Modalities of the Self: Cave and Forest in Antiquity and in The Faerie Queene

I. Introduction

In the history of mankind, after human knowledge provokes the rift between inside and outside, between the self and the world, between the soul and the body, the attempts of human beings to heal this split within the self never cease. It is in this polemical history of the concept "self" that we discover an impressive continuity among Plato, Homer, Vergil, and Spenser in terms of the topoi of cave and forest. The relation of cave and forest to the "self" is a relation of the foreground to the background. Cave and forest are areas of psychological exploration of the inner self. They help us to understand man's psychological dilemma more clearly. They function in the philosophical allegory of the life of man. This essay attempts to probe the multifaceted relation between this "foreground" and "background," and further to delin-
eate the continuity of this relationship discovered in antiquity and in The Faerie Queene.

II From Epistemological to Ethical and Psychological

Plato's representation of the cave in Book VII of the Republic establishes a topoi. This cave illustrates the doctrine of immortality which Plato uses to resolve the split distinction between mind and body within the self. Mind is imprisoned in the body. In the realm of body, one can only behold illusion; for the discovery of Reality, that is, the ultimate Perfect Goodness, one has to undergo a journey of ascent to the sunlight outside the cave. Hence, Plato's theory of the cave is a theory of knowledge that seeks to free oneself from the bondage of illusion to the freedom of rational perception of Truth. It is also a theory of education and a myth of man's growth beyond this world. It represents the process of "the contemplative seeking to enter into and experience the realm of the unchanging" (Bernard 27-28). "The activity of the contemplative man ranks among the highest of human possibilities. Indeed, it is that activity in which the merely human shades into the divine" (Bernard 12). Correspondingly, in Plato's cave, we witness a pervasive longing for eternity beyond the bondage of sensations or the flux of changes in this world. Hence, the cave experience actually illustrates the psychic process of man's growth and self-education. Somehow, the cave functions as a technical vocabulary which the poet or philosopher uses to delineate man's purgative journey and wandering in this world.

It (the cave) depicts the difficulties, perils, and pains awaiting those who attempt to break free from the illusion of traditional wisdom and to exchange them for the ultimate happiness that true knowledge brings ... and describes an ascent from darkness to light. (Sterling 205)

If he wants to attain the state of immortality and to perceive the light of eternity, man has to experience various ordeals and difficulties. He has to undergo blundering
experiences in the dark in order to breathe in the sunlight. Therefore, Plato’s cave is endowed with a force of ascent-buoyancy. This force represents the power of intellectual mind and the intellectual potentiality of physical body. However, buoyancy is always in counterbalance with the force of gravity (Sterling 208). The force of descent-gravity thus represents human imperfection. In this sense, the self lives simultaneously in the lower world of illusion as well as in the higher world of reality. The self becomes a dialectic mixture with endless ambiguity and uncertainty. Man lives and dies; he subordinates to time and change; he has to grow up: his being equals becoming. Hence, it is no surprising when John D. Bernard says:

For it was in speculation about permanence and change that western thought, i.e. philosophy, began. Questions of reality and appearance, the one and the many, teased Parmenides, shaped the thought of Socrates and Plato, and helped determine the way the Western mind grasped the world for over 2000 years. (Bernard 12)

In Plato’s cave, perfection begins with imperfection. The cave as an embodiment of the self thus contains the divine force and the evil force, in ethical terms, virtues and vices. During the cave experience, the self transcends and unites the opposites and attempts to gain a sense of awareness. Thus the cave experience is often related to the rebirth experience, awareness experience, and the return to the classical Elysium, the Christian Eden, or the psychological primal Self, each as a state of harmony and perfection. However, before the final reconciliation of good and evil, there exists a problematic middle period, the "dilation of being" (Parker 54). In Neo-platonic terms, it is the 'Emanation' of being, its procession out from, and its return to, the Source or the One" (Parker 57). In Christian terms, it corresponds to the time between First and Second Coming,

an interval in which the eschatological Judgment is held over or deferred, a period of uncertain duration when the
'end' already accomplished in the Advent is, paradoxically, not yet come, when, though the Promised Land has been conquered, the spiritual Israel still wanders in wilderness. (Parker 58, emphasis mine)

It is during this "uncertain duration" that man's life is located; it is this "wandering in wilderness" that the self is doomed to suffer. In this problematic period, everything is ambiguous, uncertain and subdued to change. The tensions of the conflict between opposites are not yet resolved. The self is still struggling. The self, sharing the dialectical character of the cave, thus becomes a process of totalizing and dissolving, an synthetic-analytic dialectic. Plato's cave thus serves as a tension for the split self which is finally transcended and united. The external physical ascent in the cave corresponds to the internal intellectual ascent of the mind and the psychological transformation of the self. Hence, in Plato's cave, the problem of epistemology reflects the problem of ethics, and also the problem of psychology.

What happens in Plato's cave "obey(s) a principle of allegorical chiasmus, as we might call it, whereby the external features of the environment reflect the internal ones in the inverse form. A man in an environment often stands for the environment in the man" (Nohrnberg 327, emphasis mine). Therefore what appears to be the exterior actually is an abundant reflection of the interior. The cave, a natural formation, is in fact a representation of an internal process. What happens to be the foreground turns to echo the background.

Petrarch at the juncture of the Middle Ages and Renaissance writes about the opening of the Aeneid:

The wood is truly this life, full of shadows and errors, tangled and uncertain paths, and inhabited by beasts; that is, difficulties and many secret dangers--and yet there is beautiful vegetation and birdsong and murmuring of waters; that is, brief and transitory appearances, and empty charms of things for the eyes and ears of the traveler and
the dwellers nearby. By day it is assuaging and caressing, at nightfall dreadful and frightening ...." (Nohrnberg 138-139, emphasis mine)

Not only the cave but also the forest represents the purgative pilgrimage of man's wandering life in this world. The forest is an extended analogue of the cave. Like the cave, the forest has a psychological effect of darkness.

Just as the wood, oppressed by many dense trees, becomes dark because the light of the sun cannot get through, so the mind, oppressed by many and dense errors, becomes dark because it cannot use the light of reason (Landino-Vellutello 2Vb). (Murrin 111)

Darkness signifies the irrational impulse of the self. Hence, the forest often functions as the representation of mental confusion, paralysis and blindness. Furthermore, in a forest, as in a labyrinth, man easily gets lost and makes choices in order to move forward. Like the cave, the forest frequently responds an "uncertain duration" during which man has to "wander in wilderness." Hence, the forest is human life in which man wanders and is not able to discern the true path. Experiencing various perils and difficulties, tasting unendurable pains, man contemplates his own life and gets a better understanding of himself. Therefore, the forest represents not only the human psychological dilemma but also an area of psychological exploration of one's inner self. It not only illustrates the process of man's growth beyond this world but also serves as a vehicle for self-observation and self-education. No wonder Tasso explains in the Prose Allegory that epic has scenes both of action and contemplation. The former have multiple personae; the latter, the solitary knight, a pilgrim figure like Dante or Ulysses, Aeneas in hell. The wood fits this contemplative side of the epic, for in it the hero wanders alone. (Murrin 120, emphasis mine)

Thus the cave and the forest are modalities of the self.
III. The Self as Spenserian Topic

The self, as we have been speaking of it, is the Neo-platonic "Emanation" of being, the Christian wild wandering of "uncertain duration," Parker's "dilation" of being. The self is by nature a synthetic-analytic dialectic which suffers from the discord and conflict of opposites. Cave and forest serve as ready vehicles to penetrate into the inner self and also as excellent topics to represent the purgative process of man's growth from this world, that is, the contemplative life of the self.

In this sense, cave and forest at least condense within them three stages of this emanation and dilation of the self. First, the split distinction of soul and body. This stage signifies the questioning of one's life and gestures the beginning of the wandering. Wars and conflicts, discord and sufferings preside this stage. Everything is chaotic, ambiguous and uncertain. Then comes the stage of transformation, a purgative process. Usually the self undergoes a series of trials and ordeals. Through these experiences, the self is able to observe his problematical inner world and begin the early stage of individuation, the incorporation of the opposites. The third stage is the consummation of individuation process, a state of reunion, reconciliation, and harmony.

*Individuation, in Jung's psychology, is precisely the realization, the sharp awareness of the integration of ego with the Self archetype. Parallel with this insight is the realization of the new life or rebirth in which all oppositional elements in the personality, such as good and evil, are seen to be parts of a transcendent, integrated unity. This condition, if realized, creates, in effect, a 'union of opposites.'* (French 175, emphasis mine)

This "tripartite" process, which we have found in Plato's cave theory, can also be figured out respectively in Homer, Vergil, and Spenser.

In the *Iliad*, Achilles' struggle between his passion and reason, between his personal glory and the safety of the Achaian allies, the transformation of his wrath into
selfless love and sympathy, and finally his brave confrontation of himself and his fate, all figure forth an inward reality and illustrate the contemplative life of the hero. In the *Odyssey*, Odysseus' separation from his family because of the Trojan war for ten years, his nostos--his journey to return home for another ten years, and finally his defeat of the bestial suitors and the reunion with his son Telemachos, his wife Penelope and Laertes his father, all demonstrate this tripartite process. During his nostos, Odysseus endures various kinds of ordeals and passes through a series of trials: he experiences different kinds of female love from Calypso, Circe, and Nausikaa respectively; he sails to the land of the dead; eventually he returns to his "home," his original Source.

In the *Aeneid*, the purpose of the dialectic struggle is "withdrawal."

> Evil resides in the mixture which we call man, that combination of first soul, psychic and body. Goodness comes when the first soul has detached itself from the rest. Escape, however, is difficult. *Immersed in sensations, the mind must choose the true out of the many alternatives ...* Things deceptively like the truth draw the mind in various direction; therefore the mind must *examine* its alternatives rigorously and proceed by *elimination*. (Murrin 45, emphasis mine)

Fulgentius summarizes the *Aeneid* as "human progress from birth to the active use of wisdom." "Books 1-6 deal with the growth of Everyman from infancy through childhood and adolescence to adulthood; whereas Books 7-12 show how the fully mature man exhibit virtue in government and war by arming himself for goodness, defeating violence, and implementing wisdom" (Bernard 43). Therefore, in the *Aeneid* the adventure of man is the adventure of the soul. To Vergil, man is a soul imprisoned in a body and he has a responsible urge to escape through a process of purgation. This Platonic body-soul conception and the motif of purgation can be best illustrated by Anchises' speech when he explains the universe to Aeneas in Book VI:
So far as they (all creatures) are not poisoned or clogged
By mortal bodies, their free essence dimmed
By earthiness and deathliness of flesh.
This makes them fear and crave, rejoice and grieve.
Imprisoned in the darkness of the body
They cannot clearly see heaven’s air: in fact
Even when life departs on the last day
Not all the scourges of the body pass
From the poor souls, not all distress of life,
Inevitably, many malformations
Growing together in mysterious ways,
Become inveterate. Therefore they undergo
The discipline of punishments and pay
In penance for old sins: some hang full length
To the empty winds, for some the stain of wrong
Is washed by floods or burned away by fire.
We suffer each his own shade ..." (The Aeneid. VI. PP. 185-186, emphasis mine)

After several years of wandering, the departure from burning Troy his ruined home, the separation from Dido, a descent to the world below, Aeneas at last comes to a fertile field and builds a new City of Troy. Thus complete the rebirth and the reincarnation of the self.

Spenser in the Letter to Sir Walter Raleigh claims that "the generall end (therefore) of all the books is to fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline," and devises that The Faerie Queene is projected to have twelve books. Furthermore, the book is also a "continued allegory or dark conceit" (Maclean 1). "The 'darkness' may refer to the author’s attempt to filter the light of truth through the dark glass of allegorical form; obscurity is thus paradoxically a means of achieving clarity" (River 170). All the vices and virtues in the book appears to us through the veil of personification. Cave and forest are their most usual dwelling and arena. The action of these personified characters signifies the contemplation of a solitary self and symbolizes a synthetic-analytic dialectic with both the totalizing and dissolving
The Faerie Queene is a book of morality with complex and inextricable psychological dimensions. In this sense, cave and forest become the so-called "Psychomachia or Battle of the Soul," a conception of interior allegory first used by Prudentius in the fourth century (Hankins 21). Beside the sense of inner conflict, Spenser's imaginative use of cave and forest also illustrates the motif of the mysterious human life in this world: wandering, Purgative trials, and longing for the escape from the flux of change to a state of permanence:

It is customary for Scripture to call the wilds of human life a wood, where the various kinds of perturbations of soul flourish, and where destructive beasts dwell—as if in a cave—lie hid: their nature is sluggish, lacking effective power, in darkness. For after the sun is eclipsed, night having fallen, the Prophet says the beasts of the wood emerge from their caves (quoted from St. Gregory of Nyssa). (Nothrenberg 158-159)

Forest and cave might illustrate the confusing state and the bestial side of the Self:

We have in this world the Labyrinth or maze, the image of lost direction, often with a monster at its heart like the Minotaur. The labyrinthian wanderings of Israel in the desert......fit the same pattern. The labyrinth can also be a sinister forest, as in Camus. (Frye 150, emphasis mine)

Forest and cave are both figures for the labyrinthian world in which the divided self wanders and experiences sinister forces, and for the purgative space which the fragmentary self has to undergo in order to live a contemplative life, aiming at the consummation of a integrated Self. After Redcross Knight and Una enter the Wood of Error,

When weening to returne, whence they did stray,
They cannot finde that path, which first was showne,
But wander too and fro in wayes unknowne,
Furthest from and then, when they neerest weene,
That makes them *doubt*, their wits be not their owne: 
So many pathes, so many turnings seen.
That which of them to take, in diverse doubt they been.

(l.i.10, emphasis mine)

Sense of confusion and loss of bearings flood in; the doubt and uncertainty deepen:

That path they take, that beaten seemes most bare, 
And like to lead the *labyrinth* about; 
Which when by tract they hunted had throughout, 
At length is brought them to a hollow caue, 
Amid the thickest woods.... (l.i.11, emphasis mine)

The forest becomes a labyrinth which requires man's continuous choices in order to advance; the cave becomes a horrible, mysterious trial awaiting man to conquer in order to move forward. However, this advancement is paradoxically a delay because they have strayed from the straight way. But man still has a way out of the labyrinthian wandering and attain the state of perfection:

I well consider all that ye haue sayd, 
And find that all things sted fastnes doe hate 
And changed be; yet being rightly wayd. 
They are not changed from their first estate; 
*But by their change their being doe dilate*: 
And turning to themselves at length againe, 
Doe worke their own perfection so by fate: 
Then ouer them Change doth not rule and raigne; 
But they raigne ouer change, and doe their states maintaine. 

(VII.vi i. 58, emphasis mine)

This dilation of the divided self and its return to perfection witness "its Spenserian counterpart in the procession of knights out from and back to the court of Gloriana, which remains, throughout, offstage." This respite of self-examination becomes a purgative process, "the interval of 'wandering' between vision and fulfillment, between the initiation of the quest and its end, in both senses" (Parker 59). In The Faerie
e, "the journey begins in the Wood and Cave of Error and ends soon after a redemptive vision of the soul's ultimate destiny from the Mount of Contemplation, or after a similar vision of the Graces on Mt. Acidale" (Bernard 44). In this sense, contemplation is a way in which the fallen-wandering soul "gains control first the passions and then the laws of nature" (Bernard 23). The Faerie Queene to a great extent exemplifies the contemplation of the Self.

IV. Establish the Topoi of Cave and Forest

After situating the self as a significant allegorical purpose in The Faerie Queene, it is the high time to examine how the topoi of cave and forest serves as the modalities of the self in antiquity.

A. Cave

1. Plato's Cave Theory

Plato's cave theory incorporates the sense of the ascent of mind and the descent of body, the force of buoyancy and the force of gravity. This cave experience reveals the individuation process of the self. While the fruit of individuation is "Self," the outcome of cave experience is a state of a union of opposites. Hence Plato's cave theory becomes an allegorical projection of one's inner conflict. Cave thus provides for us a ready vehicle for self-observation, self-introversion, and social observation. It probes deeply to the psyche, to present the universality through the particulars. Also, in its dialectic sense, Plato's cave becomes a marriage of mind and body, just like Blake's The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, and The Songs of Innocence and Experience: shewing the two contrary states of the human soul.

2. Homer: Kalypso's Cavern

   Polyphemos' Cave
   The Cave to the Underworld
"In literary epic from ancient Greece and Rome through the European Renaissance, eros often deters the hero's progress toward his social and political goals" (Pavlock 1). Eros often takes the form of "an irrational force that acts against the prevailing values of the world in which the hero operates" (Pavlock 1). In the Odyssey, Kalypso's cavern functions as a symbolic deferral force against Odysseus' nostos. The cave which detains Odysseus’ journey for seven years possesses so marvelous surroundings that "even a god who came into that place / would have admired what he saw" (V, 73-74).

...and the sun went down and the darkness came over. These two, withdrawn in the inner recess of the hollowed cavern, enjoyed themselves in love and stayed all night by each other. (V. 225-227)

Hence, this cave signifies the idleness or stasis of man's life during his purgative journey through this world. Although it is a perfect shelter from all dangerous trials and ordeals, it is not Odysseus’ final home because he has to go back to his original Source, the spiritual heavenly home. However, Odysseus is not without the awareness of his inner urgent longing to return home:

... and his eyes were never wiped dry of tears, and the sweet lifetime was draining out of him, as he wept for a way home, since the nymph was no longer pleasing to him. By nights he would lie beside her, of necessity, in the hollow caverns, against his will, by one who was willing, but all the day he would sit upon the rocks, at the seaside, breaking his heart in tears and lamentation and sorrow as weeping tears he looked out over the barren water. (V. 151-158)

Here the deference of the erotic force and responsibility for family and nation are cast into poignant conflict in the hero's inner most recess. The easy, carefree image of sexuality contrasts the uneasiness and perturbation of Odysseus' mind. The hollow-
ness of the cavern signifies the emptiness of the deference. Therefore the erotic force becomes a means of revealing heroic values and sometimes reexamining the conventional social virtues.

Beside being the deference in man's purgative journey, cave also symbolizes the horrifying danger and perils threatening the self. The dark cave of Polyphemos the Cyclops represents a chaotic state of mind, just as Homer's epithet "Cyclops lawless of mind" implies. In this lawless cavern, man loses his identity, Odysseus becomes "Nobody." This is the "country of the lawless outrageous Cyclopes" (IX. 106-107).

These people have no institutions, no meetings for counsels; rather they make their habitations in caverns hallowed among the peaks of the high mountains, and each one is the law for his own wives and children, and cares nothing about the others. (IX. 112-115)

Paradoxically, it is this deprivation of the identity belonging to the civilized world that saves Odysseus' life. "Nobody is my name," he claims. Later when Polyphemos' eye is blinded by a sharp beam of olive, he cries aloud to the other Cyclopes for help. When the Cyclopes ask what happened, Polyphemos answers, "Good friends, Nobody is killing me by force or treachery" (IX. 408). Thus go away the other Cyclopes and escape from the cave Odysseus and his companions. And thus the fulfillment of Polyphemos' ambiguous words, "Then I will eat Nobody after his friends" (IX. 369). Somehow, while confronting dangers, man has to give up his identity and pursue a new identity, in this case, nonidentity. This cave functions as a trial which challenges man's courage and wisdom. It is also an abyss which the outrageous forces dwell, the home of the evil and the source of confusion and mis-identity.

Another significant cave in the Odyssey is the cave to the underworld. The cave as the mouth of the dark abyss of the land of the dead illustrates not only the confrontation of life and death but also the motif of self-confrontation--the confrontation of the conscious self and the unconscious self. The cave thus "constitutes the hero's
entrance into the contemplative life, his initiation into the 'secrets of knowledge'" (Bernard 43):

Before any great task that begins a new life and calls upon untried character, the need seems to arise for some intro-

version of the mind upon itself and upon its past---a plung-
ing into the depths, to gain knowledge and power over self

and destiny. (Bodkin 124-125, emphasis mine)

This cave experience therefore becomes an experience initiation through which the self realizes the higher individual possibilities. It demonstrates an inner psychological exploration of the self in order to grow up independently. It is a preparatory stage for man’s maturity, a bridge between past and future, a realm full of spiritual tor-
mients which man has to undergo in order to gain maturity and rebirth. The purpose to descent is to ascent to the good, the new life. Again, the force of buoyancy and the force of gravity within the synthetic-analytic dialectic of the self are at work.

3. Vergil: The Cave of Aeolus & Allecto’ Cavern

The Cave Marriage of Dido and Aeneas

The World Below

Through the cave episodes in the Aeneid, we are able to witness Vergil’s cre-
atation of a multifaceted design in which the natural and the supernatural, the physical and the psychological are paradoxically merged. Vergil buries multiple meanings un-
der the surface and creates an atmosphere of ambivalence, ambiguity, and uncertainty.

What happens in the caves are actually the Vergilian transformation of the individual inner experiences into the external discernible.

The cave of Aeolus in Book I of the Aeneid is the horrible shelter of an hyper-
active but destructive power--storm:

Here in a vast cavern King Aeolus
Rules the contending winds and moaning gales
As warden of their prison.
Else they might flay the sea and sweep away
Land masses and deep sky through empty air.
In fear of this, Jupiter hid them away
In caverns of black night. (l. P. 5)

Storm is the strongest, wildest movement in Nature. Aeolus' cave as the prison of the
storms and winds thus illustrates the inner turmoil of the self and allegorizes personal
danger and destruction. It is a metaphor of conflict, struggle, and obstacles awaiting
Aeneas.

Another cave echoing Aeolus' disastrous cave is Allecto's underworld cavern in
Book VII. :

...From the dark underworld
Home of the Furies, she (Juno) aroused Allecto,
Grief's drear mistress, with her lust for war,
For angers, ambushes, and crippling crimes. (VII. P.207)

Allecto, "Daughter of Night" as Juno calls her, represents Fury--the excess of one's
evil and irrational impulses. All the irrational impulses generated from this cave serve
as the antitheses to such rational impulses as responsibility, valor, fidelity, etc. which
Aeneas the hero of civilization is supposed to possess. Again, this cave is also an or-
 ganic-destructive dialectic, a mirror of the self.

The cave marriage of Dido and Aeneas is at once a "cosmic and personal inter-
action" (Whitman 51). Here, Vergil uses the technique of allegorical chiasmus in a
complex way. Juno and Venus compose a wedding for Dido and Aeneas:

Meantime in heaven began a rolling thunder.
And soon the storm broke, pouring rain and hail.

Now to the self-same cave
Came Dido and the captain of the Trojans.
Primal Earth herself and Nuptial Juno
Opens the ritual, torches of lightning blazed,
High Heaven became witness to the marriage,
And nymphs cried out wild hymns from a mountain top.
(IV. P.101)

The storm outside the cave reflects the passionate physical intercourse inside the cave and the inner confrontation within the self between rational impulse and irrational impulse. Thus the cavern becomes a concentration of the cosmic movement and also an allegorical expansion of psychological turmoil. The exterior mirrors the interior: in the uneasy marriage of volatile Dido and pious Aeneas, the convergence between Dido and Aeneas is internalized within each figure, as impulsive passion encounters responsible reason. Furthermore, this cave marriage also illustrates a blind impetus toward endless perturbation and destruction:

That Day was the first cause of death, and first
Of sorrow. Dido has no further qualms
As to impressions given and set abroad;
She thought no longer of a secret love
But called it marriage. Thus, under that name,
She hid her fault. (IV. P.101)

The cave becomes a shelter of hidden fault and symbolizes the forbidden fruit which causes the Christian original sin. The tragic paradoxes generated from the cave turn to be a blind impulse toward personal destruction and nothingness on the metaphysical level; the fury or wrath on the moral level; and parallel discord on the social level. Besides, the gesture of this cave marriage also implies that "the old opposition between passion and reason, thymos and logos, is no longer adequate. Both sides are necessary to make the whole" (Whitman 52). Hence, pious Aeneas is "not only a heroic or rational figure but also a compassionate and sympathetic one" (Whitman 52). Likewise, volatile Dido is not only a changeable or passionate figure but also one with responsibility and reputation. Vergil through the complex representation of the dialectical symmetry thus leads us to ponder for ourselves and to reexamine the con-
tentational social and heroic virtues. For Vergil, inattention to either realm will result eventually in the destruction of both. By this, he also creates "a cultural agenda for the new Rome that Augustus was bringing into being" (Wiltshire 15). Beyond the above, the cave also symbolizes a state of stasis and anti-procreation. This cave marriage detains Aeneas' mission to Italy, no wonder Mercury blames him:

Is it for you
To lay the stones for Carthage's high walls,
Tame husband that you are, and build their city?
Oblivious of your own world, your own kingdom! (IV. p.105)

The outcome of the cave marriage turns to nothingness and destruction because Dido does not bear any child, and she eventually commits suicide.

In Book VI of the Aeneid, we come to the mysterious cave toward the world below:

The cavern was profound, wide-mouthed, and huge,
Rough underfoot, defended by dark pool
And gloomy forest. (VI. p.168)

The descent of Aeneas into the underworld represents a period of introversion and the initiate experience. Like Odysseus' sail to the land of the dead, this is a preparatory stage for a new life or rebirth. It symbolizes the hero's entrance into the contemplation. The hero thus experiences the anguish that falls on the man who in the middle of a great enterprise turns from action and plunges into the depths of his own being. During the descent, the outward vision stimulates the hero's inward introversion upon the self and his past, and inspires the hero to gain power over his fate and destiny. Before the descent, the rituals required by Sybil, a funeral, sacrifices to the gods, and the Golden Bough all make the strong association of the cavern with the mysterious depths of mind—a sanctuary of the self. Besides, Aeneas' gesture at the moment of entering the cave toward the underworld is significant. He points into
the cave with his long sword. This gesture toward the cave symbolizes a sexual intercourse of male and female or we might say, the marriage of reason and passion and the confrontation of the conscious and the unconscious. Vergil's underworld also implies the marriage of heaven and hell, life and death, good and evil; because it is in the underworld that we find the Elysium Garden. Again, here we witness the counterpoise between the force of buoyancy and the force of gravity. The hellish descent implies the heavenly ascent.

4. Ovid: The Cave of Envy

The Cave of Sleep

In Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, the cave functions as a psychic description of psychological transformation. The inner impulses are presented through personification. Hence, the actions of the psychological figures is actually the contemplation of the self. The cave thus symbolizes a state of mind. The house of the Goddess Envy, representing a destructive impulse, is a dark, gloomy hidden abode under Ovid's hand:

...Envy's house, a black abode,
Ill-kept, stained with dark gore, a hidden home
In a deep valley, where no sunshine comes,
Where no wind blows, gloomy, and full of cold,
Where no bright fire burns ever, where the smoke
Is the gray fog of everlasting mist. (II. 762-767)

All the outward features of the cave-like home suggest the inward lurking of the impulse envy. When Envy exerts her power, the flow of life is sentenced into a state of stasis and the energy of the self is drained out little by little till the dreadful destruction comes:

As Envy rose, torpid and slow, the snakes
Half-eaten on the ground, and she came forward,
Torpid and slow. (II. 771-773)

Pale, skinny, squint-eyed, mean, her teeth are red
With rust, her breast is green with gall, her tongue
Suffused with poison, and she never laughs
Except when watching pain; she never sleeps,
Too troubled by anxiety; if men
Succeed, she fails; consumes, and is consumed,
Herself her punishment. (ll. 776-782)

The dark cave of Envy implies the irrational, destructive, and wretched forces which endanger the soul and even cause wars. The cave of the God Sleep externalizes the inner state of man’s sleep and illustrates a sense of stasis and delay:

Far down, far under a Cimmerian mountain,
A cavern winds, the home of lazy Sleep.
His dwelling-place and shrine. No sunlight ever
Comes there at morning, noon, or evening, only
A dubious twilight, and the ground is dark
With mist, and the fog settles there. No bird
With clarion cry ever calls out the morning,
Dogs never break the silence with their barking,
Geese never cackle, cattle never low,
No boughs move in the stir of air, no people
Talk in their human voices. Only quiet. (Xl. 592-602)

The drowsy cave of Sleep implies the idleness and the stasis of man’s life. It also represents the forces of forgetfulness and deceit which reminds us of Hera’s enticing Zeus with the help of the God Sleep in the Iliad. Beside that, the cave also generates the force which brings temporary peace. This reminds us that in the Odyssey only the power of sleep can bring temporary peace to Penelope’s spiritual turmoils.

B. Forest

1. Homer: *Odysseus’ Scar*—Forest & Identity

For Homer, the forest is the major source of man’s livelihood. There man gets the wood for making fire, hunts animals to feed his hunger, obtains the materials for building houses and ships, and sometimes finds shelters there from the storm. Homer-
ic men live close to the forest. To them the forest is kind and useful, but also mysterious and full of hardships: "...hunters, who in the forest suffer hardships as they hunt the peaks of the mountains" (the Odyssey. IX. 120-121). There exist some hidden powers which are hostile to men. Besides, the forest is the place from which Odysseus obtains his scar which becomes a wound of identity when the old servant Eurykleia recognizes him:

Now there, inside that thick of the bush, was the lair of a great boar. Neither could the force of wet-blown winds penetrate here, nor could the shining sun ever strike through with his rays, nor yet could the rain pass all the way through it, so close together it grew, with a fall of leaves drifted in dense profusion. (XIX. 439-443)

The boar is "the beast in the jungle." On a psychological level, the dense grove which the sunlight cannot penetrate might represent the mysterious abyss of man's inner world. The enemy of man is within himself. It is when he defeats the inner disorder or conflict that he can recognize his true self and obtain his identity. This process reflects the individuation process and also illustrates man's growth out of the world.

2. Vergil: Aeneas' Forest Hunting

The Golden Bough in the Deep Forest

Aeneas' Seeking Allies, Going Upstream through Forest

From the time when human being place an unbridgeable chasm between cognition and action, between self and world, the world has become infinitely large and rich in gifts and dangers. However, the totality inevitably yields to fragmentation, and completeness yields to disruptiveness. For Vergil, man's life in this world is a state of degeneration and renewal. The Vergilian hero:

his freedom and reason perfected in Stoic obedience to the commands of good patriotism and holy destiny, moves in a
justice and truth, which are their proper agents, glimmer
tainter and dissolve in vengeance and deception.

(Johnson 153)

Hence, what Vergil puts in this unbridgeable chasm actually is a complex labyrinth. The self has to undergo the wandering life, to make his own choices, to taste the world, and finally as Bernard says, to grow up from the world through the contemplation of life and to become a fully mature man, "arming himself for goodness, defeating violence, and implementing wisdom," that is, leading an active life. Vergil's forest episodes serve as excellent exemplification for this individual growth.

After the violent hurricane conducted by Aeolus, Aeneas with the Trojans on the left seven ships land Libya. Aeneas goes out to probe the surroundings and in a forest shoots down seven stags, a number equal to his ships. This is a significant gesture, because in the hunting he has established his identity as a king, a leader who bears responsibility and who cares the living of his companions.

Another significant progress for the hero's growth is represented through Aeneas' search for the Golden Bough in the deep forest. Guided by two doves, the traditional symbol of peace, Aeneas comes to

... the two-hued tree
Where glitter of gold filtered between green boughs.
Like mistletoe that in the woods in winter
Thrives with yellowish berries and new leaves—
A parasite on the trunk it twines around—
So bright amid the dark green ilex shone
The golden leafage, rustling in light wind. (VI. p.167)

The Golden Bough is the crystallization of the trees, that is, the soul of the tree, the tree-spirit. Like mistletoe, it has the power to thrive even in the deadly winter. Hence, the Bough is a metaphor of the power of renewal in vegetation and further the power of self-renewal. That the Golden Bough is offered to the dead as a part of ritual is not without reasons, because it brings the powers that reawaken forest
and garden and that keep watching the dead and accompany the freed spirit. Besides, the bright image of the Golden Bough provides a sharp contrast to the darkness of the forest and to the darkness of the underworld. This contrast is later represented again by the confrontation of Aeneas and Anchises, the alive and the dead, and by the situation of the Elysium in the world below. Furthermore, the last use of the Golden Bough by Aeneas is to planted full on the threshold of Proserpin's palace. Here the Bough serves as a symbol of the transition from death to life. Thus the Elysium and the ascent to the upper world and the rebirth of Aeneas, on the way from his contemplative life to his active life.

After Aeneas and his companions land Italy, he is isolated and threatened by Turnus. Inspired by the God of Tiber River, Aeneas goes upstream to ask for the help of Achaian allies. He meets Evander who is conducting a ritual dedicated to Hercules in a forest. The forest has buried many heroic feats and horrible forces in the past. Aeneas, led by Evander, undergoes the forest with the report of the past and Vergil's prediction of the future. Thus forest becomes for Aeneas a place to seek new identity. Like a labyrinth, Aeneas is required to make his choices while facing a strong uncertainty about life. This is the necessity of the purgative human journey in this world.

3. Ovid: The Catalogue of Trees

The catalogue of trees in *Metamorphoses* (X. 86-109) is a demonstration of the close relationship between primitive society and the forest. The trees can be the sources of men's food: "the ilex bending under its acorns," "viburnum / With dark-blue bertries," and "the arbute / With the red fruit." The trees can be the materials for building and daily tools: "the hazel / Easily broken," "the ash men use for spears," and "the green boxwood." The trees can also be the spiritual symbol of the society: "the palm, the victor's triumph." They even combined with various legendary tales associating the religious belief of the society: "the cone-shaped cypress," "now a tree, /
But once a boy, loved by the God Apollo;" and the transformation of Daphne into a laurel, as the symbol of triumph and ovation.

V. Cave and Forest in The Faerie Queene

In Part II and III of this essay, much has been said about how cave and forest interweave into themselves the epistemological, ethical, and psychological dimensions at once; and about how cave and forest are incorporated into man's purgative journey in this world and thus transformed into the modalities of the self.

In Spenser's romance, .... it takes on a particular reson- ance, as part of the tension between the forward move- ment towards an ending and the delightful and seductive, dilation which is also the poem itself. (Parker 63)

In The Faerie Queene, the procession of knights' setting out from and coming back to the court of Gloriana exemplifies the deferred wandering of man's life here and the necessary purification of the self in order to return to perfection. Thus, the exter- nal forward movement here corresponds to the spiritual force of buoyancy toward perfection; the external dilation or delay corresponds to the spiritual force of gravity toward imperfection. In ethical term, the tension is a tournament between virtue and vice. In psychological term, it is the war between mind and body. In the fairyland, cave and forest are the loci of this procession, and they serve as the labyrinthian wandering realm, the purgative space, and the inner area of psychological exploration. Spenser's cave and forest, I think, are born with this vertical dialectic feature and the horizontal multiple dimensions.

Continual deferral or postponement is part of the sorrow of wandering, ... but it is also part of the 'delightful land of Faery,' its potentially endless variety, and it is this tension, in its various implication, that the different Legends of Spenser's romance invite us to explore. (Parker 64)
It is a land of uncertainty, "yet is etern in mutabilitie" (III. vi. 47). Now it is time to penetrate into the fairyland and to decipher some significant passages about cave and forest.

A. Cave

All these obscure, hollow recesses of evil are also abscesses in the land of Faery, sources of the 'far in fixed sting' that poisons human health. From each of these wounds in the earth emanates an impulse that tempts man to make a hollow place of himself, that tempts him to misuse and abuse his spiritual, emotional, and material substance, and to become a monster rather than ... to become a man.

(Glamatti 101)

At the first sight, the caves in The Faerie Queene are overwhelmingly negative in their association. However, this is only one side of the coin. The wild beasts or the irrational impulses and the evil men or the evil temptations associated with the dark caves are actually the excessively hyperactive, organic powers awaiting the restraint of Reason. They are the vices to be conquered by virtues:

For in the wide wombe of the world there lyes,
In hatefull darkenesse and in deepe horrore,
   An huge eternill Chaos, which supplyes
The substances of natures fruitful progenyes. (III. vi. 36)

This passage serves as an excellent example to illustrate the dialectic feature of cave in The Faerie Queene. Chaos, a destructive cosmic force nourished in the cave-like womb of the world, paradoxically supplies the generative force of Nature. Therefore, cave is potentially positive and also potentially negative. It can be the source of procreative but at the same time the impulse of destruction. Sometimes it represents organic and restless energy, but sometimes it is a place of stasis and respite. When the impulses generated from the abscesses of the Fairyland are under the control of rea-
son, they can be generative and productive. Hence in *The Faerie Queene*, the purpose to depict the darkness is to clarify the image of light under the veil of personification, just as the erotic, irrational forces in Homer is to figure the heroic values. In fact, all the caves in the fairyland to a considerable extent illustrates the variations of man’s purgative trials.

1. Cave as the threatening dangers and perils within and without the self

Dangers and perils mark the necessary delay in the hero’s action. Hence, the cave often functions as the spiritual as well as the physical trial of heroes. Redcross’ entrance into the cave of the dragon Error (I. i) implies the entrance of the human soul into vices; and his defeat of Error represents man’s conquest of the vices within his own soul. In Book III, the hyena-like beast that dwells in the witch’s hidden cave and feeds on women’s flesh represents the lustful passion of love and the horrifying danger which threatens virginity. This cannibalistic monster reminds us of Polyphemos the Cyclops in the *Odyssey*. The cave in the Garden of Adonis where the destructive boar is shut up is a cave of chaos and the dwelling palace of irrationality impulses. Cave in this sense becomes a dialectic, because it is anti-generative and generative at once. In Book IV, The cave of Ate is located in the deep abyss or chaos of the underground. This darksome house reminds us of Allecto’s underground house in the *Aeneid*. While Allecto is conducted by Juno from the underworld to brings various perturbations to the human being, Ate is conjured up by Duessa from the hell because of her faculty to stir up discord among knights. In this sense, cave becomes the source from which the power of discord originates. In Book V, the cave of Melengin also demonstrates a horrible aspect of man’s life, especially because he is capable of transforming himself into a fox, bird, hedgehog, and a snake. In Book VI, the cave of the Brigands also figure the extreme hellish power of irrationality.
2. Cave as a metaphor of mental blindness and paralysis

This kind of cave is often full of temptations and illusions. It is dark and marks the delay and idleness in the hero’s forward movement. The most conspicuous examples are the perturbations represented as wizards or witches who cast strong spells or enchantment. Such figures as Archimago, Duessa, Acrasia, the witch who formed the false Florimell, Busyrane, Carflambo, Porteus, and Radigund all have their cave-like dwelling places in the deep forest. Other caves like the cave of Sleep (I. i) and the cave of Night (I. i) possess the sense of stasis which is the sin of sloth. Besides, the cave of Despair illustrates an invitation for Redcross knight to give up his mission and stop his forward movement. In Book V, Geryoneo’s unnamed monster which lurks in a cave beneath the temple altar represents the Illusion and Idol, contrasting to Truth in religious belief. The cave of Lust in Book IV also belongs to this type.

3. Cave as an inner area of psychological exploration of the self

This psychological realm reminds us of the initiation experience to the underworld in Plato’s cave, in the Odyssey, and in the Aeneid. Like its forerunners, the cave of Mammon is a realm of uncertainty and ambiguity, paralleling the purgative process of man’s wandering life. It is again an invitation for Guyon to stay his forward movement and to delay forever the end of his pursuit. In this labyrinthian realm, Guyon is asked to make continuous choices to shun temptations, indulgence, and personal destruction. After this allegorical self-introversion, Guyon is able to gain a spiritual rebirth which begins an active life. Thus in the rest part of Book II, we witness Guyon as an active man who gains control over himself and his surroundings, no longer as a passive one who can only receive endless trials. Another cave with this contemplative feature is the cave of Merlin in Book III. This cave is a cave of glass—the magic mirror. Through the prophesy, it is a bridge between past and future and hence contains all the challenges that are determined and that the soul must face and undergo.
4. Cave as the earthly prison of the individual soul

The Platonic man is the soul imprisoned in the body, and he has a consequent necessity to escape through a process of purgation. We have delineated this image in Plato's model of the cave. Correspondingly, in The Faerie Queene, there exist several cave-like dungeons into which the personified virtues are put. The dungeon symbolizes the body and the heroes or heroines imprisoned in them represent the aspects of the soul. It implies a world of change and uncertainty and marks the confinement of the fugitive soul. The dungeon in the palace of Orgoglio in Book I and the one in the palace of Proteus in Book III where Redcross and Florimell are imprisoned respectively belong to this type.

B. Forest

The forest is the locus of Spenser's fairyland. It possesses the psychological effect of mystery and darkness. Its physical characteristics often bring the association of uncertainty, ambivalence, and ambiguity. In The Faerie Queene, the forest is the literary expression of a complex spiritual experience. It is a place where the bad mingles with the good, where the heroes have to make moral choices constantly. It is a realm which is inhabited by various hidden hostile forces, functioning as the purgative trials awaiting the self to subdue or experience. The forest is Spenser's ambitious vehicle to delineate the process of man's growth from fragmentation to wholeness, and to represent the violent conflict between opposites. The forest is an allegory of human life. The forest represents this world of change. This world is

a brief prologue to eternity ... In allegory this vision reveals itself in two seemingly contradictory character types. There are shadowy personifications and half-developed characters of The Faerie Queene, perfect emblems for the unfinished personalities which we have in this temporal life. There are likewise the realistic characters ..., realistic because they are the essence of and individual's total life,
its consummation in eternity. (Murrin 151-152)

Hence, forest has incorporated the temporal world and the eternal world into it. For Spenser, it is an attempt to illustrate the universal law: the conflict between permanence and change. It is this dialectical feature that transforms forest into a modality of the synthetic-analytic dialectic—the Self.

In Book I, the catalogue of trees reflects the Ovidian conventional one. The trees are all conscripted to human use. It also illustrates a tendency from outward to inward. This tendency thus implies that later Redcross’ entrance into the wood of Errour signifies the confrontation of soul and body. The wood as suggested in Part II of this paper is a labyrinthian region of wandering and moral choices. The hostile forces in the forest beguile and perplex the intellect. Therefore it provides the necessary delay for spiritual growth. The forest is also shitters of the beasts and evil men, which are the irrational impulses, the dangers, of the subconscious menace within the self. Hence, forest might symbolize the body or the flesh, since most of the perturbations which annoy the soul come from the imperfection of the flesh. However, the forest might serve as a place for the nourishment of benevolent power. Thus in Spenser’s forest, we find Una’s lion which is capable of discerning false and Truth; Belphoebe and Satyrane who repersent the healing power of Nature; the Salvage Man who is the innocent child of Nature; and shepherds who are the spokesmen of the peaceful pastoral life.

VI Conclusion

Cave and forest are expanded analogue of one another. They share the dialectic feature with the self and thus provide as excellent literary vocabulary to penetrate into the inner ample world of the self. In The Faerie Queene, Spenser makes a successful interweaving of epistemological, ethical, and psychological dimensions into the topoi of cave and forest. Cave suggests the chaotic state, spiritual darkness and men-
tual blindness and paralysis, the descent of hell, the stasis of life; but also the hyper-active energy of the world. Forest suggests a place of mystery, full of hidden dangers and occasional pleasant surprises. It symbolizes Chaos, the perplexing power, the danger and subconscious menace within the self, and most important of all, an allegory of human life. Besides that, it is also a nourishing place of benevolence power of Nature. Therefore, in cave and forest, we witness a marriage of virtues and vices, good and evil, namely, soul and body, heaven and hell. Deciphering the *topoi* of cave and forest in Plato, Homer, Vergil, Ovid, and Spenser, reveals an impressive continuity about the representation of human nature. Somehow, this continuity is "the essence of an individual's total life, the consummation in eternity." This continuity is rightly Spenser's "eterne in mutibilite."
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