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William Blake's Songs of Innocence and of Experience

A Student's Guide

Brendan Cooper

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Series: Cultural Interactions: Studies in the Relationship between the Arts

John Harvey

«Ut pictura poesis», Horace said, but through the two millennia in which «the sister arts» have been compared, little has been said about the nature of sight itself. What we see in «our mind's eye» as we read has not been explored, though by following the visual prompts in texts, one can anatomize the process of visualization. *The Poetics of Sight* analyses the role of sight in memory, dream and popular culture and demonstrates the structure of a complex sight within the metaphors of Shakespeare, Pope and Dickens; and within the visual metaphors of Picasso, Mag ... [Show More](#)

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Naming and Narrating in Women's Fiction, 1750-1880

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Sarah R. Wakefield

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Odysseus, Simbad and Atlantis

Odysseus's voyage home

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life on the island of Corfu during his stay there between 1937 and 1938. Durrell's younger brother, Gerald, only twelve at the time and before long to become a famous zoologist and author of several popular books about animals, has given a memorable description of his first impressions of Corfu. At the close of the prologue to *My Family and Other Animals* (1956), Gerald relates how the overnight crossing from Italy in order to catch a first glimpse of the island that would be their next home. This lyrical passage, describing a real island in a highly stylized and imaginative manner, is characterized by a profusion of colour words and references to birds and insects:

It stirred in the dawn-light, and the foam of our wake spread gently behind us like a white peacock's tail, glinting with bubbles. The sky was pale and stained with yellow on the eastern horizon. Ahead lay a chocolate-brown smudge of land, huddled in mist, with a frill of foam at its base. This was Corfu, and we strained our eyes to make out the exact shapes of the mountains, to discover valleys, peaks, ravines and beaches, but it remained a silhouette. Then suddenly the sun lifted over the horizon, and the sky turned the smooth enamelled blue of a jay's eye. The endless, meticulous curves of the sea flamed for an instant and then changed to a deep royal purple flecked with green. The mist lifted in quick, lithe ribbons, and before us lay the island, the mountains as though sleeping beneath a crumpled blanket of brown, the folds stained with the green of olive-groves. Along the shore curved beaches as white as tusks among tottering cities of brilliant gold, red and white rocks. We rounded the northern cape, a smooth shoulder of rust-red cliff carved into a series of giant caves. The dark waves lifted our wake and carried it gently towards them, and then, at their very mouths, it crumpled and hissed thirstily — 29 | 30 — among the rocks. Rounding the cape, we left the mountains, and the island sloped gently down, blurred with the silver and green indescence of olives, with here and there an admonishing finger of black cypress against the sky. The shallow sea in the bays was butterfly blue, and even above the sound of the ship's engines we could hear, faintly ringing from the shore like a chorus of tiny voices, the shrill, triumphant cries of the cicadas. [pp. 17-18]

✚ Annotate : with the poetic prose of the above the following description of another first glimpse of Corfu, or Scheria as it was then called.¹ Emphasizing just one aspect of the island and using a single analogy, the depiction, as related by Homer in Book V of *The Odyssey*, could not be more succinct. Sailing alone from Calypso's island of Ogygia in the boat he had built there, Odysseus's initial impression of the island is one of stark defensiveness:

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Odysseus's voyage home

In *Prospero's Cell*, Lawrence Durrell described life on the island of Corfu during his stay there between 1937 and 1938. Durrell's younger brother, Gerald, only twelve at the time and before long to become a famous zoologist and author of several popular books about animals, has given a memorable description of his first impressions of Corfu. At the close of the prologue to *My Family and Other Animals* (1956), Gerald relates how the Durrell family went up on deck at dawn after the overnight crossing from Italy in order to catch a first glimpse of the island that would be their next home. This lyrical passage, describing a real island in a highly stylized and imaginative manner, is characterized by a profusion of colour words and references to birds and insects:

The sea lifted smooth blue muscles of wave as it stirred in the dawn-light, and the foam of our wake spread gently behind us like a white peacock's tail, glinting with bubbles. The sky was pale and stained with yellow on the eastern horizon. Ahead lay a chocolate-brown smudge of land, huddled in mist, with a frill of foam at its base. This was Corfu, and we strained our eyes to make out the exact shapes of the mountains, to discover valleys, peaks, ravines and beaches, but it remained a silhouette. Then suddenly the sun lifted over the horizon, and the sky turned the smooth enamelled blue of a jay's eye. The endless, meticulous curves of the sea flamed for an instant and then changed to a deep royal purple flecked with green. The mist lifted in quick, lithe ribbons, and before us lay the island, the mountains as though sleeping beneath a crumpled blanket of brown, the folds stained with the green of olive-groves. Along the shore curved beaches as white as tusks among tottering cities of brilliant gold, red and white rocks. We rounded the northern cape, a smooth shoulder of rust-red cliff carved into a series of giant caves. The dark waves lifted our wake and carried it gently towards them, and then, at their very mouths, it crumpled and hissed thirstily — 29 | 30 — among the rocks. Rounding the cape, we left the mountains, and the island sloped gently down, blurred with the silver and green indescence of olives, with here and there an admonishing finger of black cypress against the sky. The shallow sea in the bays was butterfly blue, and even above the sound of the ship's engines we could hear, faintly ringing from the shore like a chorus of tiny voices, the shrill, triumphant cries of the cicadas. [pp. 17-18]

Contrast with the poetic prose of the above the following description of another first glimpse of Corfu, or Scheria as it was then called.¹ Emphasizing just one aspect of the island and using a single analogy, the depiction, as related by Homer in Book V of *The Odyssey*, could not be more succinct. Sailing alone from Calypso's island of Ogygia in the boat he had built there, Odysseus's initial impression of the island is one of stark defensiveness:

So for seventeen days he sailed on his course, and on the eighteenth there hove into sight the shadowy mountains of the Phaeacians' country, which jutted out to meet him there. The land looked like a shield laid on the misty sea. [trans. E. V. Rieu, pp. 94-5]

No sooner does Odysseus catch sight of the island than Poseidon delivers a series of stormy blasts that shatter his craft, and, but for the intervention of the ever-protective Pallas Athene, the hero would appear doomed:

For two nights and two days he was lost in the heavy seas. Time and again he saw his end at hand. But in the morning of the third day, which Dawn opened in all her beauty, the wind dropped, a breathless calm set in, and Odysseus, keeping a sharp lookout ahead as he was lifted by a mighty wave, could see the land close by. He felt all the relief that a man's children feel when their father, wasted by long agonies ailed in the malignant grip of some disease, passes the crisis by god's grace and they know that he will live. Such was Odysseus's happiness when he caught that unexpected glimpse of wooded land. He swam quickly on in his eagerness to set foot on solid ground. But when he had come within call of the shore, he heard the thunder of surf on a rocky coast. With an angry roar the great seas were battering at the ironbound land and all was





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