

John Robert Cozens (1752–1797), the Sublime, and Civita Castellana

A new discovery

Maddine Insalaco



John Robert Cozens (1752–97) elaborated a revolutionary technique of watercolour painting during his first trip to Italy in 1776–79. His interest in the pictorial representation of Edmund Burke's concept of the Sublime, evident in his works in the Swiss Alps, culminated in his cavern paintings described as 'his most perfect realization of Burke's dark, infinite, terrifying sublime'.¹ The previously unknown subjects of these mysterious, gloomy pictures (Pl 1, Pl 2) are here positively identified as topographical interpretations of two caves located in Civita Castellana, Italy.² This discovery provides new insight into Cozens's artistic dialogue with Burke's Sublime; advances the understanding of Cozens's process of finding the Sublime in nature; locates Civita Castellana as a focus of experimentation for early Romantic painting 50 years before the arrival of Corot in the area; and raises new questions about the relationship between Cozens's mental illness and his work.

Cozens was as mysterious a man as the works he produced in his short life. We know comparatively little about him. There are no extant documents by his hand apart from his paintings and drawings, writings about him are scant, and there are no portraits to give us an indication of his appearance. His artistic training came exclusively from his father Alexander Cozens (1717–1786), an established artist, theoretician and instructor to the British elite. Through the connections of his father Co-

The works illustrated are by John Robert Cozens (1742–1797) unless otherwise stated

1 *A Cavern in the campagna*, 1778. Watercolour, 41.5 x 61 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum

zens was introduced to patrons and opportunities to showcase his work. From 1767–71 he regularly exhibited work with the Society of Artists, an organization that the elder Cozens helped to establish. In 1776 he submitted an oil painting of *Hannibal Crossing the Alps* for admission to the Royal Academy. While the painting was favourably received, Cozens was unsuccessful in his application and never repeated the effort. He served as draughtsman to Richard Payne Knight (1776–77) and William Beckford (1782–83) during their respective Grand Tours to Italy. Otherwise he supported himself from private commissions, many of which related to work he had done during his Italian travels.

Given the dearth of information it is difficult to appreciate the nature of Cozens's mental fragility, periodic bouts of illness and ultimate nervous collapse in 1794 followed by a three-year confinement in an asylum prior to his death. There is evidence that



2 *View from inside a cave*, 1778. Watercolour, 37.7 x 50.6 cm.
Victoria and Albert Museum

mental instability descended through his family. He had a cousin who was insane and his sister seemed also to have displayed a nervous character that was considered dangerous.³ In one of the few written references we have Cozens was described to be of 'silent, hesitating disposition, and of grave manners'.⁴

While Cozens's early work shows a debt to his father's teachings and theories of landscape painting, in Italy he developed and refined the groundbreaking watercolour technique and poetic language that distinguished him from his predecessors. Relying on masses constructed from layers of multiple washes rather than outlined, coloured shapes, Cozens was able to control the disposition of light and dark contrasts, and gradually introduce a harmonized colour scheme. The result was a unified composition with a rarefied, dreamlike sense of atmosphere and space. The technique allowed Cozens to translate mere topography into something visionary and supernatural. In his hand the humblest, simplest landscape form became charged with emotion. His palette of subtle blues, greens and greys determined the singular quality of brooding and melancholy that defines his work. Significantly, Cozens was able to use this innovative technique to translate his own emotional sensitivity into high art in prophetic works indicative of a shift away from Classicism towards Romanticism.

Cozens and the Sublime

Consistent with neo-classical standards, Cozens's artistic training required knowledge of the works of ancient and modern writers, poets and philosophers, which would inform and inspire works reflecting the highest criteria of taste and contain a moral import. Cozens's work demonstrates a greater influence of contemporary themes in art, most notably the concept of the Sublime advanced by Edmund Burke in his treatise *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* published in 1757.

Burke's work represents an effort to explore human emotions and their sources within an organized hierarchy, with the larger goal of investigating the laws of nature. Burke defines the Sublime as something that 'produces the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling' and identifies specific circumstances that produce this experience. He states generally: 'Whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain, and danger, that is to say, whatever is in any sort terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the sublime.'⁵ Burke distinguishes between emotions provoked by the Sublime and the conditions that generate it in nature. Astonishment, fear and horror are identified as the emotional responses to physical situations which are dark, obscure, vacuous, solitary, vast and infinite. Concerning the arts, Burke is clear that the Sublime can best be communicated through poetry, and that the poet who best understood how to do this was Milton. He suggests by contrast, that painting is limited in its power of suggestibility to the 'image it presents', and goes further to state that 'the most perfect kinds of the sublime and beautiful are formed in poetry'.⁶

That Cozens should actively engage with a work focused on exploring human emotions is understandable considering his sensitive artistic temperament and mental fragility. What has not previously been considered is that Cozens's works that reference Milton, including the cavern paintings, represent a dialogue with Burke in the debate over painting versus poetry as the superior vehicle in expressing the Sublime. Arguments on the relative merits of painting and poetry date back to Aristotle and Plato but it was to the authority of Leonardo da



Vinci that Cozens would have referred in making his pictorial response to Burke. In his treatise *That Painting Surpasses All Human Works by the Subtle Considerations Belonging to It* Leonardo states:

The eye which is called the window of the soul, is the principal means by which the central sense can most completely and abundantly appreciate the infinite works of nature... If you, historians, or poets, or mathematicians had not seen things with your eyes you could not report of them in writing. And, if you O Poet, tell a story with your pen, the painter with his brush can tell it more easily, with simpler completeness and less tedious to be understood. And, if you call painting dumb poetry, the painter may call poetry blind painting. Now, which is the worse defect? To be blind or dumb? Though the poet is as free as the painter in the invention of his fictions they are not so satisfactory to men as paintings; for, though poetry is able to describe forms, actions and places in words, the painter deals with the actual similitude of the forms, in order to represent them.

Now tell me which is the nearer to the actual man: the name of the man or the image of the man? The name of man differs in different countries, but his form is never changed but by death.⁷

Cozens would have been familiar with Leonardo's treatise because his father famously made reference to it when seeking to establish credible authority for his 'blot' technique of landscape composition published in a 1759 essay and utilized in his teaching at Eton College.⁸

In interpreting passages from *Paradise Lost* in his composition depicting *Satan Directing his Legions* (Pl 3), it has been suggested that Cozens was one of the first artists to show his independence from tradition by portraying Satan as a heroic rebel.⁹ Yet the work also shows an active engagement with Burke's ideas on the power of art to communicate the Sublime. In the first instance, this regards the use of what Burke terms 'judicious obscurity'. That is defined as anything which heightens and maintains a sense of terror and fear by either suggestion, lack of clarity or selective omission.¹⁰ He cites Milton as the person who best understood this tool and proceeds with a portrait of Satan which illustrates this:

He above the rest
In shape and gesture proudly eminent
Stood like a tower; his form had not yet lost
All her original brightness, nor appeared
Less than archangel ruin'd, and th' excess
Of glory obscured: as when the sun new ris'n
Looks through the horizontal misty air
Shorn of his beams.¹¹

In Burke's view the various images that communicate this 'noble picture', a tower, archangel, the sun rising through



3 *Satan Summoning his Legions*, c1776.
Watercolour, 28.8 x 33.4 cm. Tate Britain

4 *Paysage a la cascade* attributed to Claude-Joseph Vernet (1714–1789), nd.
Pencil on paper, 24.5 x 38.8 cm. Louvre, Paris. This drawing contains elements taken directly from the landscape of Civita Castellana

5 *Landscape of ancient Greece* by Pierre-Henri Valenciennes (1750–1819), 1786. Oil on canvas, 100.3 x 151.4 cm. Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit.
This painting contains elements taken directly from the landscape of Civita Castellana

mists and so on, affect the emotions in poetry because they are crowded and confused, deliberately obscure and unclear. He concedes that judicious obscurity in painting can produce a similar result when images are 'dark, confused and uncertain'.¹² Cozens's Satan is an attempt to represent this concept pictorially. At least two thirds of the picture surface is composed of darkness, the controlled tonality of which recedes into an uncertain, murky distance. The heroic figure of Satan depicted as a handsome classical god in his 'original brightness' (ie nude) is immediately confusing and shocking at the same time. Illuminated by a sea of flames his eyes are directed to something obscured behind the foreground rock. We can only imagine what is happening because we are shown so little. We sense the terrible but cannot know it. In this controlled, obscure image Cozens takes us right into Burke's Sublime. In concluding his treatise Burke returns to the argument that words have more power than painting in provoking sublime emotions:

In painting we may represent any fine figure we please; but we never can give it those enlivening touches which it may receive from words. To represent an angel in a picture, you can only draw a beautiful young man winged; but what painting can furnish out anything so grand as the addition of one word, 'the angel of the Lord?'.¹³

Cozens's Satan would seem to represent a direct pictorial challenge to this claim. Here is a beautiful winged young man, an angel of the Lord, but himself the Lord of darkness and evil. In this case the image unambiguously conveys a completely different meaning, provoking an emotional response based in



6 *Part of Civita Castellana, between Narni and Rome*, nd. Graphite on paper, 22.5 x 17.1 cm. Yale Center for British Art, New Haven

terror and fear more consistent with the Burkean Sublime.

The mysterious cavern paintings, unique among Cozens's work, contain every physical characteristic suggested by Burke to evoke fear and terror connected with a sublime experience. They present spaces from the Underworld that are dark, dangerous, vast, and empty. They can also be considered part of Cozens's continuing dialogue with Burke regarding the relative powers of painting and poetry in expressing the Sublime. Cozens offers once again a pictorial response to a reference by Burke to Milton. In quoting the following passage from *Paradise Lost* Burke remarks how the words 'death' and a 'universe of death' greatly increase the sublime emotion:

O'er many a dark and dreary vale
They pass'd, and many a region dolorous.
O'er many a frozen, many a fiery Alp
Rocks, CAVES, lakes, fens, bogs, dens and SHADES OF DEATH.
A UNIVERSE OF DEATH.¹⁴

He suggests that only by this poetic language and not images can ideas be communicated that are 'great and amazing beyond conception'.¹⁵

In relation to Da Vinci, Cozens's cave images present us with spaces into one of which he has inserted obscure figures that are more like souls or 'shades', former men whose forms have been 'changed by death' (Pl 1).¹⁶ No suggestion or imagination is necessary to experience the intense bleakness, despair and emptiness one feels when confronted by these paintings. They immediately shock and unnerve as we are faced with the prospect of death, a state beyond conception for the living.

Sometime between 1777 and 1778, having passed over the 'frozen Alps' in his journey south into Italy, Cozens engaged with his most intense artistic experience of the Sublime in the caves of Vignale in Civita Castellana.

Civita Castellana and the early open-air painting tradition

During the 18th century Civita Castellana was a familiar destination as it lay on the Via Flaminia, one of the ancient Roman consular roads and major overland routes to Rome from the north. Known for its comfortable lodgings and convenient location only four post stations from Rome, the town played host to multitudes of travellers. For artists interested in landscape painting, Civita exerted a particular appeal.

Consistent with Enlightenment empiricism artists were required to work from observation directly in nature as a fundamental part of their training. The goal of open-air study was to make sketches that could be used as material for future studio compositions. By the middle of the century, specific routes for outdoor excursions emanated from Rome that were routinely followed by artists. Civita Castellana lay on the northern 'Campagna' itinerary.

The dominant aesthetic mode of 18th-century neo-classical painting reflected an emphasis on what was known as the *beau idéal* or ideal beauty. The painter was expected to take nature in its imperfect state and transform it into an ideal interpretation in a work designed to elevate the life of the spectator. From this point of view ideal beauty was not solely a physical quality but an intellectual and moral one as well. In landscape painting the common idioms used to convey these ideas were images of ancient citadel towns dominating fertile valleys with flowing rivers, populated by cows and sheep. Together these images presented a world of grandeur, order, grace and harmony between natural and manmade elements. The unique geology of Civita Castellana with its monumental plateaux, with villages and fortresses perched above steep ravines with meandering watercourses, represented nothing less than the *beau idéal* in nature itself. No great imagination was required for artists to create a landscape composition according to the classical ideal there. The subjects were right in front of them, usually only a few steps from the inns that offered food and lodging (Pl 4) (Pl 5).

In the course of the 18th century specific elements of the Civita Castellana landscape became stock images in the portfolio of artists who visited Italy. These were the cliffs and rivers which flowed through them: the Celle, Flaminia, Clementine and Terrano bridges; the convent of Santa Maria del Arco; the Sangallo Fortress and the entrance gates to the town. Many of these motifs became popularized by the so called 'vedutisti' or view painters, who created prints for travel books that were distributed throughout Europe. Artists were often familiar with the Civita landscape before travelling to Italy.

Also significant in promoting Civita Castellana as a painting destination was the precedent of respected artists who worked there. For Cozens this recommendation could have come from his father who studied in Rome with the landscape master Joseph Vernet (1746–49). Adding to Vernet's authority was his influence on Richard Wilson's decision to focus on landscape painting. William Marlow worked in the town some time between 1765–68. Pierre-Henri Valenciennes, author of a seminal treatise on open-air painting, spent eight years in Italy between 1777–85 and made numerous sketches in Civita Castellana. He wrote enthusiastically of the cliffs in his publication. Carl Ludwig Hackert, younger brother of the well-known court painter Philipp, made at least one detailed work of the ancient entrance gate in 1777. It is not unreasonable to assume that the elder Hackert was familiar with Civita and as a known acquaintance of Cozens could have recommended the town to him.

A less-appreciated fact is that the Civita landscape also appealed to the sensibilities of early Romantic painters such as Cozens. The shifting focus on individual emotional and spiritual concerns in art found ample subject matter in the mysterious ruins of the Faliscans, an indigenous population that settled the territory in the 7th century BCE. The tufa cliffs were honeycombed with ancient necropolises and tunnels

leading to dark underground realms, all seamlessly integrated into the natural environment. Temples, bridges, gates, walls and cisterns from the vanished race, yet unidentified by modern archeology, fueled the poetic imagination of the visiting artist.

The Vignale cavern paintings

An undated drawing inscribed 'Part of Civita Castellana, between Narni and Rome' (Pl 6) in the collection of the Yale Center for British Art confirms the presence of Cozens in Civita Castellana. Given the 1778 date of the Victoria and Albert cavern paintings we can assume that the Yale drawing was executed during the same trip that inspired these works. The unusual and distinctly un-picturesque subject of these paintings would suggest that they were personal works and not undertaken in the company of Richard Payne Knight. A reasonable conjecture therefore is that Cozens made the trip to Civita Castellana after parting company with Knight in Rome in April 1777.

The Yale drawing is a depiction of the church of Santa Maria del Arco (today Santa Maria del Carmine), which is situated on a plateau in the historic center of Civita. On the right is another land mass, the 'Colonneta', under which once passed a road that connected with the Via Flaminia. Of critical significance in identifying the subjects of the cavern paintings is that the drawing is an accurate rendering made at a location equidistant from the Albergo di Tre Re, the inn and post station where Cozens probably stayed, and the Vignale caves.

The bridge over the Treia River has long been destroyed but in Cozens's time if one exited the inn, walked to the centre of the bridge and looked left across the river, the plateau of Vignale would dominate the landscape (Pl 7). Cozens would have been immediately drawn to the spot as it offered a bird's-eye prospect over the picturesque Treia valley with one of the few opportunities to depict deep space in the immediate area. His works executed in the Alps during the same trip show an interest in this compositional type.

The ascent to Vignale was steps away from the spot where Cozens executed the Yale drawing and therefore was close enough to invite exploration. Interestingly, it was in the exact opposite direction from the most popular sketching sites at that time. Most artists preferred the valley beneath with its ancient bridge and tufa cliffs seen from below, consistent with the interest in finding the *beau idéal* in nature. Cozens's decision to explore the views from the high prospect of Vignale shows a rejection of this ideal. It was also a way to isolate himself from the society of other artists and have a solitary dialogue with nature.

The tufa plateau of Vignale is a natural fortress bordered on all sides with watercourses and was an obvious choice for settlement by the Faliscans in antiquity. Tufa is an ideal material in that it is easy to cut into building blocks or carve, making it suitable for shelters, cemeteries, tunnels and roads. The plain is littered with architectural remains of the Faliscan culture, most notably tombs and a massive cistern with a connecting network of tunnels. The landscape, punctuated by copses of oak trees, is mysterious and suggestive. It invites wandering and poetic musing. As a protected archeological zone it is undeveloped and presents itself much as it did in the late 18th century. When Cozens explored Vignale, the tree and plant cover was much sparser than it is today, given the then practice of common grazing and use of wood for fuel. For this reason it would have been relatively easy for Cozens to discover the two separate caves.

Recent photographs of the caves provide unquestionable evidence of the subjects of Cozens's paintings. They also clearly show the topographical accuracy of the works and thus rule out the possibility that they are fanciful creations. Their originality lay in Cozens's choice to depict them rather than in the force of his imagination (Pls 8–13).

A genuine appreciation of these works is only possible if one considers the actual experience of being alone inside the caves. The first observation in both spaces is an unquantifiable

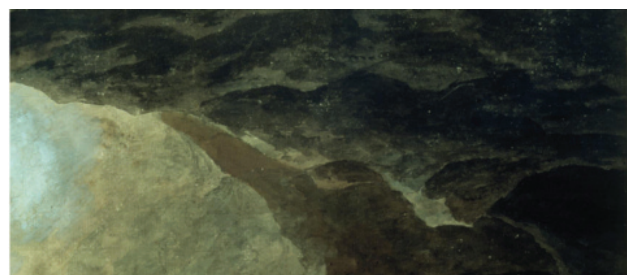


7 *Civita Castellana* attributed to William Marlow (1740–1813) undated. Pen and brown ink, brown wash and pencil on paper, 23.5 x 37.1 cm, Yale Center for British Art, New Haven. This drawing depicts the Treia River, the Via Flaminia, and the Albergo di Tre Re on the right.

vastness in size. With only the sun as a light source it is impossible to measure the caves as the light dissolves gradually into a dense and complete darkness. Because the boundaries of the spaces are not perceptible they give the impression of being endless and correspond perfectly to Burke's definition of the infinite, which he describes as the 'truest source of the sublime'.¹⁷ There is a steep descent into each cave, which immediately communicates the subterranean experience of the Underworld or Hell. A quick exit is not possible as the earth is loose and rocky. A solitary person is instantly consumed with fear. The absolute silence coupled with a confused sense of the size of the space provokes a sensation of danger. The air is damp and the farther in one goes the colder it becomes. The caves are extremely unsettling and inhospitable environments. Apart from archaeologists, geologists and speleologists they do not invite human activity. And so it is reasonable to wonder what Cozens was after when he decided to spend an extended period of time in these unwelcoming spaces.

There are several possible explanations. First, the cave paintings represent a direct engagement with Burke's Sublime. Among the subjects that Cozens depicted both during his first Italian journey and in previous travels in England the caves were the most complete examples of the Burkean Sublime he found in nature. By immersing himself in an actual experience of the Sublime with all the attendant risks, he could best transmit the emotion to his work, insuring a level of authenticity. If so, this unprecedented act would constitute further evidence of the revolutionary nature of Cozens's work and his early modernism. Secondly, as was previously suggested, Cozens travelled to Civita Castellana for personal study. His solitary and melancholy nature would have easily gravitated to the quiet isolation of working in the caves. If his visit took place during the hot summer months it would have made sense to seek the cool refuge they offered. Given the fact that Cozens had no difficulty producing emotionally charged, sublime works without exposing himself to physical harm, and that finding an isolated spot to work in Civita Castellana was fairly easy at that time, there is yet another possible explanation for his choice. That is, that he found the spaces compelling, even familiar on some level. He may have found in the caves the perfect metaphor for his own melancholic and depressed isolation. Perhaps he wanted to connect with the indefinable, mysterious feeling of 'otherness' in them. Further, as a sign of his future madness might he have been under the spell of a 'delusional vision that he could see or grasp what lay beyond all bounds of sensibility' and sought to become part of the Sublime himself?¹⁸

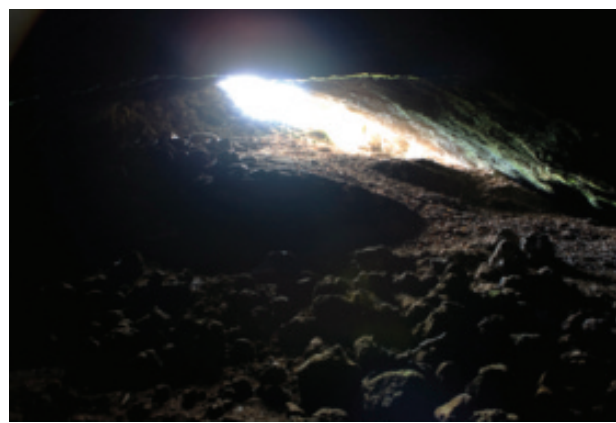
While the truth of Cozens's motivations cannot be known there are some important observations that can be made about the paintings. The large scale, detail and finish of the



8 (as Pl 1) *A Cavern in the campagna*, 1778

9 Detail of Pl 1

10 (as Pl 2) *View from inside a cave*, 1778



11 *Caverna della chiesa*, Vignale.
Digital photograph by Maddine Insalaco 2016

12 Detail of Pl 11

13 *Caverna della cisterna*, Vignale.
Digital photograph by Maurizio Piccinini 2016

Victoria and Albert works make it very unlikely that they were executed on location. The first reason is that the damp environment would have significantly slowed down the drying time between the application of paint layers, making the process interminably long. Secondly, the loose and rocky terrain would have made the steep access to both caves more challenging when carrying oversized boards and other equipment required for painting on location. Even if Cozens was assisted by a 'jackass' of the kind that he is known to have used, it would not have been possible to bring an animal into these spaces.¹⁹ Thirdly, the reduced light conditions would have

made it hard to see and work. The topographical accuracy, coupled with the fact that there is no drawing under the paint layers in either V & A picture, strongly suggests that the paintings were based on detailed drawings that Cozens produced inside the caves on a smaller scale. If this is what he was doing, none of the obstacles that painting would have presented can have been a problem, and even with limited light Cozens could have recorded the information he needed with sketchbook and pencil. While no such drawings have been identified at the present time this compelling reason for their existence should provide encouragement that they may some day emerge.

Final observations and thoughts

In 1776, when the 24-year-old Cozens made his first trip to Italy, his career was just beginning. His youthful enthusiasm for his profession was demonstrated by an active engagement with the artistic questions of his time, most notably in his response to the challenge to painting presented by Burke's theory of the Sublime. His work throughout his Italian sojourn can be viewed as an investigation of this theme with the intent of investing the depiction of nature with poetic emotion.

The Vignale cave paintings are the culmination of Cozens's explorations of the natural Sublime. In an act of 'extreme sketching' Cozens placed himself at physical risk in an effort to capture the intensity of the feeling of terror that the Burkean Sublime evoked. This was a major departure from the tamer goal of plein-air sketching at the time, which was to provide studies for studio compositions in which the imperfections of nature would be corrected and reassembled into an ideal narrative based on classical principles. Cozens, whether consciously or not, was advancing an avant-garde agenda by focusing on emotions alone and eliciting them through the experience of a pure landscape.

The convenient location on the road to Rome, variety of subject-matter and ease of access to the landscape, underlay the attraction of Civita Castellana as a destination for artists. The monumental verticality of the tufa cliffs, meandering rivers and architectural elements together created an enchanted vision of the *beau idéal* in nature, which was sought after in neo-classical painting. Cozens's interest in exploring the power of nature as an independent subject also found inspiration in the local terrain, making Civita a forum of investigation for the nascent Romantic sensibility, preceding the work of Corot by 50 years. The positive identification of the location of Cozens's cave paintings in Civita lends added significance in the town's role as a centre for pivotal developments in the history of modern painting.

As far as can presently be determined Cozens is the only artist who created works based on the Vignale caves. Given the tendency of artists at the time to study the same motifs in Civita Castellana this is quite unusual. Other painters certainly would have found the caves, given their proximity to the Albergo di Tre Re. The most likely reason that other artists did not depict these subjects is that the spaces were simply too frightening and uninviting. It is tempting to conjecture that Cozens's choice of working in these spaces reflected his developing mental illness and that the paintings are a self-referential testimony of his condition.

The lack of information about Cozens's health and mental fitness is problematic, although the few fragments that are available suggest that his condition was emotional and mental rather than physical. The fact that he survived a malarial fever that claimed the life of another member of the Beckford entourage in 1782 suggests that Cozens's physical constitution was not weak at all. Furthermore anyone with a propensity to physical illness would necessarily avoid the cold, damp and unhealthy atmosphere of the Civita caves. In his memoirs Thomas Jones relates that when Cozens was not well and the weather favourable he re-located from Rome to the country villa of his landlord.²⁰ The malady that Jones referred to was likely a debilitating bout of melancholy and depression that Cozens fought with an exposure to nature during painting excursions in the Campagna.

Contemporary research reveals that depressed individuals, particularly those with major disorders describe their condition with metaphors of being in 'pits with no escape', in 'dark tubes with no end'.²¹ Episodes of depression are associated with darkness, loneliness, and painful isolation. There is a sense of 'looking out into the world but feeling separated from the experience of it, from seeing the world in sunlight'. Depression is experienced as a 'lack' or 'absence' of qualities fundamental to well being such as ability to relate to others, love, hope and so on.²²

Every one of these descriptions can be applied to the imagery of caves. Each of Cozens's paintings presents a space that is experienced from deep inside and below the sun-lit opening. The compositional point of view is that of one imprisoned within. The massive void and absence of incident paradoxically suggest the heavy, uncomfortable presence of melancholy and hopelessness. The works can be viewed as personal narratives in the psychological drama that was only to intensify and which ultimately destroyed Cozens's life.

Cozens's engagement with Burke's Sublime in the cavern paintings represented a dialogue with one of the major artistic themes of the time while simultaneously making an astonishing revelation about himself. Given the depth of understanding Cozens displayed of Burke's theory, and the fact that all artists at the time had wide knowledge of literature and poetry, one wonders if he was not also invoking another passage from Milton in the personal message of the cave images:

Rocks, Dens, Caves; but I in none of these
Find place or refuge; and the more I see
Pleasures about me, so much more I feel
Torment within me, as from the hateful siege
Of contraries; all good to me becomes
Bane, and in Heav'n much worse would be my state.
But neither here seek I, nor in Heav'n
To dwell.²³

It is impossible to know, but Cozens certainly did find little refuge in the world as his unfortunate mental collapse at 42 years old revealed. Cozens's good fortune, on the other hand, was that he worked in a moment of transition from the Classical to the Romantic sensibility and could give free rein to his revolutionary and expressive vision.

- 1 Kim Sloan, *Alexander and John Robert Cozens The Poetry of Landscape*, New Haven and London 1986, p134.
- 2 The two works in the Victoria and Albert Museum collection are 3020–1876 *A cavern in the campagna*, and P6–1984 *View from inside a cave*. There is another version of 3020–1876 in the Birmingham Museum, 1953P144, *A grotto in the campagna*, which probably is dated incorrectly.
- 3 AP Oppé, *Alexander and John Robert Cozens*, Cambridge MA 1954, p121.
- 4 Joseph Farington, *The Farington Diary*, 2 July 1794, https://archive.org/stream/faringtondiary01fariuoft/faringtondiary01fariuoft_djvu.txt accessed 18 January 2019.
- 5 Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful 1757*, Eighteenth Century Collections Online, Part I, Section VII, p26.
- 6 Burke, Part II, Section V, p45, and Part V, Section VI, p121.
- 7 Leonardo da Vinci, *The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci*, vol I, Section 653, p354.
- 8 Alexander Cozens *Essay to Facilitate the Inventing of Landscips, intended for Students in the Art*, 1759.
- 9 Sloan, p108.
- 10 Burke, Part II, Section III, p44.
- 11 Burke, Part II, Section V, p45.
- 12 Ibid, p45.
- 13 Burke, Part V, Section VI, p121.
- 14 Ibid, p121. Capital letters by author.
- 15 Ibid, p121.
- 16 Da Vinci, p354.
- 17 Burke, Part II, Section VIII, p47.
- 18 Nicholas Tromans, 'The Psychiatric Sublime' in Nigel Llewellyn and Christine Riding, eds, *The Art of the Sublime*, Tate Research Publication, January 2013, <https://tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/the-sublime/nicholas-tromans-the-psychiatric-sublime-r1129548>.
- 19 Thomas Jones, 'Memoirs of Thomas Jones, Penkerrig, Radnorshire 1803', ed P Oppé, *Walpole Society*, XXXII (1946–48), p73.
- 20 Ibid p73.
- 21 Adam Geraghty, Miriam Santer, Samantha Williams, 'A qualitative study of primary care patients' conceptualizations of emotional distress', *Health*, vol XXI, 3 (2017), p297.
- 22 Jeffrey T Kiehl, 'The phenomenological experience of depression', *Inter-Regional Society of Jungian Analysts* (March 2005), p3.
- 23 John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, University of Oxford Text Archive, Book IX, p312.