

# THE POETRY OF THE ROMANTIC GARDEN

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The Romantic nature lyric is usually regarded as being grounded in sensation, in actual experience, in contrast to the topographical landscape poem of the eighteenth century, in which the landscape often appears as a sum of cultural and collective experience, rather than referring to a subjective mood - or where the landscape is more of an appropriate symbol than an actual locale. The Romantic nature poem can also be seen in contrast to the eighteenth-century pastoral, which transforms any landscape into Arcadia, a literary landscape modelled on Greek and Roman pastoral poetry. The shift from Classicism to Romanticism can be viewed as a shift from the general to the specific, or as the English Romanticist J.R. Watson says:

Instead of viewing a landscape, the romantics preferred to feel it, and with the feeling went a heightened perception of its beauty. Instead of comparing one landscape with another, they surrendered to the power of each, to the moments of individual delight; instead of dividing up the landscape into items, they struggled to express its unity.<sup>1</sup>

The Romanticist M.H. Abrams also stresses the meaning of *place* in the Romantic lyric: "In the Romantic poem (...) the speaker merely happens upon a natural scene which is present, particular, and almost always precisely located (...)"<sup>2</sup>

However, this is a truth which requires qualification. For in such an understanding it is easy to neglect the intertextual field into which authors - by necessity - write themselves. The Belgian-

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<sup>1</sup>J.R. Watson: *Picturesque Landscape and English Romantic Poetry*, London 1970, p. 196.

<sup>2</sup>M.H. Abrams, "Structure and Style in the Greater Romantic Lyric", in *From Sensibility to Romanticism*, eds. Frederick W. Hilles and Harold Bloom, New York 1965, p. 556.

American literary critic Paul de Man characterises such a view as a metaphysics of presence, which does not take full account of the rhetoric of language and poetry. The American school of deconstruction revives the notion of *topos*. Harold Bloom criticises the New Critics' view of the text as an autonomous, complete whole - in Bloom's view the meaning of a poem can only be another poem; it can only be read and understood on the basis of tradition: "Criticism is the art of knowing the hidden roads that go from poem to poem."<sup>3</sup> The notion of *topos*, with its fixed schemes of thought and expression, formulae, phrases and quotations, is otherwise linked to pre-nineteenth-century literature, from before the Romantic Age, when the rhetorical common denominator determined both the choice of subject and its treatment. The topic was thus regarded as a period-specific technique, alluding to the unbroken tradition of Western European style from Antiquity to the Romantic Age - "von der Antike bis zum Durchbruch e. eigenwertigen Ausdruckshaltung im 18. Jh.," as Gero von Wilpert defines it in *Sachwörterbuch der Literatur*.<sup>4</sup> In other words, the topic "is mastered" in the emergence of a personal voice in literature.

Against this, Paul de Man and others assert that the topic cannot be mastered; literature will always be quotations, echoes, allusions. De Man's stress on the *emblem* in his reading of Yeats's poetry ("Image and emblem in Yeats"),<sup>5</sup> can be seen as a polemical rejection of the poetics of experience, in favour of the literary tradition and rhetoric.

In order, for instance, to read and understand a nature poem like "Høstsang" (Autumn Song) by the Norwegian Romantic poet J.S. Welhaven (*Digte*, 1839), it is thus by no means certain that a comparison with Norwegian nature is the most fruitful approach; more appropriate might be a comparison with the Swedish Romantic poet Stagnelius' "Flyttfåglarna" (The migratory birds) of

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<sup>3</sup>Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence. A theory of poetry*, New York 1979, p. 96.

<sup>4</sup>Gero von Wilpert, *Sachwörterbuch der Literatur*, Stuttgart 1961, p. 641.

<sup>5</sup>Paul de Man: *The rhetoric of romanticism*, New York 1984.

1824, and the Finland-Swedish author Runeberg's 1830 poem of the same title.

However, Paul de Man is accused of cutting the links between the work of art and its surroundings by neglecting experience and sensation: poetry has nothing to say about reality.

This discussion will not be followed up here, but the starting point of this article is the interesting questions de Man has raised about the problem of referentiality. In the following there will be an attempt at reading a nature poem not as a heartfelt expression of experience, but as an "echo" of *the Romantic garden* and its aesthetics. The poem is titled "Natlig Fart" (Night Gallop), and it was written by the Norwegian Romantic poet Andreas Munch (1811-1873). Andreas Munch wrote several poems about Romantic gardens; however, it is more interesting that the aesthetics of the Romantic garden may be discovered in poems that have nothing to do with gardens or parks. The landscape is often described in terms of the landscape garden; the register of experience corresponds to the "tour de sentiment" provided by the Romantic garden. Before taking a closer look at the poem, we should briefly examine the principles on which the Romantic garden is based, since it evolved in opposition to the formal garden.

## II The aesthetics of the garden

The English landscape garden - "the Romantic garden" as it came to be called - evolved in eighteenth-century England as a reaction against the formal geometrical language which until then had dominated garden design, reaching its apogee in the French Baroque garden (Louis XIV's Versailles). While the Baroque garden was intimately linked to the building, and simultaneously separated from the landscape, the ideal of the Romantic garden was that it should appear as an open space, i.e. as an extension of the landscape - hence the name landscape garden.

While the palace is the centrepiece of the Baroque garden, the wayfarer - the individual himself - is at the centre of the Romantic garden. Given its order, the Baroque garden appears static: we can stand on one spot and survey the whole (and the best place to do so

is from an upper window of the palace itself). The Romantic garden, however, suggests dynamism. Ideally it should not be possible to view the garden in its entirety from any single point; it can only be experienced by wandering through it. Narrow, winding paths and small walks are an important part of the garden, and round every bend a new scene reveals itself to the "traveller". Where the Baroque garden radiates unity, the Romantic garden is marked by plurality and contrasting effects.

Around the gardens, hermits' cabins, Chinese summer houses and Greek temples were built. A walk through the garden thus became a kind of *journey*, both geographically and historically, but with a focus on the experiencing individual. The Danish art historian Christian Elling puts it thus in *Den romantiske have* (The Romantic garden): "Each shift from one place to another entailed a spiritual expansion and surrender to a new kind of mood".<sup>6</sup> The garden is therefore a breathing space for the subject, a place that not only provides recreation, but also opportunities for spiritual expansion.

Since the *journey* - walking through it - is so important in the Romantic garden, the *road* - the path or walkway - is also equally significant. And since the path is to lead the wayfarer to ever new surprises and through variegated landscapes - dark *forests* and bright lawns - of course, it cannot consist of straight lines and right angles, but must rather wind its way through the garden, so as to preserve its whimsical character. The winding road, the curve, was regarded as *nature's own hand*. "Nature abhors a straight line", said William Kent, one of the pioneers of the English landscape garden.<sup>7</sup>

The wayfarer - the "user" - however, must know the codes in order to experience the garden. He must know both how to walk through it and the meaning of the emblems in the garden - he must know what he is supposed to *feel* as he encounters the various props, how to focus his feelings according to the *meaning* of the changing locales. A wanderer in a Romantic garden today will

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<sup>6</sup>Christian Elling: *Den romantiske have*, Copenhagen 1979, p. 48.

<sup>7</sup>Quoted in Horace Walpole: "On Modern Gardening", in *Anecdotes of Painting in England*, vol. 4, London 1771, p. 270.

certainly react with wonder - rather than excitement - to a hermit's cabin of bark and twigs in the middle of the garden, and similarly, a false grave will no doubt arouse more laughter than horror. Regarded from our vantage point today, the Romantic garden was also marked by a formulaic language - as were earlier gardens - even though it insists that it is not.

For a garden is never just a piece of nature. And indeed the ideal that the garden should imitate nature also had two qualifications: it was nature in idealised form, "at its best", that was to be imitated - on the model of the picturesque landscape painting; furthermore, the garden was expected to absorb the imagination and the mind, providing rich associations. ("We walked for 3 hours from one delightful idea to the other", wrote Admiral H.C. Sneedorff in 1805 of a walk in the English garden at Ullevaal.)<sup>8</sup>

The main principle underlying a Romantic garden, that it should look like *a piece of nature*, is contradicted by the qualification: *at its best*. For there is no general, timeless consensus on what nature at its best looks like; that is determined by the ruling tastes of one or several groups. This qualification demands a concentration, a selection of natural elements, a composition. A "piece of nature" is thus always transformed into a cultural expression.

Even if the ideal was that the Romantic garden should bear the mark of the local landscape, it is clear that the English landscape emerges as a model for many European Romantic gardens, for the gardens constructed in flat landscapes, such as Denmark and the Netherlands, were filled in and landscaped to give them the character of an English landscape.

### III Goethe and Rousseau

We find two of the most famous descriptions of Romantic gardens in Rousseau's *Julie, ou la Nouvelle Héloïse* (1761), and Goethe's *Die Leiden des Jungen Werther* (1774). Werther describes how one

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<sup>8</sup>Carl W. Schnitler: *Norske Haver i gammel og ny tid*, vol. 2, Kristiania 1916, p. 171.

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immediately feels that no scientifically trained gardener drew the plans for Count von M...'s garden, but a sensitive soul following his own heart as he laid out the garden.<sup>9</sup> In Rousseau, the encounter with the garden is an even more intense experience; when Saint-Preux enters Julie's garden he feels like the first human being to go ashore on a desert island:

(...) I thought I saw the wildest, the most solitary place in nature, and it seemed I was the first mortal who had ever penetrated into this desert island. Surprised, impressed, ecstatic over a sight so little expected, I remained motionless for a moment, and cried out with involuntary enthusiasm, "Oh Tinian! Oh Juan Fernandez!"<sup>10</sup>

Saint-Preux' exclamations are the names of two Pacific islands. The garden thus functions in accordance with its purpose, as the creator of associations: What is the point of *travel* when the garden "serves" one the most distant places! It all looks just like a piece of untouched nature! Saint-Preux exclaims, "I see no human footsteps." Exactly, replies Julie's husband, "it is because we have taken great pains to efface them" (p. 311). The garden is, like every Romantic garden, "deceptive"; it drapes itself in thick foliage in order to conceal its constructedness; it appears wild and untouched, but, as Julie says, there is nothing in the garden that has not been thought out and controlled by her. The garden's mode of experience is suggestive of *naïveté* - in Schiller's sense of the word - a place of

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<sup>9</sup>In his diary entry for 4 May 1771 Werther writes:

Die Stadt ist unangenehm, dagegen rings umher eine unaussprechliche Schönheit der Natur. Das bewog den verstorbenen Grafen von M...; einen Garten auf einem der Hügel anzulegen, die mit der schönsten Mannigfaltigkeit sich kreuzen und die lieblichsten Täler bilden. Der Garten ist einfach, und man fühlt gleich bei dem Eintritte, dass nicht ein wissenschaftlicher Gärtner, sondern ein fühlendes Herz den Plan gezeichnet, das seiner selbst hier geniessen wollte. (Goethes Werke, Hamburger Ausgabe in 14 Bänden, vol. VI, Hamburg 1960, p. 8)

The garden in neither Goethe nor Rousseau is mentioned by name (the romantic garden/the English garden); nonetheless, the aesthetics of the type of garden described is undoubtedly identical with the romantic garden.

<sup>10</sup>Jean-Jacques Rousseau: *Julie, or the new Eloise*, translated by Judith H. McDowell, Philadelphia 1968, p. 305 (Part IV, Letter XI)

spontaneity and unself-conscious harmony between man and nature; but in fact the garden is an expression of a *sentimental* attitude, nostalgia for a lost natural state.

Rousseau's description nevertheless contains a warning that the garden is emblematic, that it presupposes a key to its interpretation; in any case, we need a *key* to enter Julie's garden. The garden is, in contrast to the norm for landscape gardens, fenced, enclosed: "The dense foliage which surrounds it makes it impervious to the eye, and it is always carefully locked" (p. 305). When Saint-Preux goes to visit the garden alone the following day, he therefore has to borrow Julie's key. He must unlock the door to *nature*. When Saint-Preux exclaims as the door shuts behind him: "I found myself there as if fallen from the sky" (p. 305), his spontaneity is staged, an active forgetting, a suppression of the key and the act of unlocking. - The key to the garden is symbolic of the cultural codes dominant within a certain circle of the nobility and bourgeoisie, artists and "sensitive souls".

#### IV "Natlig Fart" (Night Gallop)

Andreas Munch visited Romantic gardens in several countries, including Henry Howard's park in the English Lake District:

This park, which encompasses over a thousand acres of land, must not be thought a garden, but an entire mountain landscape, offering the most exquisite variations of green groves, deep dales, dark mountain chasms and quiet forest clearings, where whole herds of fallow deer graze peacefully.<sup>11</sup>

Here a veil is drawn - according to the principles of the landscape garden - over the boundary between the garden and the surrounding landscape. Nevertheless, the landscape is marked by a discreet but wholly essential order:

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<sup>11</sup>Andreas Munch: *Reiseminder*, Christiania 1865, pp. 235-236.

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As we proceeded, the dale became narrower and narrower, and the mountainsides steeper. But a comfortable path wound its way along the riverbank, and now and then rustic benches, made of boughs interlaced, invited us to rest at the most picturesque spots, so that we well understood that we were in the haven of a country garden, rather than a mountain area left wild. (p. 237)

The park is intended to provide the same aesthetic experiences as a walk in the wilderness, but without the hard work and the dangers that such a trek might entail. The *path* becomes the very "water mark" of the landscape, leading the wayfarer safely around nature reduced to a creator of atmosphere. The benches placed at "picturesque spots" function like the stalls in a theatre: at each spot the wanderer is presented with a tableau, an extract from nature, arranged by the architect of the garden according to fixed aesthetic rules. And the most important aesthetic principle is *variation - the most exquisite variations*; dark mountain chasms and quiet forest clearings, high mountain peaks and deep dales - in other words variations between enclosure and openness, light and dark, height and depth. Variation is more important than wholeness or unity - so there is no objection to mixing various styles together: "here and there a white Italian villa shone through, or a Gothic castle amongst the woods" (p. 233). A Renaissance villa built to the architectural principles of Antiquity and a Gothic anti-classical castle go well together when the aim is to create different moods, when they are merely seen as props in the sensitive wayfarer's journey of associations.

So we are led to the poem, "Natlig Fart" (Night Gallop) (1873):



Maanen staaer blank over Fjelderygge,  
Breder sit Sølv over Skov og Tjern -  
Dalene slumre i dunkle Skygge,  
Nattens Fred hersker nær og fjern.

The moon stands shining over mountain  
ridges,  
Spreading her silver over forest and tarn -  
The dales slumber in dark shadows,  
Night's peace reigns far and wide.

Luften er sval efter Dagens Hede,  
Kvæger Naturens brændende Bryst,  
Er dog saa mild, at den kan udbrede  
Over dens Øie en drømmende Lyst.

The air is cool after the heat of day,  
Soothing nature's burning breast,  
Yet so mild, it can cast  
Across its gaze a dreamy desire.

Over de bakkede Veie vi fare  
Med flinke Heste i strygende Fart.  
Huse og Træer hilse os snare,  
Nu er det dunkelt, nu atter klart.

Over bumpy roads we ride,  
With good horses at a belting gallop.  
Houses and trees rush to greet us,  
Now it is dark, now again clear.

Hist en Gaard dukker op af Taage,  
Alle derinde sove nu sødt.  
Ikkun de tindrende Stjerner vaage  
Over Enhver, som til Arbeid er født.

Here a farm looms out of the mist,  
All therein now sleeping sweetly.  
Only the twinkling stars keep watch  
Over those who are born to toil.

Her fra en Høide i Fjernhed blaane  
Mægtige Fjelde bag Fjordens Spalt:  
Over dem alle den mystiske Maane  
Seiler frem i sin hvide Gestalt.

Here from a height in the distance blue,  
Mighty mountains behind the cleft of the  
fjord:  
Over them all the mystical moon  
Sails forth in her whiteness.

Nu vi os styrte i dybe Dale,  
Granerne over os lukke sig til -  
Sælsomme Stemmer fra Skoven tale,  
Hvad er det, Natten os sige vil?

Now we plunge into deep dales,  
The pines above us closing in -  
Mysterious voices from the forest speak,  
What is the night trying to tell us?

Atter de sorte skygger vige,  
Tjernet viser sit blanke Speil.  
Birken hænger sit Slør, det rige,  
Ned over Vandet fra Skrænten steil.

Again the black shadows yield,  
The tarn displays its shiny mirror.  
The birch hangs its veil, so rich,  
Down over the water from the steep  
escarpment.

Agre smile paa blide Høie,  
Er deres Skjær nu Sølv eller Guld?  
Nu om et Klippehjørne vi bøie,  
Atter er Scenen meer alvorsfuld.

Fields smile upon gentle heights,  
Is their sheen now of silver or gold?  
Now round a craggy corner we turn,  
Again the scene is more sombre.

Saa gaaer det frem, til Egnen os bringer  
Tegn, at Hjemmet er naaet snart:  
Hundene glamme, Porten opspringer,  
Endt er den skønne, natlige Fart

Then on it goes, till the landscape gives us  
A sign that home will soon be reached:  
The hounds bay, the gate swings open,  
Ended is our lovely night gallop.

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The poem opens with *the moon* and closes with *gallop*, pointing to a tension between rest and speed. The moon is personified in the first stanza as one who spreads *her blanket* over all that sleeps: *Spreading her silver* - in other words, not sharp daylight, but the lustre of a light that brings peace and restfulness. The connection between man and moon is forged in a gliding movement, from *moon* in the first verse, to *forest and tarn* in the second verse, to the *dales* of the third verse: from light source > illuminated area > the shadows cast by the light. *Shadows* - in other words the dale, the area of man - connotes here not something gloomy or enclosed, but rather peacefulness.

This harmony is linked with the night, *the peace of night* built up in the first verse of the second stanza; the night air is *cool*, in contrast to *the heat of day*. *Day* may be read as the problems, demands and trivialities of everyday life - but also as the domain of reason and rationality - while night is associated with restfulness; not a passive resting, but different kinds of activity from those of daytime - dreams, fantasies and associations. It is here that the new stage is erected for the subject.

This semi dream-state which the poem builds upon, prepares the way for the abrupt shift in the third stanza; without warning a rapturous journey begins - both as regards speed and experiences along the way. Contrasting with stative verbs like *stands, slumber* and *soothing* in the first two stanzas, now each line is marked by expressions of speed like *ride, belting gallop, rush, now ... now*. The dynamism is underscored by a shift in metre: While the first two stanzas begin with two dactyls, followed by trochees, the third begins with *three* dactyls, producing a rapid reading rhythm and a feeling of movement. The speed is sustained in stanza four, which is introduced by *Here*, i.e. a signal that we will soon leave this scene, as we do in stanza five, which is also introduced by *Here* (*Here a farm heaves out of the mist, ... Here from a height in the distance blue ...*). In stanza six we *plunge* down into *deep dales* and the forest, while for a moment in stanza seven we find ourselves out in a clearing, only to see a field in stanza eight, before rounding a *craggy corner*, and, as the gate *swings open*, all of a sudden we are

*home* in stanza nine; in a single line the journey stops as abruptly as it started.

What, then, is the purpose of this "wild", night-time journey? Is it just motion from one place to another? Or are the travellers out on some special mission? Not in the usual, rational sense: The last line of the poem - *Ended is our lovely night gallop* - emphasises the subjective *experience* rather than the objective, rational purpose of the action.

And the landscape that is presented emerges precisely as a series of scenes to be experienced, where surprises and contrastive effects are important, just as they are in the Romantic garden. *Now it is dark, now again clear* (third stanza); light and dark shift time and again; things suddenly come into view - *looms out of the mist* (fourth stanza), only to disappear again as the road leads the traveller on. But not only light and dark shift; the distinction between open and closed is also central - *the pines above, us closing in* (stanza six), contra *Again the black shadows yield* in the next stanza. *Deep dales* and the tarn's *shiny mirror* in the same two stanzas function within the same trope of enclosure and the open or expansive. The third important distinction is between *height* and *depth*: in the fifth stanza the traveller is *on a height* looking up even higher, towards *mighty mountains*. The moon sailing *over them* all renders the height sublime. The next stanza indeed has all the opposite elements - *deep dales* - once again evoking enclosure and darkness, where mystical creatures reside - *mysterious voices from the forest speak*. In stanzas seven and eight the distinction between organic and inorganic is central: *the birch hangs its veil over the steep escarpment* in stanza seven, and *the craggy corner* contrasts with *Fields smile upon gentle heights* in stanza eight - a distinction between *organic forms* and *the geometrical*.

Sharp contrasts and ever-shifting scenes are in other words the core of the landscape of this journey; schematically we might divide the journey into five "views". 1) *A farm* (stanza 4). The journey has just begun, and we are in the border zone between nature and culture, in between home and the outdoors, on the periphery of the man-made landscape. 2) *The mountain*. We have now arrived in "Nature", and while harmonious adjectives like

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*sweet* and *twinkling* characterised the previous scene, here the adjectives - *mighty* and *mystical* - now point towards a more sublime experience. Then our gaze is turned downwards to 3) *the dale* and *the forest*, before 4) *the water's surface* appears in stanza seven. The last view is 5) *fields*, a warning that the journey will soon be at an end: We are out of the natural space, and back in the man-made landscape. The core stanzas of the journey (stanzas five, six and seven), with the components *mountains*, *forest*, and *water*, are heavy with meaning, and can be seen both as expressions of the dimensions of *height*, *depth*, and *space*, and as the phenomena of *light*, *dark*, and *reflection*.

The whole experience and the description of the landscape bear numerous similarities with the experiential aesthetics of the Romantic garden. Christian Elling says of the element of surprise and "the law of variation" in the Romantic garden:

The surprise is most "congenial" where we least expect it. Behind a tree a prospect should suddenly open up, a turn in the road may reveal an unexpected panorama. In the garden, as in Nature, the law of variation applies, above all between high and low, concealment and revelation; here we can look in from the outside and look out from within. This constant play of variation served "the enrichment of the mind and the delight of the imagination".<sup>12</sup>

The aestheticising attitude to the landscape becomes explicit in stanza eight, where the traveller, on encountering undulating fields, is concerned with only one question: *Is their sheen now silver or gold?* The fields are experienced in the aesthetic rather than the practical sphere. At the same time, the traveller shows his true colours - he is no farmer, but an artist, a sensitive soul. If we look back at stanza four, this comes out even more clearly - on the farm the traveller passes everyone is sound asleep: *Only the twinkling stars keep watch / Over those who are born to toil.* The farmer is, in other words, born to toil, and the day is his domain, while the sensitive soul *expands* at night.

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<sup>12</sup>Elling, op.cit., p. 37.

Nevertheless, there is no *ego* present in the poem, although there is a *we*. Who are *we*, then? The family of the implied ego? Hardly, since that would add a prosaic element to the poem, breaking with the aesthetics of the lone wanderer. Is the *we* a collective we, the implied ego's inclusion of everyone in his experience? No, for the farmer is excluded, as we have seen. The *we* must rather be seen as other initiates, other sensitive souls; in the same way as the Romantic garden presupposes a wanderer from a certain social background, one who knows the codes, and can experience the garden properly, the *we* of the poem is dependent on readers who can go into the experiential role which the poem itself constitutes.

An interesting counterpoint to the walk, the calm pace the Romantic garden invites us to adopt, is the lively tempo of the poetic journey. The title is descriptive in this respect - not night journey, but "Night Gallop". This increases the intensity of the experience, as well as giving a feeling of drama - *With good horses at a belting gallop* (fourth stanza); it may at times seem as if the horses are bolting, e.g. where they *plunge* down into deep valleys. Or it may seem as if the traveller is being pursued, especially in the last stanza, where *The hounds bay, the gate swings open*, as the horses thunder in. The use of enjambement (the only instance in the poem), where the first word of the second verse belongs to the statement of the first - ... *brings / a sign ...* - heightens the reading tempo, the pause at the end of the line is cut to a minimum. But the horses are not bolting, and there is no-one following in pursuit - *Ended is our lovely night gallop*. It was all staged to serve the experience.

The journey becomes a means of gathering a series of experiences, and the gallop is not necessarily felt to be in opposition to the contemplative mode characteristic of the Romantic garden, since the landscape preserves its mystical calm, and the implied ego maintains his sovereign position in spite of the gallop.

The dream-state of the first two stanzas might be an indication that the ego (or "we") is already home at the outset, that the journey has been arranged as an excursion starting from home. Out and home again. Are we then being offered an allegory of the

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Bildungsreise (Grand Tour)? Or is the journey an allegory of the structure of understanding, in the sense that Hans Georg Gadamer claims that understanding is a "Bildungsreise" on which the subject becomes himself in his encounter with the alien, recognising himself in the other? In both instances, in that case, *nature* in Munch's poem must represent the *outdoors* or the *alien*. But is nature really alien, "the other", a challenge, something to lose oneself in - or through - in order to become oneself? No, as we have seen, the experience of nature is determined by a limited set of experiential codes: the landscape is at the mercy of ego, structured by ego's experiential categories. This is also why nothing totally new ever appears - everything is a fixed component of a code system which holds the landscape in a secure grip. The landscape is precisely composed of "signs", as the last stanza reveals. Round each new bend, in each new scene, therefore, we encounter above all else the implied ego of the poem, the sensitive soul in his own codes. - And these codes correspond to those of the Romantic garden.

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Translated from Norwegian by Kevin McCafferty, University of Tromsø.