of time in “The Poet” believes in and celebrates the potential harmony of past, present, and future through the creative, aesthetic vitality of the poet. While images of a natural refuge from the world as a space of reflection on the past, self-revitalization, or poetic inspiration are present in

various poems of Tennyson, the Garden of Eden image in “The Poet” is especially interesting because of the golden luminescence which creates and pervades it. The lovely sunrise is the “fountain-light” of the aesthetic vision which will perpetually reenergize itself by preserving and strengthening the power of its inner radiance.

As the golden light in Joseph Turner’s painting *Angel Standing in the Sun* congeals into the supernatural form of an angel, so “Freedom” (37) in Tennyson’s “The Poet” emanates from the golden light of the Eden-shaping sunrise. One might even suggest that “Freedom” (37) is the crystallization of the essence of the orphic, outward-directed dimension of the poetic scroll. “Freedom” (37) also represents the mirroring of the soul of the poet—his eyes are burning perhaps because in the sense of a creator who has shaped a work of an intensity and power that he was not fully aware of, the figure of Freedom is the activated, the publicly engaged poetic soul, the creative spirit who is and will remain “an unacknowledged legislator” of the world through devotion to “the progeny Immortal / of Painting, Sculpture, and rapt Poesy” (*Prometheus Unbound*, III.iii.54–55).

The final stanza of “The Poet” asserts the power of the pen over that of the sword. The open scroll of the poet is so vital that it has the capacity not only to illuminate and revitalize the world through its emanation, or manifestation of the figure of Freedom, but also to renew itself perpetually in epiphanic moments of orphic luminescence. The creation of the Garden of Eden ambience in stanza nine is such a dynamic moment which evolves the golden light which will influence and shape the world in an epiphany of self-generating radiance.

The ending of “The Poet” revitalizes and redefines the affirmative, dynamic power of the beginning of the poem. Although it is not the poet directly but a manifestation and symbol of the poet, “Freedom,” that emerges at the end the powerful creative presence of the poet who “saw thro’ life and death” (5) is proclaimed. The creative vitality of the persona in “The Poet” fulfills the challenge of Walter Pater in *The Renaissance* that art and life should be infused with a dynamic energy and a passionate creative vitality. As Tennyson’s “The Poet,” so Pater’s conclusion to *The Renaissance* draws on imagery of fire and flame to signify its artistic power. Whereas Tennyson’s “The Lady of Shalott” ends with the night of the poet and the ending of “The Palace of Art” is pervaded by the aura of a metaphysical twilight, “The Poet” represents a paean to light, to the luminescent vitality and self-regenerative effulgent cyclicity of the poetic power.

In Tennyson's "The Poet" the persona creates not only for himself but also for the world; in contrast, in Tennyson's "The Palace of Art" the persona creates only for herself. In "The Palace of Art" the poetic persona creates a hermetic, self-contained world of beauty which would accommodate every mood of her tranquil soul. The images which soothe and inspire her—images which seem to have an external existence in the halls of the palace—may also be construed as landscapes of the mind. The construction of the palace demonstrates the supreme creative vitality of the persona. Whereas the persona of "The Poet" creates an inner expansiveness of mind which has the world of mortality as its domain, the persona of "The Palace of Art" shapes an outer expansiveness of spirit which has as its realm the spaciousness of its own creation. The persona of "The Palace of Art" revels in her own courts, lawns, cloisters, fountains, and gallery. While the personae of the two poems have different aesthetic conceptions and philosophies of art they do share an interest in and an emphasis on dazzling brilliance of light and flame in their visions. The "viewless arrows" (11) of the persona's thoughts in "The Poet" are "wing'd with flame" (12), whereas in "The Palace of Art" "The light aerial gallery, golden-rail'd, / Burnt like a fringe of fire" (47-48). Moreover, the deep-set windows of the palace "Would seem slow-flaming crimson fires / From shadow'd grots of arches interlaced, / And tipt with frost-like spires" (50-52).

Like Shelley's "Witch of Atlas" the persona of "The Palace of Art" develops and nurtures a hermetic existence beyond good and evil, indifferent to the events and the activities, to the happiness and the suffering of the world of everyday mortality. The absolute contentment and complacency of the persona in "The Palace of Art" with her exclusively hermetic situation is the tragic flaw which will ultimately lead to her downfall. Perhaps the flaw of the persona in this poem is not only her complacency but also her attempt to "possess" the world of her creation. When she possesses it as she asserts in line 181 she undermines its potential for further refinement and growth, undermining its capacity to renew and regenerate its own aesthetic vitality. The persona's indifference to mortal concerns and suffering and her hubris of functioning as "God holding no form of creed" (211) also precipitate her demise as the creative demiurge of the palace of art.

In the fourth year of her sojourn in the palace of art the persona is plagued by God with despair so that she disdains her solitude. The once self-assured dynamic persona is no longer in control of her spacious mansion which now reveals uncertain shapes standing in dark corners. Now oppressed by her incapacity to govern her own mind, for which the mansion serves as a