A STUDY OF
THE DEVELOPMENT IN WORDSWORTH'S USE OF SOME CENTRAL IMAGES IN THE PRELUDE, I-VI

by

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A thesis submitted for the degree of M.A. in English,

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1969

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ABSTRACT

This is a study of the development in some aspects of Wordsworth's poetic vision as they are reflected in certain central images in the early and later texts of The Prelude, I-VI. Chapter I deals with images of Nature which portray it as a great mother, and imply man's need to depend on it for emotional food; most of these images are removed from the 1850 Prelude. Chapter II deals with other removed images which reflect the poet's early panentheism. In Chapter III the changes introduced in Nature imagery are discussed: in revising his poem, Wordsworth deprives Nature of its maternal role, stressing its outward beauties; he also removes many panentheistic images, adding others intended to suggest a belief in orthodox religion. The added images are mainly elaborate and complex, many being highly wrought metaphors and personifications, whilst most of the early images are simple, direct and swift shifting similes. Chapter IV deals with the removed images of childhood which contribute to a glorified image of the child in the 1805 text of that poem. The last chapter concerns images of movement and stillness, and the effect of the removal and addition of these on the style of both versions of The Prelude. It has been found

that the revision, although it has profited the text in many ways, has affected certain images and views characteristic of the poet's great period, the years 1798-1807, and has led to inconsistencies in the poetic vision expressed in the final Prelude.

CONTENTS

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This study represents an attempt, though very limited in scope, to throw light on the development in Wordsworth's use of some central images in The Prelude, I-VI. The main texts compared are the 1805 version of that poem and the posthumous text of 1850, both printed by de Selincourt in his variorum edition (revised by H. Darbishire, 1959). The former will be referred to throughout as the A text, and the latter as 1850; the intermediate manuscripts produced in the various revisions, and those produced still earlier during the composition of the A text, will keep the headings given to them by de Selincourt. In spite of the limitation of the study's scope, other Books of The Prelude are often consulted and quoted, as well as other early and later poems; this seems inevitable as a strict limitation could result in false conclusion.

My deep thanks are due to Miss A. Latham who supervised this work, for her instruction and criticism and above all, her encouragement.

I am grateful for the grant offered by Cairo University which enabled me to finish the study without financial hardship, and to Mrs. S. Pyke for her conscientious typing of the thesis.

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

The question of Wordsworth's development, the change in his poetic vision (often described as decline) has long engaged critical thought, and is not likely to be settled as easily as it is sometimes suggested. The controversy which still rages and which may not subside at all does not, however, concern the seminal fact of the poet's changed vision and practice; this seems to have been accepted as indisputable as, indeed, any comparison of an early poem like An Evening Walk with one from the Lyrical Ballads or, again, of either of these with some of the later poems like the Ecclesiastical Sonnets, will sufficiently evidence. Except for the lonely voices of Mary Burton (The One Wordsworth) and Edith Batho (The Later Wordsworth), general critical opinion has ceased to question the poet's development; instead, the extent and significance of this development are discussed, especially as convincing factual evidence has recently been furnished, by leading scholars like de Selincourt and H. Darbishire, which makes the reiteration of theories of a static Wordsworth sound as hollow as they prove futile.

The most important document of the poet's changed vision is de Selincourt's definitive edition of The Prelude, 1805, which first appeared in 1926. It had been known before that date, of course, that the poem existed in a different form from the posthumous version of 1850, but the difference had been thought to be slight, consisting in incidental improvement of phraseology, and revealing no substantial change in the poet's vision or beliefs. The publication of the early text completed in 1805, and the various manuscripts produced in the successive revisions of that poem, has enabled the students of Wordsworth's mind to trace a clear, if not always a consistent, line of the poet's development. In the introduction, and the apparatus criticus of his variorum edition of The Prelude, 1805-1850, (revised by H. Darbishire, 1959), Professor de Selincourt briefly explains and comments on the major textual changes in the poem which reveal Wordsworth's development.

Hence the question which gave birth to this study: can we, by comparing the imagery in the two versions of The Prelude gain any further understanding of the poet's development? The attempt to answer the question seemed worthwhile, and the initial comparison of some of the prominent textual changes in the poem proved to be fruitful.

Many images are removed from the 1805 version which, together with the images in the poems of the great decade, 1798-1807, build up into a consistent vision of Nature, God and man. Other images are added to the 1850 text of that poem (not always in the place of the removed ones) which are in the spirit which informed Wordsworth's later work, and which are markedly different, both in form and implication, from the images of the great decade. Some of the images which survived the revisions of the text still underwent a certain modification that affected their character and, consequently, their function in the poem. Seen as a whole, textual alterations indicate more than stylistic improvement and point to a deeper change in Wordsworth's poetic vision.

This study does not attempt a comprehensive analysis of the imagery of either text of The Prelude; it is simply an attempt to examine the changes introduced in some of the central images in the poem, which may help us to see how far and in what direction the poet's development went. The stress, therefore, is laid more on the difference between the two texts of that poem than on the similarities between them. When the change has mainly a negative effect - as the rejection in the final version of The Prelude of the bulk of childhood images which largely account for the

glorified image of the child in the early version - the images of the early text are the prime subject of analysis; but when the change involves the replacement of a set of images with another - as the group of panentheistic images were removed in favour of religiously orthodox ones - both sets are studied.

Before proceeding any further, however, we must define at the outset the concept of 'image' adopted in this study. This term presents special difficulties to literary scholars because it is not so much an exclusively literary term as it is a compound of the meanings of 'image' which, though originally borrowed from other fields, has been adapted to the special use it is put to in literary criticism. A detailed discussion of these various meanings clearly falls outside the scope of this introduction: it is too wide and complex a subject to be covered here. However, a consideration of the main uses of 'image' in different fields will help us to understand the particular sense in which it is used in literary criticism.

The most significant use of 'image' is perhaps the psychological (and imagery is primarily a psychological activity). According to Professor Wellek, psychologists

regard images as 'vestigial representatives of sensations'(1): any sense impression mentally reproduced, and not necessarily visual, can be considered as an image. The term could mean any memory of a past 'sensational or preceptual experience'(2). Some modern scholars, by easy tranference of this view to poetry, define the poetic image in the same way: as mental reproduction of sensation. Bliss Perry thinks that poetry is imagery and that imagery is sensation, more or less refined by the transforming power of the mind through which images pass(3). In Perry's opinion, a reader of poetry must concentrate his attention on realising the imagery as vividly as possible, as if the 'images were not made of words at all, but were naked sense-stimulus'(4). This view is quite similar to that of Robert P.T. Coffin who insists that poetry should present to the mind 'the clearest images, the most memorable of objects ... the things which we can see, touch, hear, taste and smell'(5), and to Edith Rickert's view that

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(1) R. Wellek, Theory of Literature, p.188.
(2) Ibid.
(3) A Study of Poetry, p.48; (quoted by Fogle's Imagery of Keats and Shelley, p. 5)
(4) Ibid. pp.94-5.
(5) The Substance that is Poetry, p.15.

imagery is a mode of expressing experience in the form of mental pictures of things 'seen, heard, touched, tasted and smelled'(1). Whether or not these identical attitudes to imagery draw on what was laid down as an 'imagist credo' early in this century by T.E. Hulme is not strictly relevant to our point; for Hulme's theory is itself influenced by Bergson's philosophy and the work of the late nineteenth-century French symbolists, and any investigation of such influences would, therefore, take us outside the field of the present research(2). It is well to remember, however, that Professor I.A. Richards objects to the transference of the psychological conception of imagery to poetry, suggesting that, to avoid this, neither 'image' nor 'figure' should be used as anonymous with 'metaphor' because they 'bring in a confusion with the sense in which an image is a copy or revival of a sense-impression of some sort, and so have made some rhetoricians think that a figure of speech, an image, or imaginative comparison, must have something to do with the presence of images, in this other

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(1) New Methods for the Study of Literature, p.27.
(2) Cf. Coffman's Imagism: A Chapter for the History of Modern Poetry, Chap.III; Cf. also Glenn Hughes's Imagism and Imagists.

sense, in the mind's eye, or the mind's ear. But, of course, it need not'(1).

Professor Richards is justified in showing concern about the confusion of the senses in which the word 'image' is apt to be used; there are indeed other senses of the word which may be easily confused with the literary sense. Philosophers concerned with the study of thinking, for instance, regard images as representatives of external objects, in almost the same way as linguistic 'signs' stand for certain referents. It was generally assumed that the mind used these 'images' in thinking, whether as exact replicas of the original impressions made on the senses or as mentally contrived symbols representing external objects (or modified forms of these objects). The modern view is, however, that 'images' in this sense may have nothing to do with the process of thinking; the occurrence of a series of 'images' in the mind is not the normal mode of thought, Michael Roberts tells us, and few mathematicians, musicians and philosophers, and not all poets, are visualisers(2).

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(1) Philosophy of Rhetoric, p.98.
(2) Critique of Poetry, p.47.

In linguistic studies the term 'image' is used to mean the original graphic figure which stood for certain referents. In picture writing each sign 'meant a whole sentence or even more - the image of a situation or of an incident being given as a whole'(1). Early languanges employed a system of symbolism in which the images were laden with religious, social and mythical implications(2). They were perhaps more poetic than the present analytical languages(3), but the natural development of human thought needed a better system; and so the image-writing 'developed into an ideographic writing of each word by itself', and this 'was succeeded by syllabic methods, which had in their turn to give place to alphabetic writing'(4).

In literary criticism, 'image' is used principally with one or both of two meanings: 1) an analogy (a simile or a metaphor), 2) a verbal representation of sensation. Some critics use it in one of these senses, some in the other, but the majority prefer to give it the compound meaning of an analogy having a sensuous appeal. In the

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(1) Otto Jespersen, Language, Its Nature, Development, and Origin, p.437.
(2) Ernst Cassirer, Language and Myth, p.44.
(3) Florence Marsh, Wordsworth's Imagery: A Study in Poetic Vision, Chapter I.
(4) Jespersen, Ibid.

terms of Professor Wellek, it represents to most critics the convergence of two lines, 'one of sensuous particularity, or the sensuous and aesthetic continuum, which connects poetry with music and painting and disconnects it from philosophy and science; the other is the oblique discourse which speaks in metonyms and metaphors'(1). C. Day Lewis tells us that a poetic image is 'a sensuous picture in words, ... (which is) metaphorical, with ... some human emotion in its context, ... charged with and releasing into the reader a special poetical emotion or passion'(2). Professor Fogle holds a similar view: a poetic image is an analogy or comparison, which has a special force and identity from the peculiarly aesthetic and compressed form of poetry(3).

For the purposes of this study, the word 'image' will be used to connote 'any and every kind of experience, drawn in every kind of way, which may have come to the poet, not only through any of his senses, but through his mind and emotions as well, and which he uses, in the form of simile and metaphor in their widest sense, for the

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(1) Wellek, Op. Cit. p.186.
(2) C. Day Lewis, The Poetic Image, p.22.
(3) R.H. Fogle, The Imagery of Keats and Shelley, pp.22-3.

purposes of analogy'(1). We, therefore, must 'resolutely exclude from our minds the suggestion that the image is solely or even predominantly visual, and allow the term to share in the heightened and comprehensive significance with which its derivative 'imagination' has perforce been endowed'(2).

The question whether poetic imagery may or may not include symbols must now be discussed. Literary historians do not, for some reason, make any definite conclusions about the connection between imagery and symbolism: Professor Wellek simply wonders if 'images, not offered as metaphors, as seen by the mind's eye' can be considered symbols(3); and a leading Wordsworthian critic has said that, confronted 'with the paradox of a major poet whose imagery yields almost nothing for discussion', she had to correct the wrong 'terms of ... definition' by proposing a 'theory of symbolism' according to which all poetic language, (even when most literal), is metaphorical, and that, consequently, all poetry is imagery (or symbolic) whether it contains similes and metaphors or not(4).

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(1) C.F.E. Spurgeon, Shakespeare's Imagery, p.5.
(2) J.M. Murry, Countries of the Mind, p.4.
(3) Op. Cit. p.188.
(4) F. Marsh, Op. Cit. p.1.

The reason for including symbols in the definition of imagery is easy to understand: images and symbols work on the same principle of analogy; both involve a comparison, direct or indirect, between two things. The apparent difference is that whereas in an image the two or more terms of comparison are given, a symbol need not be accompanied by what it stands for; furthermore, a symbol may stand for a variety of things; it may be employed in different contexts to suggest different analogies. However, there are many cases in which images are so compressed and so rich in implication as to look like symbols, and sometimes poetic symbols are so built up, and used in such contexts, as to pass for metaphors. The border line between an image and a symbol can be too thin to be recognized, and in certain contexts it may disappear altogether.

This may be particularly true of Wordsworth's images, many of which are so unobtrusive as to pass for symbols (or some kind of submerged or 'sunken' figure of speech), or, indeed, to pass unnoticed. But even when most unobtrusive, Wordsworth's similes and metaphors can be distinguished from his symbols and deserve an independent study. It has been found, however, that Wordsworth's

images often build up into a symbolic vision to which many of the recurrent symbols in The Prelude contribute; such symbols are unavoidably dealt with in this study.

Now remains a word about the method of approach adopted in this thesis. Two main methods seem to be in favour: one is the statistical method which relies on image-counts, classification of the various 'subjects' used in the images, and the analysis of the quantitatively dominant images in order to examine the poet's preoccupations, general interests, and main trends of thought. There is another method by which individual images in a poet's work are studied as representing archetypal symbols, that is, symbols accepted traditionally by humanity and carried from one generation to another in more or less the same form and with almost the same significance(1). Both methods obviously must isolate the images from their context; there is indeed no other way in which either method can achieve its end. Yet in isolating a poetic element we necessarily falsify it; it only remains a poetic element as long as it is dealt with as an integral part of a

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(1) Cf. M. Bodkin's Archetypal Patterns in Poetry, and Studies of Type Images in Poetry, Religion, and Philosophy.

particular work of art. 'An image, ... outside of its context', Professor Clemen tells us, 'is only half the image', because its life partly derives from its 'natural environment' in the poem(1). Studied in isolation, images do not yield the same richness of suggestion which they do as living wholes, as parts of the living work of art. Only by establishing the vital relation between imagery and the other aspects of a poet's work can any deeper appreciation of them be gained.

That is mainly why the statistical method of approach has not been adopted in this study, although it proved useful in pointing to certain trends in the poet's thought and poetic vision. For when 'we find the writer drawing again and again upon the same source, applying it sometimes to the same end but just as often to any variety of ends, have we not struck upon a cache which is, for him, filled with jewels not only fascinating in themselves but capable of casting light on whatever is brought near them?'(2). The principal source of error in this method, however, is that a set of statistics gives us the illusion that all

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(1) W. Clemen, The Development of Shakespeare's Imagery, p.3.
(2) Donne's Imagery, p.14.

the phenomena encompassed by it are equal among themselves, which is not always the case. Professor Clemen illustrates this error by saying that if in a certain poem there are three sea-images 'opposed' to eight garden-metaphors, the statistical statement itself is but very little help and may indeed be misleading. 'The three sea-images may be comprehensive, they may stand at important points and may have a far greater significance than the eight metaphors from the garden'(1). Professor Rugoff explains that a 'graph' or 'image-count' seems to put undue emphasis upon mere quantity and number, and to 'suggest that images are translatable into significant mathematical terms and formulae'(2). In other words, this method can tell us very little about the relevancy, the degree of significance of individual images, and nothing at all about the pattern of images in a given poem; it cannot help us in relating the images in a poem to each other, and this may be of vital importance in realising their place within the wider framework of the poet's vision.

The other method of studying images individually as archetypes, or 'primordial images', to use Jung's term,

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(1) Op. Cit. p.8.
(2) Op. Cit. p.26.

has seemed equally inadequate. I can dismiss it in no better terms than those of Abrams who says: 'For literary criticism ... the ultimate criterion is not whether a doctrine is a justifiable psychological hypothesis, but what it does when put to work in interpreting a text. And from this point of view standard archetypal criticism can be charged with blurring, if it does not destroy, the properties of the literary products it undertakes to explicate. A mode of reading that persists in looking through the literal, particular, and artful qualities of a poem in order to discover a more important ulterior pattern of primitive, general, and unintended meanings eliminates its individuality, and threatens to nullify even its status as a work of art. For the results of such reading is to collapse the rich diversity of individual works into one, or into a very limited number, of archetypal patterns, which any one poem shares not only with other poems, but with such unartful phenomena as myth, dreams, and the phantasies of psychosis'(1).

In this thesis, an attempt is made to approach the images of The Prelude both in their particular context,

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(1) M.H. Abrams, English Romantic Poets, pp.49-50.

and as they are related to Wordsworth's poetic vision as it is expressed elsewhere in his poetry. This study includes, however, only those images which are, either because they occur more frequently than others in that poem or because of the poet's significant use of them, central to The Prelude. These have been found to constitute important aspects of his vision, to deal with prominent themes in that poem, and, accordingly, have been classified in major groups which again comprise various sub-groups. Part of the work consisted in tracing the internal patterns of symbolism in these groups, which has helped not only to unveil the main threads of the poet's vision, but also to establish a relation between the images of Wordsworth's early poetry - between the imagery of The Prelude 1805 and that of the poems of the 'great decade' (1798-1807) - and to contrast these with the images of his later work, to which must belong the images added to the 1850 Prelude. Care has been taken, throughout this study, to keep Wordsworth's vision full in view, as this is the only valid framework of reference within which individual images can fruitfully be approached.

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CHAPTER I

I

Imagery of Mother-Nature

a)

In comparing the imagery of the two versions of The Prelude (1805 and 1850) one is perhaps first struck by the changes introduced in Nature-imagery: the simple, swift ballad simile has given place to a complex elaborate metaphor, and Nature's double symbolism as both Mother (in a relationship of sustained love and sympathy with man) and Deity, is almost completely lost. Wordsworth's assiduous revision of the 1805 version, his sedulous care in writing up his poem, proved, on the whole, to be beneficial to the text; but the removal or modification of certain images and the addition of others so much affected the original symbolism that the final text can be said to present us with a different concept of Nature. We shall, in the first two chapters of this thesis, consider the original symbolic role of Nature as a Mother and Deity respectively, then, in a subsequent chapter, the changes introduced in Nature imagery and their implications.

Nature's symbolism as Mother is significantly confined

to the imagery of the 'great decade' (1898-1807); it is suggested neither by the earlier imagery of Descriptive Sketches and An Evening Walk, nor by that of the later poems (e.g. Ecclesiastical Sonnets and The River Duddon Sonnets). This is shown strikingly if we compare Nature imagery in the two parallel descriptions of the Swiss tour of 1890; the first occurs in Descriptive Sketches (at a distance of only two years from the experiences it relates), and the second, produced much later, is in the sixth book of The Prelude. Not only is the imagery in the earlier poem devoid of the rich symbolism of the later work, it is also so different in tone from the actual mood of the tour, (as it is revealed by the poet's correspondence), that some critics have considered the earlier account of the tour as 'essentially untruthful'(1). In Descriptive Sketches Nature is conceived in eighteenth-century terms; the 'beauteous' forms won the poet's 'admiration' and gave him 'increasing pleaure'(2); the religious sentiment which stirred in his heart among these 'lovely'(3) scenes was directed to 'Him who produced the terrible majesty

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(1) Garrod, H.W. Wordsworth, p.46.
(2) Early Letters, ed. De Selincourt, p.35.
(3) Ibid, p.34.

before me', that is, to God who makes, rather than is, Nature(1); and the favourite form of imagery is metaphor and personification. The imagery of the other early poems is not different in its general character from that of Descriptive Sketches; and in spite of the exultant mood of Wordsworth during the French Revolution - of which The Prelude is a truthful record - the imagery of An Evening Walk has touches of wistful melancholy quite reminiscent of Gray and the fashion of his day(2). Even The Borderers, Which is in a way a revolt against Godwinian philosophy, betrays an almost detached attitude to Nature that cannot be traced in either the imagery of the great decade or that of the early Prelude.

Wordsworth's mature period was marked, and in a sense indicated, by this double symbolism of Nature both as mother and as Deity; and this was partly a consequence of a major change in his vision: love, conceived as a life force, 'coercing all into sympathy', became a major theme in his poetry. It is indeed the theme whose

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(1) Garrod, Op. Cit., p.50.
(2) Graham Hough, The Romantic Poets, pp.9-11. Cf. also Garrod, Op. Cit., p.48.

inception proclaimed with finality the poet's recovery from Godwin's rationalism, from the moral crisis that had led him to believe in Godwin(1).

Modern interpretations of Wordsworth's Nature symbolism have been varied; to review them would be irrelevant. It is well to note, however, that the evidence of the imagery cannot support the view that Wordsworth's early attachment to Nature was basically negative, that is, that young William sought in Nature an escape from the oppressive atmosphere at home, that he was a 'neurotic' or a guilt-laden soul, inasmuch as 'nature (in him) is curiously uncreative and dead'. 'Was it,' asks Bateson, 'primarily a mirror in which his subconscious mind could reflect itself?'(2). Similar views are offered by G.W. Meyer and H. Read, though these are less bold in their use of psycho-analytical methods(3).

On the other hand, Nature's symbolism as mother seems to have attracted no great attention until quite recently. William Empson asserts that 'Wordsworth frankly

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(1) A. Beatty, Wordsworth, His Doctrine and Art in their Historical Relations, p.25 et seq.
(2) Bateson, F.W., Wordsworth, A re-interpretation, p.56.
(3) G.W. Meyer, Wordsworth's Formative years, & H. Read's The True Voice of Feeling, and also his Wordsworth.

had no inspiration other than his use of the mountains as a totem or father-substitute'(1). Not long after this Dr. Leavis replied that he had always thought that the imaginative substitute was a mother not a father, (to which, incidentally, Empson replied that Nature could represent both father and mother)(2). The most recent reference to the parental symbolism of Nature was that of Enid Welsford who first accepted Leavis's view, then went on to use a safer term, 'parental', in describing Nature symbolism in Wordsworth(3).

Images of Nature's parental role abound in the early version of The Prelude, as well as in the poems of the great decade, in the form of explicit metaphors which often identify Nature with the earth. The flower in To The Daisy (1802) is described as the daughter of the earth and as being 'bold in maternal nature's care'; the girl in 'Three years she grew...' (1799) is Nature's daughter and is compared to a lovely flower 'sown on earth'. Nature's lap in which man is bred is the very lap of the earth:

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(1) William Empson, Seven Types of Ambiguity, p.20.
(2) F.R. Leavis, Revaluations, pp.156-66.
(3) Enid Welsford, Salisbury Plain, p.119.

up
For I, bred/in Nature's lap, was even
As a spoil'd Child;

A.iii.358-9

Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own;

'The Immortality Ode'

The 'maternal care' of the 'sweet valley' to which the poet was 'first entrusted' is Nature's (A.v.450-2); and many images in The Prelude refer to man as 'the child of earth' (A.v.24-6), to men, the 'children of the Earth' (A.v.97-99), or the 'children of the land' (A.v.226-9) and to the earth as 'old grandame Earth' (A.v.348-51). It is an identification which in no way significantly alters the vision of mother Nature; for both terms - earth and Nature - are used alternatively in Wordsworth to mean a single entity: the physical world (the 'visible') and its inherent spirit (the 'invisible')

The key passage which most powerfully suggests this symbolic vision occurs in book II of The Prelude, lines 237-303. Essentially this passage deals with the origins and early development (in babyhood) of natural feelings founded in love and sympathy; but after line 266 the theme is extended from single parenthood to general Nature:

Bless'd the infant Babe,...
Nurs'd in his Mother's arms, the Babe who sleeps
Upon his Mother's breast, who, when his soul
Claims manifest kindred with an earthly soul,
Doth gather passion from his Mother's eye!
Such feelings pass into his torpid life
Like an awakening breeze, and hence his mind
Even (in the first trial of its powers)
Is prompt and watchful, eager to combine
In one appearance, all the elements
And parts of the same object, else detach'd
And loth to coalesce. Thus, day by day,
Subjected to the discipline of love,
His organs and recipient faculties
Are quicken'd, are more vigorous, his mind spreads,
Tenacious of the forms which it receives.
In one beloved Presence, nay and more,
In that most apprehensive habitude
And those sensations which have been deriv'd
From this beloved Presence, there exists
A virtue which irradiates and exalts
All objects through all intercourse of sense.
No outcast he, bewilder'd and depress'd;
Along his infant veins are interfus'd
The gravitation and the filial bond
Of nature, that connect him with the world.
Emphatically such a Being lives,
An inmate of this active universe;
From nature largely he receives; nor so
Is satisfied, but largely gives again,
For feeling has to him imparted strength,
And powerful in all sentiments of grief,
Of exultation, fear, and joy, his mind,
Even as an agent of the one great mind,
Creates, creator and receiver both,
Working but in alliance with the works
Which it beholds.

A.ii.237, 240-275.

The central symbolism in this passage, by which Nature is conceived as a great mother, is connected with

two main groups of images: the first are from 'food' and 'drink', and equate the baby's feeding on his mother's milk (the satisfaction of his physical needs) with man's feeding on Natural impressions - the fulfilment of his innate 'yearnings', the needs of his 'organic sensibility', through Nature's love and care. The second group deals with the quality of man's love-experience with Nature, suggesting that it ideally takes place, as in the case of the child's experience with his mother, in silence and solitude, and that it primarily relies on the sense of touch. Both groups confirm the suggestion in this passage that the love-experience develops man's imaginative power (as it had the child's), and enables him to be fully conscious of his belonging deeply in the universe. The first group will now be examined.

* * * * *

Images of this group portray man's feeding on Natural impressions as a child's feeding on his mother's love,

whilst his body is being fed with her milk. This double feeding is resolved in man's experience with Nature into one complex process in which physical impressions are vehicles of feelings, or are indeed themselves feelings. The correlation of physical with emotional satisfaction is corroborated by Wordsworth's characteristic use of the words 'sensation' and 'sensibility' - both of which imply a compound of the physical and emotional. A striking example of this use occurs in Tintern Abbey: sensations are almost identified with feelings. The 'beauteous forms of Nature', he tells us, had been removed from his sight; yet he owed to them:

> sensations sweet
> Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart;
> And passing even into my purer mind,
> With tranquil restoration:-
>
> 27-30

'Sensibility' likewise implied a combined quickness and keenness of emotional response to sense stimuli. Wordsworth's explanation of how the child's 'infant sensibility' is by 'intercourse of touch' with his mother 'augmented and sustained' is that the child's physical contact with his mother makes him 'drink in feelings' from her heart. In the Preface to the Lyrical Ballads

he asserts that a poet must be possessed of 'more than usual organic sensibility', implying that physical impressions must produce in the poet more than usual emotional response(1). J.C. Smith remarks that 'in the English of Wordsworth's and Jane Austen's day "sensibility" commonly connoted emotionalism, sensibilité ... '(2), and argues that feeling alone is not all the poet must have: before the emotions come the senses. In Wordsworth, however, the work of the senses does not necessarily precede the stirring of feeling; 'communication' with Nature is a complex process in which the feeling defines and determines the impressions received as much as these convey the feeling. (The mind in him, we remember, is no mere 'pensioner' on outward forms; it half-creates its food - 'creator and receiver both'.)

The symbolism of man's feeding on Natural impressions has this further significance: it suggests that such food is as essential to man's mind as food, in its literal sense, is to his body. The food supplied by impressions of Nature meets an innate need in man that 'must be satisfied', a need

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(1) The Lyrical Ballads, ed. G. Sampson, (London, 1961) p.10.
(2) J.C. Smith, A study of Wordsworth, p.1.

whose fulfilment is essential to the growth of his 'moral being', integrity, and even mental health; hence the description of these needs as the 'yearnings' of 'every day' (A.iv.286), and the 'absolute necessities/ That struggle in us' (Y, 82-3, de.S. 573).

Images of this group, in spite of the changes they undergo in the final text of The Prelude, are not all removed; the vision of man's dependence on mother-Nature for emotional food is not completely abandoned. While certain images were rejected in the revision, as A.ii.272-82 and A.iii.524-30, and while others were never included in either version of that poem, as Y, 80-3, (de.S. 573) and the following:

> Then everyday appearances, which now
> The spirit of thoughtful wonder first pervades,
> Crowd in and give the mind its needful food;
>
> Y, 37-9, de.S.572.

some survived the revision, albeit with minor alterations, as A.v.211-13, and the following:

> Dumb yearnings, hidden appetites are ours,
> And they must have their food;
>
> A.v.530-1

and

> Mighty indeed, supreme must be the power
> Ofliving Nature,...
> The trickling tear

Upon the cheek of listening Infancy
Tells it, and the insuperable look
That drinks as if it never could be full.

A.v.166-7, 189-92

In a single instance, the revision substitutes a metaphor from 'drinking' for the earlier general one. The early text reads:

blest the Babe,
Nurs'd in his Mother's arms, the Babe who sleeps
Upon his Mother's breast, who, when his soul
Claims manifest kindred with an earthly soul,
Doth gather passion from his Mother's eye!

A.ii.239-42

and the final:

blest the Babe,
Nursed in his Mother's arms, who sinks to sleep
Rocked on his Mother's breast; who with his soul
Drinks in the feelings of his Mother's eye!

ii.234-7

It is remarkable that many artists have expressed their enjoyment of natural beauty in terms of metaphors drawn from food. Van Gogh expressly records such relish: 'I devour nature ceaselessly'(1). Wassily Kandinsky describes the artist's experience in the same way: 'You experience satisfaction and delight like a gourmet savouring

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(1) Vincent Van Gogh, Letters to Emily Bernard, (ed. and trans., and with a foreword by Douglas Lord, London, 1938), p.90.

a delicacy. Or the eye is stimulated as the tongue is titillated by a spicy dish'(1). Professor A. King thinks that this physical feeling is the 'beginning of the process that Matisse describes in which our feelings are nourished, in which the external world is gradually assimilated'(2), and which ultimately results in a love-experience.

This emotional food Wordsworth conceives as a basic factor in man's mental development; and the part played by Nature in providing man with it is a continuation of the mother's early role. The relation between feeling and mental development, a major Wordsworthian topic, will be discussed in the next chapter in connection with the power of love and the way in which its recognition helped the poet in forming his panentheistic beliefs. At this point it suffices to note the part played by emotion in 'awakening' in man a certain mental power akin to the imagination (conceived in terms of Coleridge's Primary Imagination)(3). Just how this mental power is related to the early emotional life of the child Wordsworth never

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(1) Wassily Kandinsky, Concerning the Spiritual in Art, (Documents of Modern Art, New York, 1947), p.43.
(2) A. King, Wordsworth and the Artist's Vision, p.33.
(3) Basil Willey, Nineteenth-Century Studies, p.22.

makes clear; but the terms in which he describes its activity are clear enough: it enables the child, through sustained contact with his mother, to perceive the wholeness of things, to establish unifying principles in the objects around him so that their elements combine 'in one appearance' and 'coalesce' (A.ii.244-250). The poet could be suggesting that the child develops this faculty through the habit of dealing with everything around him in the same way as he deals with his mother, viz. as 'living beings'; for Wordsworth emphasises the importance of this 'impersonating' power, 'The faculty that gives sense, motion, will' to things (Y.67-71, de S.573), describing it as 'verily ... the first poetic spirit of our human life' (A.ii.275-6). And as Nature replaces the mother in the boy's affections, in 'nourishing in the heart its tender sympathies', it begins to be 'charged' with the office of developing this mental power:

> Yet who can tell while he this (?) path
> Hath been ascending,...
> What subtle virtues from the first have been
> In midst of this, and in despite of (?)
> At every moment finding out their way
> Insensibly to nourish in the heart
> Its tender sympathies, to keep alive
> Those yearnings, and to strengthen them and shape,
> Which from the mother's breast were first receiv'd?
> The commonest images of nature - all,
> No doubt, are with this office charg'd, -
>
> Y.214-15, 218-26, de S.577

Wordsworth here is talking about his own growth; but his vision of the maternal role of Nature cannot be explained in merely biographical terms. For him continuity of growth was a prime requisite for man's moral being (not just for the mind of a genius)(1), and continued growth meant a process of action and reaction to the outside world which would ultimately result in intimate attachment to it. This was the vision of the great decade, when Nature represented for the poet an extension of the powers of man's mind, and inner and outer appeared as different aspects of the same reality:

> Whatever dignity there be ( )
> Within himself, from which he gathers hope,
> There doth he feel its counterpart the same
> In kind before him outwardly express'd,
> With difference that makes the likeness clear,
> Sublimities, grave beauty, excellence,
> Not taken upon trust, but self-display'd
> Before his proper senses;
>
> Y.176-183, de S.576

And as the seminal principle of love reconciles man's mind to the variety of natural appearances, the nascent imaginative activity grows to a supereminent unifying power 'coercing' everything 'into sympathy'. The mind, now

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(1) J.F. Danby, The Simple Wordsworth, pp.101-4.

internally unified(1) and most active, resolves into 'one great faculty of being' man's physical and spiritual powers, enabling him to communicate as a whole with nature:

> and as it were
> Resolving into one great faculty
> Of being bodily eye and spiritual need,
> The converse which he holds is limitless;
> Nor only with the firmanent of thought,
> But nearer home he looks with the same eye
> Through the entire abyss of things.
>
> Y.152-8, de.S.575.

The notion of the early evolution of the imagination must be seen as essentially Wordsworth's own; it came to him purely through experience. Possible sources for it are untraceable in his reading, not even in Coleridge's theory of the imagination which had such an influence on Wordsworth. Indeed, Coleridge does not believe that the power or activity of the imagination, especially in the act of perception, is the possession of every child. More importance is given in his system to instruction and training (by society) of the infant mind, as without a well-developed manner of reasoning, he asserts, the child cannot grasp the relations between the various parts of even the same object. 'Reflect on the simple fact of the state

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(1) Ibid.

of the child's mind while with great delight he reads or listens to the story of Jack and the BeanStalk!' says Coleridge; 'How could this be, if in some sense he did not understand it? Yea, the child does understand each part of it - A, and B, and C; but not ABC=X. He understands it as we all understand our dreams while we are dreaming - each shape and incident, or group of shapes and incidents, by itself - unconscious of, and therefore unoffended at, the absence of the logical copula, or the absurdity of the transitions'(1).

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(1) Inquiring Spirit, ed. K. Coburn, p.204.

b)

The Tactile Dialogue
Images of Touch, Silence and Solitude.

Other groups of images - from touch, silence and solitude - suggest other aspects of Nature's symbolism of mother. As with the child, man's communion with Nature begins with and relies on touch; it requires a sense of privacy - 'solitude' - a consciousness of nothing besides (or indeed beyond) Nature; and it must reach its climax in silence. It is well to begin by examining these elements of the child's experience with his mother before looking into the way in which they symbolise man's communion with Nature.

The child's first contact with his mother relies almost solely on touch. This is the first sense to awaken, and its power never fades throughout man's life in spite of the changes in its manner of working. It seminally awakens in the child a consciousness of being, an assurance that existence is real. The activity of

this sense was always recognised by Wordsworth who often resorted in boyhood to its testimony to assure himself of the reality of existence; he even considered it more truthful than sight which, though 'the most despotic of our senses', could fuse inner and outer visions - the actual impressions made on the eye with the 'prospect in the mind' - so as to blur, even remove, the dividing line between the real and unreal. Professor C.C. Clarke has shown, in a recent study of the poet's use of the terms 'image' and 'form', that Wordsworth's eye tended to abstract the contours of natural scenery and so deal with them as lineaments inside the mind(1). So powerful was this abstracting faculty that young William sometimes felt that he had to lean against a wall, to touch it, in order to 'recall himself from the abyss of idealism to reality'(2).

For the child touch functions primarily as a vehicle for feeling between him and his 'mother's heart; and even at that early age, in babyhood, the child does not only receive his mother's feeling but also conveys his own by touch to her; hence the use of the word 'dialogue' in describing the tactile contact:

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(1) Romantic Paradox, p.33.
(2) Fenwick note to The Immortality Ode.

... A Babe, by intercourse of touch,
I held mute dialogues with my Mother's heart

A.ii.282-3

This language of touch uses, instead of words and features of intonation and pitch, physical sensations of the soft and solid, the smooth and rough, the warm and cold. J. Smith observes that touch in Wordsworth covered 'three senses which psychology now distinguishes, namely the sense of touch properly so called, the sense of temperature and the muscular sense or sense of pressure'(1); the following lines from The Excursion will help to illustrate Wordsworth's use of the term:

> 'And even the touch, so exquisitely poured
> Through the whole body, with a languid will
> Performs its functions; rarely competent
> To impress a vivid feeling on the mind
> Of what there is delightful in the breeze,
> The gentle visitations of the sun,
> Or lapse of liquid element - by hand,
> Or foot, or lip, in summer's warmth - perceived'.

viii.325-32

As the child grows to maturity, this language develops into a comprehensively sensuous one: it uses other senses, above all vision, but never fades away. The perception of the grown-up whose growth was not arrested at any stage

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(1) Smith, Op. Cit., p.9.

of his life, Wordsworth suggests, will inevitably reveal the influence of touch. And here one can be justified in suspecting a Coleridgian influence; for both, man's mental life has 'obscure origins' in the child's tactile contact with his mother; and in Coleridge this notion is developed to connect explicitly the senses of touch and vision. 'The first education which we receive, that from our mothers' says Coleridge,

> is given to us by touch; the whole of its process is nothing more than, to express myself more boldly, an extended touch by promise. The sense itself, the sense of vision itself, is only acquired by continued recollection of touch. No wonder, therefore, that beginning in animal state, we should carry this onward through the whole of our being however remote it may be from the true purpose of it(1).

Coleridge's influence on Wordsworth, in this as in other themes, cannot be exaggerated. Images of touch in The Prelude, however, suggest that they were a direct consequence of his rich natural experience. Often as a schoolboy had he lain on the warm ground, feeling almost lost in the lap of Nature, as if he were still a 'babe in arms'. Sometimes the complete absence of 'sights and sounds' - at least his unconsciousness of them - so

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(1) Philosophical Lectures, p.115.

intensified the power of the tactile contact that he felt quite removed from our world, and almost 'lost entirely'. An image in the early Prelude, which was later rejected, describes one of these instances:

> Thus long I lay
> Chear'd by the genial pillow of the earth
> Beneath my head, sooth'd by a sense of touch
> From the warm ground, that balanced me, else lost
> Entirely, seeing nought, nought hearing, save
> When here and there, about the grove of Oaks
> Where was my bed, an acorn from the trees
> Fell audibly, and with a startling sound.
>
> A.i.87-94

Another tells how in his close tactile contact with Nature, in solitude and silence - the usual conditions of the communion - the faintest sounds were symbolic of the language of Natural elements:

> (I) on the Turret's head
> Lay listening to the wild flowers and the grass,
> As they gave out their whispers to the wind.
>
> A.vi.230-2

It is essential at this point to consider the part played by silence which is itself a language allied to the tactile. It will be noticed that images of silence are often images of solitude as well, silence and solitude being inseparable conditions of any communicative experience.

* * * * *

The part played by 'sound' in Wordsworth has always been recognized; though some critics have tended to minimize its importance, pointing out that his imagination was predominantly visual(1). The language of Nature often took the form of sound as in A.ii.321-28; he stood beneath a lofty rock listening to 'the language of the ancient earth' and 'drinking the visionary power': he 'felt whate'er there is of power in sound/ To breathe an elevated mood, by form/ Or image unprofaned'. The imagery of The Prelude, however, suggests that the language of Nature was also heard in silence, or, indeed, that silence was itself the means of natural communion. Silence is not merely a kind of negative sound, like a pause in speech, but itself a 'mute' speech (like the 'mute dialogues' of the mother and child) that conveyed Nature's feelings to man, and his to her. Man, impelled by the 'most watchful power of love', needs no words in his communion with Nature; their reciprocal 'silent inobtrusive sympathies' need no help from sound. Words are not only rendered superfluous, but can mar the purity of the communion: they can intrude on the privacy - the 'solitude' - and thus interrupt the 'dialogue'(A.ii.307-17).

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(1) Smith, Op. Cit., pp.37-8.

The 'silent language' (A.ii.477) of the mother is portrayed in her face, and the child, by drinking in the expression of this face, absorbs her feelings and is healthfully nourished. The silent face of Nature had for Wordsworth the same significance; he tells us that

> the earth
> And common face of Nature spake to me
> Rememberable things;
>
> A.i.614-16

that his mind

> hath look'd
> Upon the speaking face of earth and heaven
>
> A.v.11-12

and that he often

> perused
> The common countenance of earth and heaven;
>
> A.ii.110-111

But the poet's reference to the face of Nature is no casual metaphor; it is an integral part of his vision of 'maternal nature'. His recurrent mention and often detailed portraiture of this face clearly reveal this (A.iii.132-6 and A.iv.132-4).

The fact that the 'speaking face' of Nature is silent, that the 'rememberable things' which the 'common face of nature spake' did not take the form of sound, can explain

to us why 'dumb creatures' had the power to 'talk to (his) mind perpetually' and why in his daily walks 'with' Nature moments of silence were endowed with that particular power of 'usurpation'. We must, however, remember that the silence he 'heard' in Nature was not always translated into visual expression; in other words, he did not 'see' the silence portrayed in Nature's face. Many characteristically Wordsworthian experiences in Nature either took place at night when the power of the eye is reduced to a minimum, or if occuring by day, revealed a deliberate attempt by the poet to avoid the 'despotism' of sight, and to seek another mode of natural communion, namely that of 'drinking in' the silence:

> I look'd not round, nor did the solitude
> Speak to my eye; but it was heard and felt.
>
> A.iv.390-1

> Thus did I steal along that silent road,
> My body from the stillness drinking in
> A restoration like the calm of sleep
> But sweeter far.
>
> A.iv.385-8

These and many other images which were removed from the early Prelude strongly suggest the correspondence of silence in Nature and the 'silence of mind' which the poet valued so much. Some of the images indeed suggest that

silence, as a mental state, was more important than its natural correlative. (The poet himself tells us that he could feel the silence in the midst of a harsh noise, and sometimes hear voices in his 'silence of mind' that never were). And the same is perhaps true of solitude. But silence and solitude surely helped to deepen their mental counterparts. If particularly intensified by contrast - as the contrast between the two states of a theatre, noisy when full and silent when 'fresh-emptied of spectators', or the two states of a 'public way' noisy during the day and silent when 'for the night deserted' - silence and solitude may even give birth to their mental equivalents (A.iv.363-8).

Some critics find, in the occasions on which Wordsworth heard voices in Nature that never were, enough proof that he suffered to a degree from hallucination, (as when in Paris he thought he heard a voice crying to the whole city 'Sleep no more', which, it is suggested, came from a subconscious memory of the voice in Macbeth)(1). This may seem an exaggeration; however, whatever the poet wanted to hear, he did hear. When there were sounds in the external

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(1) Smith, Op. Cit.,pp.37-8.

world, they appeared to be more or less echoes of the inner ones; when there was silence, it helped him to hear more clearly the voices of the mind. Two cases in point occur in Book I and IV of The Prelude. The first is the well-known:

> I heard among the solitary hills
> Low breathings coming after me, and sounds
> of undistinguishable motion, steps
> Almost as silent as the turf they trod.
>
> A.i.329-32

and the other

> And in the shelter'd coppice where I sate,
> Around me, from among the hazel leaves,
> Now here, now there, stirr'd by the straggling wind,
> Came intermittingly a breath-like sound,
> A respiration short and quick, which oft,
> Yea, might I say, again and yet again,
> Mistaking for the panting of my Dog,
> The off-and-on Companion of my walk,
> I turn'd my head, to look if he were there.
>
> A.iv.172-80

Leaving aside the significance of 'breath' and 'breathing' (which will be discussed in the next chapter), the two images portray the poet's consciousness of sound in silence. The sounds he heard, though clearly a creation of his own mind, provided him with two memorable experiences in Nature.

Sounds born in silence - as those heard in it - are generally invested with a vast spiritual power. The images suggest a possible explanation for this: it concerns the poet's belief in an inner life of the universe whose language could not be heard in the 'harsh and grating' noise of the busy world, but needed absolute stillness and silence to reach the heart of man. It will be noticed that as Wordsworth was interested in still objects whose movement was momentarily arrested (which will be discussed in Chapter V), certain objects had for him a great evocative power according as they had 'voices-in-silence' in them, that is, as their speech was likewise temporarily 'muted':

> the wondrous Vale
> Of Chamouny did, on the following dawn,
> With its dumb cataracts and streams of ice,
> A motionless array of mighty waves,
> Five rivers broad and vast, make rich amends,
> And reconcil'd us to realities.
>
> A.vi.456-61

The poet's Nature-experience in his continental tour (recorded in Book VI, from which the previous lines are quoted), reveals how powerfully evocative those voices-in-silence had been, not only in themselves, but also in combination with other images, as for instance, those from movement and stillness. Arrested motion and speech present us with only one variation of this combination; others

include silence and stillness (to be discussed in Chapter V), and silence and motion. During the tour the poet had 'walks' for 'league after league' in 'cloistral avenues/ Where silence is'; and one day 'Upris'n betimes', he 'renew'd' his journey,

> Led by the Stream, ere noon-day magnified
> Into a lordly River, broad and deep,
> Dimpling along in silent majesty,
>
> A.vi.582-4

and on his way, movement in silence was particularly intrusive on his consciousness; he noted fixed and still objects, felt the movement about them, and heard the silence in them speak to him:

> The rapid River flowing without noise,
> And every Spire we saw among the rocks
> Spake with a sense of peace,
>
> A.vi.417-19

* * * * *

It will be in order now to consider the structure of certain passages in <u>The Prelude</u> which reveal, among other things, how the distinctively Wordsworthian experience of Nature initially relies on the 'mute dialogues'

of touch in solitude, then develops into a trance-like state in which Nature's sights and sounds are fused with the mind's inner images and voices. The structure of these passages follows a common pattern: they begin with a physical contact and advance to an expanding sensuous awareness, moving from the small to the large, from the close to the far. Silence usually prevails in the beginning, then, as in the previously quoted image (A.i.87-94), a sound is heard that awakens the mind and prepares for the climactic point at which the reality of the external world is almost called in question.

In Book I we have two examples of this pattern of consciousness. The first is the passage in which Wordsworth describes how as a boy he was overwhelmed by fear as he 'plundered' birds' nests. In the beginning the boy is only conscious of his precarious position on the rock; he is alone; it is dark; his attention is centred on the 'knots of grass/ And half-inch fissures in the slippery rock' which but 'ill sustain' him. His awareness of the tactile aspects of the ridge, however, soon expands to include the blast that blows 'amain', then the 'strange utterance' of the 'loud dry wind' - and ultimately the sky and the clouds (A.i.341-350).

The sudden revelation which immediately follows this expanding consciousness is all-important: the mind feels that the whole of Nature is one, that the affinity it has with the whole universe is deep-rooted and inalienable. And this is similar to the discovery by the child that the different parts of a whole are linked by the one spirit in them, that his mother's heart and his own are closely connected by the power of love. The 'mute dialogues' led in man's case, as in the child's, to an imaginative activity which made the parts of a whole, (which are detached and 'loth to coalesce') as well as 'the discordant elements' in Nature, seem reconciled and 'harmonious'. The following image records the revelation:

> The mind of man is fram'd even like the breath
> And harmony of music. There is a dark
> Invisible workmanship that reconciles
> Discordant elements, and makes them move
> In one society.
>
> A.i.351-5

The other experience in Book I proceeds from an initially 'thoughtless' sporting afternoon and concludes in a similar revelation. The contrast between the movement of the boy and the stillness of the landscape about him is momentarily lost: he stops 'short' and, as he reclines on his heels, his mind transfers the motion to the 'solitary cliffs' which

'wheel by him'

> even as if the earth had roll'd
> With visible motion her diurnal round;
>
> A.i.485-6

and then he stands and watches, still absorbing the scene in his mind, until he feels as if he had passed into sleep. This sleep-image recurs frequently in Wordsworth's experiences in Nature; his state is not self-induced but an immediate consequence of his keenly sensuous contact with Nature. A similar image occurs in Book II:

> Oh! then the calm
> And dead still-water lay upon my mind
> Even with a weight of pleasure, and the sky
> Never before so beautiful, sank down
> Into my heart, and held me like a dream.
>
> A.ii.176-80

And this, we remember, is what happened to the boy of '<u>There was a boy</u>...' (who may be Wordsworth himself); in the pauses between the hooting of owls and his mimicking hoots, Nature's language was heard most distinctly, and the visible scene 'entered' into his mind. Such intense sensuous awareness, as has already been said, leads to a feeling of oneness with the universe, a feeling that man and Nature are 'lost' in each other.

CHAPTER II

II

Nature as God

Commenting on the revision of The Prelude, Professor De Selincourt remarks that 'most to be regretted are those alterations in the text which have obscured the statement of that religious faith which is reflected in all the poet's greatest work. When Wordsworth wrote The Prelude he had in nothing swerved from the faith that inspired the Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey'(1). This faith has often been identified as 'pantheism', a term seldom defined or clearly conceived. It strictly indicates the belief that the universe is God, or that He is a spirit permeating it but limited to it, so that if it were destroyed He would no longer exist(2). It is commonly used, however, as a synonym for 'panentheism'; and it is this latter term which is really intended whenever the former is used to describe Wordsworth's early religion. The difference

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(1) De Selincourt, ed. Wordsworth's Prelude, p.lxviii.
(2) Havens, R.D. The Mind of a Poet, p.186.

between the two terms may seem slight indeed - considering the extensive common ground they cover-, but it is particularly important in connection with Wordsworth. For panentheism, which also defines God as an immanent and all-pervading presence, does not indicate that He is necessarily limited to the universe(1): it can imply His transcendence, His freedom from dependence on the material world. This is what has made some critics attempt, not unsuccessfully, to relate the poet's early faith to Christianity(2); even modern philosophers like Samuel Alexander and Newton Stallknecht have found in that faith no transgression against Christian belief(3).

The question of Spinoza's influence on Wordsworth regarding this concept of monism can be better understood in the light of the distinction between pantheism and panentheism. For Spinoza's view is essentially pantheistic; he believes that there cannot be anything outside or beyond the single substance in existence which he calls 'God or

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(1) Rader, Wordsworth, A Philosophical Approach, pp.59-60.
(2) Cf. E. Batho, The Later Wordsworth, & M. Burton, The one Wordsworth.
(3) Samuel Alexander, Beauty and Other Forms of Value, (London, 1933), p.60; Cf. also Stallknecht, Strange Seas Of Thought, Chapter IV.

Nature' (Deus sive Natura). He employs a rigorous system of logic in which the key words are given strict definitions, or on occasion re-defined; any violation of a word's meaning can result in the collapse of the whole system. (One is here inevitably reminded of the methods of modern linguist-philosophers, of, for instance, Gilbert Ryle's The Concept of Mind.) So, according to his definitions and the seminal 'propositions' of his Ethics, any conception of God as an independent being will involve a contradiction in terms. Logic cannot admit such a notion; it cannot accept the multiplicity of substance. The root of this mistake, he argues, lies in the fact that unphilosophic minds, because they cannot grasp what they cannot visualise, have tended to imagine, that is, to form a mental image of God as an independent entity which has always had anthropomorphic implications. The highest truths of existence, we are told, cannot be approached except through the highest of human faculties, through abstract reasoning, which is by definition free from the tricks of the imagination. No possible transcendence on the part of God is ever conceived by Spinoza; he even uses 'God or Nature' as a proper name, since for him it indicates a single entity(1).

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(1) Stuart Hampshire, Spinoza, pp.40-1. Cf. also Spinoza's Ethics, translated by A. Boyle, (London, 1967), p.18.

The area of meaning covered by both terms - pantheism and panentheism - will, however, be of more use to us than the difference between them; for both of them indicate, as has been said, that God is the totality of existence. This is the notion revealed by the imagery of the early Prelude. And although most of the images indicate Wordsworth's belief in it, none of them implies his belief in Nature as an ultimate, as will be seen in tracing the origins and development of his monism.

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Wordsworth's earliest intimations of the unity of being must have sprung from the feeling that love is the binding force in all existence, that it makes the variety of Natural objects 'cling together' and enjoy a community of being. This feeling is basically different from the idea of mechanical interrelation between Natural objects which science proposes; it implies that Natural objects have individual mental lives (often related to the poet's animism), hence their wilful passions, and their affinity with man:

the forms
Of Nature have a passion in themselves
That intermingles with those works of man
To which she summons him,

A.xii.289-92

From nature doth emotion come,...
This is her glory;

A.xii.1, 3.

From Nature and her overflowing soul
I had receiv'd so much that all my thoughts
Were steep'd in feeling;

A.ii.416-18

From love, for here
Do we begin and end, all grandeur comes,
All truth and beauty, from pervading love,

A.xiii.149-51

But love is not merely a soft force in Nature; it is not merely equivalent to the 'calm sentiments' of mankind. It is also a tyrannical power which makes Natural objects 'prevail' over one another; individually, they 'exercise a mutual domination'(1), one object 'swaying' another (2), or diffusing itself over others(3), with 'interchangeable supremacy'(4), so that 'each object is at once active and passive in a dynamic course'(5). Their 'several frames'

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(1) The Prelude (1850) xiv.81.
(2) Ibid.MS. W.xiii.82.
(3) Ibid.MS. A2.xii.81.
(4) Ibid. (1850) xiv.84.
(5) Stallknecht, Op. Cit., p.85.

would then inter-penetrate and their individual flames appear as emanating from one universal fire:

> There came a time of greater dignity
> Which had been gradually prepar'd, and now
> Rush'd in as if on wings, the time in which
> The pulse of Being everywhere was felt,
> When all the several frames of things, like stars
> Through every magnitude distinguishable,
> Were half confounded in each other's blaze,
> One galaxy of life and joy.
>
> A.viii.624-31

Many images suggest that love, the unifying power in existence, is involuntary; Natural objects are 'impelled' by it to live in eternal communion with each other. Man, who partakes of it, is likewise impelled; the 'involuntary sympathy of (his) internal being' (A.xiii, 302-3) binds him to Nature; he 'drinks in' this power, and 'moves from strict necessity along the path of ... good':

> And from the blessed power that rolls
> About, below, above,
> We'll frame the measure of our souls:
> They shall be tuned to love.
>
> (<u>To My Sister</u>, 1798)

> Thus deeply drinking in the soul of things
> We shall be wise perforce, and we shall move
> From strict necessity along the path
> Of order and of good.
>
> (<u>The Excursion</u>, iv.1267-70)

However, other images suggest a contrary idea: that love is an expression of the free will of Nature and man alike. Even the lines quoted above (from The Excursion) have not survived the revision without the qualification that we are still 'inspired by choice, and conscious that the will is free'. Hazlitt's remark about Wordsworth's expression of 'the doctrine of philosophical necessity'(1) in Tintern Abbey disturbed those critics who were aware of the poet's utterances expressing the contrary idea of 'the freedom of the universe' (The Excursion, ix.16). To many it seemed a Wordsworthian paradox characteristic of his vision; it must, according to Miss Darbishire, have its origins in, or was at least corroborated by, Spinoza's thought(2). Others sought a possible philosophical influence in Boehme who taught that the freedom of the human will, as well as the freedom of Nature's will, are a corollary of their being a part of the universal will which is free because it is God's. In his Six Theosophic Points, Boehme says that 'the will which is called Father, which has freedom in itself, so generates itself in Nature, that it is susceptible of Nature, and that it is the

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(1) Hazlitt, W., Philosophical Necessity, Collected Works of William Hazlitt, xi, pp.277-8.
(2) H. Darbishire, The Poet Wordsworth, (O.U.P. 1950), p.163.

universal power of Nature'(1).

Another possible source is the 'sublime thought' in Spinoza which Coleridge greatly admired, and which identifies love in all existence as that of God; so, inasmuch as all beings are in God, the 'love with which they love themselves' and man 'is a part of that love with which God loveth himself'(2). It is possible that Coleridge had discussed this 'thought' in one of his endless conversations with Wordsworth, or at least expressed his admiration for it to his friend. Of the precise influences on Wordsworth we cannot be certain; the evidence of the poetry suggests varied and sometimes improbable sources. But this 'thought' is in harmony with the expressions in The Prelude, 1805, and its early manuscripts, about the unity of God and Nature, the unity

> - In Which all beings live with god, themselves
> Are god, existing in one mighty whole
>
> (de S.525)

and accounts for Wordsworth's praise of Coleridge as a firm believer in 'the unity of all'. Coleridge is referred to as

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(1) Quoted by Stallknecht in Op. Cit., pp.132-3.
(2) T.M. Raysor, Coleridge's Miscellaneous Criticism, p.263.

> The most intense of Nature's worshippers
> In many things my Brother, chiefly here
> In this my deep devotion.
>
> A.ii.477-9

and is particularly admired because he was not 'enslaved' by the 'false secondary power' (i.e. reason) by which man in 'weakness' creates distinctions. Neither of them, we are told, was 'blinded by outward shows', and therefore to them

> The unity of all has been reveal'd
>
> A.ii.226

Wordsworth seems to have felt certain at one time at least in his life that Coleridge shared his belief in 'the mighty unity/ In all which we behold, and feel, and are', (A.xiii.252-8). It is remarkable that this should be so, especially in view of Coleridge's well-known objections, nay, severe opposition to his friend's beliefs which continued until late in the poet's career, when The Excursion had long been published. In 1796 Coleridge referred to Wordsworth as 'at least a semi-atheist'(1); in 1803 he remarked that his friend 'spoke so irreverently, so malignantly

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(1) Letter to Thalwell, 13th May 1796, quoted by Havens Op. Cit., p.201.

of the Divine Wisdom that it overset me'(1); and as late as 1820 he still attacked the 'vague, misty rather than mystic, confusion of God with the world, and the accompanying nature-worship'.(2). Whether Coleridge meant what we should mean by 'semi-atheist' or not, (some critics assert that he did not(3)), his words do not indicate his approval of his friend's religion; hence the interest we have in Wordsworth's eulogy of Coleridge's 'nature-worship'.

* * * * *

Wordsworth's contemplation of the unifying force of love must have made him consider its relation to the animating power in existence, the understanding of which is essential to the study of his panentheism. Various groups of images - of 'breeze' and 'breathing', and 'depths' and 'heights' - present us with different elements, or rather aspects, of this power, which for some critics seems

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(1) Anima Poetae, 1895, passage dated 26th October 1803.
(2) Ibid.
(3) Edith Batho, Op. Cit., pp.264-70.

akin to an anima mundi, somewhat independent of the Natural objects which it 'impels', and for others a vast intelligence inherent in Nature which cannot be conceived in abstraction - a kind of mind of the universe.

The concept of anima mundi will perhaps need a word of explanation. It is commonly defined as a spirit in Nature, universal, active and permanent; it must not be confused with God or considered in itself as a God; it is independent of Him except in will, that is, it is God's succedaneum charged with the execution of His will. This surrogate of God's is at the same time independent of the universe; it is essentially different from the material world which is proved on the senses, being a spirit, a soul, or, to use a modern approximation of this idea, energy.

The argument for an anima mundi relies on the poet's recurrent references to a 'spirit' in Nature, a 'soul of all the worlds', a 'Being in Nature' looking after creatures everywhere. The following lines from Hart-leap Well

> This Beast not unobserved by Nature fell;
> His death was mourned by sympathy divine.
> The Being that is in the clouds and air,
> That is in the green leaves among the groves,
> Maintains a deep and reverential care
> For the unoffending creatures whom he loves.

are thought by J.W. Beach to indicate a belief in a 'universal Soul of the World, or spirit of Nature, or anima mundi which pervades the universe and acts as God's agent in it'(1). Professor Douglas Bush suggests (in tracing the poet's affinity with the metaphysical and mystical idealism of the seventeenth century) that Wordsworth's 'spirit that rolls through all things is less like the deistic First Cause, or Godwinian "Necessity", than like the Neoplatonic Anima Mundi of Henry More and others'(2). Havens ascribes the poet's references to this 'world spirit' to his 'genuine animism'; 'his faith in the anima mundi is', he tells us, 'a kind of extension of his repeatedly-expressed belief that there are Spirits or tutelary Powers who pace the solitudes and who must be conceived as acting under the direction of the Deity'(3).

The imagery of the early Prelude does not, however, suggest a belief in the anima mundi as an independent power, divided into separate spirits, or working as God's agent in the universe. It is portrayed as a power inherent in existence, in the very substance of the universe, which

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(1) J.W. Beach, The Concept of Nature in Nineteenth Century English Poetry, New York, 1936, Chapter iv.
(Cf. Haven's Exposition of his view in Op. Cit., p.190.).
(2) Douglas Bush, Science and English Poetry, (O.U.P. 1967) p.92.
(3) Havens, Op. Cit., p.192.

defies abstraction. It is true that Wordsworth's treatment of this soul often suggest its independent existence, particularly when it is addressed, or when it is treated as an entity not limited to Nature(1). But this metaphorical treatment is always based on a conception of this soul as an activity - as 'Act', to borrow a term from Spinoza - (the term is useful for the light it throws on this particular concept, even though it does not suggest an influence). Spinoza thinks of God, T.S. Gregory tells us, rather as a verb, or activity, and of all existent things as modes of this activity. The world is not a collection of things but a 'conflagration of Act whose

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(1) Cf. the lines from Book XI:

> Oh! soul of Nature, excellent and fair,
> That didst rejoice with me, with whom I too
> Rejoiced, through early youth before the winds...
> ever with the heart
> Employ'd, and the majestic intellect;
> Oh! Soul of Nature! that dost overflow
> With passion and with life,...
>
> A.XI.138-40, 144-7

and the following from Book V:

> A gracious Spirit o'er this earth presides,
> And o'er the heart of man: invisibly
> It comes, directing those to works of love
> Who care not, know not, think not what they do:
>
> A.v.515-19

innumerable flames are but one fire'(1). Man recognises this activity in the life-cycles of Nature, the continual birth and rebirth of individual lives, and the intelligent order that underlies the universe. The very fact of existence evidences this activity: being is a form or mode of 'Act'(2): the 'active Principle'(3) inherent in every 'Form of being' is its very principle of being: it is the 'pulse of being' which is 'felt everywhere' and the 'sentiment of Being' which animates 'all that moves, and all that seemeth still', that is, all animate and, apparently (though not really), inanimate objects. 'To be', for Wordsworth, meant 'to live'; and the crass blunder of the mechanical philosophy lay in its substitution of a 'universe of death' for the alive, eternally animated reality.

Wordsworth's references in The Prelude (1805) to the animating power in the universe are consistent throughout; they invariably suggest that it is a quality of a living being, which cannot be conceived in abstraction. The power is sometimes said to be the 'wisdom and spirit of the universe',

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(1) Introduction to Spinoza's Ethics, p.viii.
(2) Ibid.
(3) The Excursion, ix.2.

the 'soul' which is the 'Eternity of thought', but which is at the same time inseparable from Nature's biological life, if not indeed its engenderer, giving to 'forms and images a breath/ And everlasting motion' (A.i.428-31). This power is also described as the 'soul, the Imagination of the whole' (A.xiii.65), the 'majestic intellect' (A.xi.144), the 'one life', the 'joy' in all things (A.ii.429), and the 'freedom of the universe' (The Excursion, ix.16).

Images portraying the unity of existence confirm this view: the 'quickening soul' and the 'inward meaning' cannot in the following image be conceived in isolation from the 'one Presence' and the 'life of the great whole':

> the great mass
> Lay bedded in a quickening soul, and all
> That I beheld respired with inward meaning.
> Thus much for the one Presence, and the Life
> Of the great whole;
>
> A.iii.127-31

Images vary of course in their degree of explicitness in expressing this idea; some are remarkably emphatic in suggesting the unity of God and Nature, as is the following early image which was rejected from both versions of **The Prelude**:

> the one interior life
> Which is in all things ... that unity
> In which all beings live with God, are lost
> In god and nature, in one mighty whole
> As undistinguishable as the cloudless east
> At noon is from the cloudless west when all
> The hemisphere is one cerulean blue
>
> MS.RV, 10-16 (de Selincourt, p.525)

Others obliquely imply it, though stressing the vital theme of the '_active_ principle' which binds all the features of the universe together making them appear as 'workings of the same mind, ... features/ Of the same face, blossoms upon one tree' (A.vi.555-71). Certain images make clear that Wordsworth's conception of the animating power bears no relation whatsoever to the traditional systems based on the dichotomy of 'spirit' and 'substance'; for him the whole universe is alive and animated by the one power in each and all natural objects; the '_active_ principle' is at work 'In all things, in all natures; in the stars/ Of azure heaven, the unenduring clouds,/ In flower and tree, in every pebbly stone/ That paves the brooks, the stationary rocks,/ The moving waters, and the invisible air...'(1). And a memorable image in book II of _The Prelude_, which recalls _Tintern Abbey_, embodies the idea still more clearly:

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(1) _The Excursion_, ix, 5-9.

I felt the sentiment of Being spread
O'er all that moves, and all that seemeth still,
O'er all, that, lost beyond the reach of thought
And human knowledge, to the human eye
Invisible, yet liveth to the heart,
O'er all that leaps, and runs, and shouts, and sings,
Or beats the gladsome air, o'er all that glides
Beneath the wave, yea, in the wave itself
And mighty depth of waters.

A.ii.420-8

* * * * *

Two groups of images are used in The Prelude in connection with this universal power: the first - from 'breeze' and 'breathing', - symbolise its invisible activity; the second - from 'depth' and 'height' - represent its 'apparent home' in Nature. Both groups appear unobtrusively, though recurrently and consistently, in the early version of The Prelude.

In common with his Romantic contemporaries (indeed with all poets of all times), Wordsworth uses the breeze or wind to symbolise the inner motions of the spirit. The blowing of Nature's 'breath' symbolised for the romantics the 'return of a sense of community after

isolation, ... emotional vigour, ... and an outburst of creative power'(1). M.H. Abrams's discussion of this basic Romantic metaphor, though very profound and illuminating, is more concerned with the similarities in the use of breeze-symbolism by the four poets - Coleridge, Wordsworth, Shelley and Byron - than with the differences between them. The four poets indeed share the basic symbolism of the breeze which is almost an archetype; but their differences cannot be overlooked. Shelley's most memorable use of the breeze symbol occurs in his Ode to The West Wind, (analogues of this use can easily be enumerated, particularly from Alastor and Adonais); it draws on the traditional concept of breeze as the breath of both life and inspiration - the Roman Zephyrus, as well as Chaucer's. It is almost the same use which we find in Coleridge, in, say, his Aeolian Harp; and again, the image of the wind instrument - be it a lyre, harp or lute - occurs in Keats, and before him in Wordsworth. In The Prelude, Wordsworth tells us that he was to Nature's 'passion'

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(1) M.H. Abrams, "The Correspondent Breeze: A Romantic Metaphor", in English Romantic Poets, pp.37-8.

> as wakeful, even, as waters are
> To the sky's motion, in a kindred sense
> Of passion was obedient as a lute
> That waits upon the touches of the wind.
>
> A.iii.135-8

and in the preamble to that poem, he refers to memorable occasions on which he conceived the plan of his work, one of which is thus recorded:

> It was a splendid evening; and my soul
> Did once again make trial of the strength
> Restored to her afresh; nor did she want
> Eolian visitations; but the harp
> Was soon defrauded, and the banded host
> Of harmony dispers'd in straggling sounds
> And, lastly, utter silence.
>
> A.i.101-7

The recurrent wind serves in that poem as a leitmotif representing the interchange between outer motions and internal powers - a use quite familiar in the contemporary English Romantics, as well as in all poets. 'The symbolic equations between breeze, breath, and soul, respiration and inspiration, the reanimation of Nature and the spirit, are older than recorded history; they are inherent in the constitution of ancient languages, are widely current in myth and folklore, and make up some of the great commonplaces of our religious traditions'(1). Abrams reminds us that the

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(1) Abrams, Op. Cit., p.46.

Latin spiritus signified 'wind' and 'breath', as well as 'soul'. So did the Latin anima, and the Greek pneuma, the Hebrew ruach, the Sanskrit atman, and the equivalent words in Arabic, Japanese and many other languages, some of them totally unrelated(1).

Wordsworth's distinctive breeze-symbolism can be clearly seen in the behaviour of a single verb, 'to breath', in the imagery of his early poetry. The literal and figurative meanings of the verb overlap, and are sometimes combined in the same image indicating both biological and mental (or spiritual) life at the same time. 'Breathing' Nature is not only biologically alive; for what she inhales and exhales is not merely air: she breathes 'moods' or states of mind. The 'ceaseless music' of the river Derwent, 'travelling over the green plains' near his birthplace, gave the poet

> A knowledge, a dim earnest, of the calm
> That Nature breathes among the hills and groves.
>
> A.i.284-5

Nature has a power 'to consecrate' her creatures,

> and to breathe
> Grandeur upon the very humblest face
> Of human life.
>
> A.xii.284-6

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(1) Ibid.

All the poet 'beheld respired with inward meaning' (Cf. the previously quoted image A.iii.127-31).

To breathe 'calm', 'grandeur' and 'meaning' must imply more than the literal use of the verb indicates; it even implies more than its common figurative sense when used to portray the life of Nature, as in:

> from recent showers
> The earth was comfortless, and, touch'd by faint
> Internal breezes, sobbings of the place,
> And respirations, ...
>
> A.ii.127-30

and in the numerous references to the universe as 'this great frame of breathing elements' (A.iv.303); (even the sea, we notice, is described as 'breathing')(1).

Man's breathing is also indicative of a special spiritual activity; it has a certain symbolic value which is sometimes too subtle to grasp. The breathing of 'an elevated mood', in A.ii.321-6, partly led to and partly required freedom from 'profane images'. And that mood is not necessarily a 'thoughtful' one: the poet's breathing can imply an intense mental activity or a 'thoughtless' overpowering joy:

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(1) MS. 18a. de Selincourt. p.610.

> I breathe again;
> Trances of thought and mountings of the mind
> Come fast upon me:
>
> A.i.19-21
>
> In many a thoughtless hour, when, from excess
> Of happiness, my blood appear'd to flow
> With its own pleasure, and I breath'd with joy.
>
> A.ii.191-3
>
> Another Maid there was, who also breath'd
> A gladness o'er that season,
>
> A.vi.233-4

At this level of symbolism, 'breathing' (indicating mental or 'moral life' A.iii.126) throws light on the concept of the 'majestic intellect' as it is revealed by another group of images from depth and height. It is curious that while in the revision the use of 'breathing' symbolism suffered a considerable change, the other group from depth and height was hardly affected at all, in spite of the close relationship between the two groups. Consider, for instance, the change of 'the gladsome air of my private being' (A.iv.226-7) into 'the absolute wealth of my private being' (iv.234-5); the 'air' which 'environed me' is removed (A.iv.289-91); 'breathing as if in different elements' (A.vi.263) is replaced by 'nursed and reared as

if in several elements' (vi.254-5); 'breath'd a gladness' (A.vi.233-4) becomes 'shed a gladness' (vi.225-6); and 'the still spirit of air ... we breathed' (A.ii.138-9) becomes "the spirit shed from air'.

* * * * *

The 'majestic intellect' is conceived in a rather peculiar manner. Although fundamentally seen as a vast intelligence, a 'mighty mind', permeating the very substance of the world, it is mainly recognized in depths, and felt as an inward activity continuing beneath the surface of life. Hence the poet's use of special nouns compounded with the prefix 'under' in his references to it, most of which, as de Selincourt has remarked, are his own coinages(1). It

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(1) Some of these words do not exist in O.E.D., and others are the only examples given. 'Under-powers' (i.163) is the only example; 'under-soul' (iii.540) is illustrated by no example before 1868; 'under-countenance' (vi.236) and 'under-thirst' (vi.489) are not in O.E.D., while 'under-presence' and 'under-consciousness' (xii.71, A2, B2) are the only examples given. Op. Cit., p.622.

is an 'under-power' or an 'under-soul'; in man, it is an 'under-consciousness', an 'under-thirst for power'; and in all existence it is the one 'under-presence'. De Selincourt remarks that the poet needed such words to express 'his profound consciousness of that mysterious life which lies deep down below our ordinary, everyday experience', then suggests that this must be 'related to the conception of the subconscious or subliminal self of the modern psychologist'(1). This relation, however, is too tenuous to be maintained with any certainty; the poet's concept of the 'majestic intellect' provides a more plausible explanation of his use of these words. The prefix 'under', far from suggesting the 'sub' of the 'subconscious', means that this 'under-presence' is hidden from the eyes of those who 'soil their wit with the gross and trumpery'(2), and are thus unable to 'see into the life of things'. The words compounded with under- do not indicate for Wordsworth a hinterland of the mind, a distant region of man's consciousness, where emotions, ideas, etc.

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(1) Op. Cit., p.623.
(2) Op. Cit., p.620.

which the individual consciousness fights or suppresses are stored; the 'under-presence' is not banished from man's, or Nature's, consciousness, but is essential to it; it is indeed the major spiritual attribute of all existence, or, to carry the argument a little farther, its 'essence'(1). The 'under-life', to coin a word, of the universe is no other than the 'one interior life' in all things; it is more an 'essential self' than a 'subliminal self' - its depth being, in a word, a philosophical rather than a psychological concept.

Wordsworth's concept of the 'majestic intellect' is embodied in certain images of depth which are, in spite of their relative paucity in The Prelude, central to his symbolic vision of Nature. His treatment of depth suggests that it is not merely conceived as a dimension in space but also, and more important, as the core or essence of each object's being, as a spiritual rather than a spatial attribute. Everything in existence, be it a human being or a natural object, necessarily has depth: and in its depth resides its 'soul', or 'mind',

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(1) Ibid.

or 'imagination'. Nature's depths are treated as symbolic of human depth, as in both man comes nearer to the recognition of the 'majestic intellect', the one power in all existence. It is clearly beside the point for us whether Wordsworth himself was able to communicate with this 'majestic intellect', to achieve the fusion he sought of man's and Nature's minds, or whether his attempts were never 'consummated', so that the sought-for 'blending' of human and **Natural** remained merely 'a hope, and faith, and desire'(1). The poet must have continually striven to realise, or 'actualise', his vision of Nature, to bridge the 'gulf' between the 'objects he contemplates and himself as thinking subject'(2), and may have been often unsuccessful, yet this is no reason to suppose, as Professor Hartman does, that the Imagination belongs solely to man's mind, and that it is in this sense independent of Nature(3) and 'may be intrinsically opposed to nature'(4). Wordsworth's view of the imagination did not confine it to the working of his own mind (although it is surely, in Piper's terms, 'the power to communicate with the life in natural objects')(5). The poet believed, as

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(1) G. Hartman, Wordsworth's poetry 1798-1914, p.350.
(2) Sperry, Wordsworth's Anticlimax, Camb. Mass, 1935, pp.170-7)
(3) Hartman, Ibid., p.41.
(4) Ibid. p.33, Hartman's italics.
(5) Piper, The Active Universe. P 2

Professor Stallknecht has admirably shown, that the imagination was the power in all existence, - a power not figuratively seen to belong to Nature but actually manifested in the active life of Nature; it belongs as much to Nature as to man. And this is perhaps the simplest explanation of the symbolism in his imagery of depth that wherever you look you will see an emblem of the one mental faculty in all existence, call it the 'majestic intellect' or the 'imagination'.

Whatever, therefore, the outcome of the poet's endeavours to 'melt' his imagination into that of Nature, the fact remains that he never failed to recognise the 'glory' of this power; even as a boy he sought after it in anything emblematic of its 'awful presence', particularly in depths; he worshipped then, he tells us, among the depths of things:

> I had not at that time
> Liv'd long enough, nor in the least survived
> The first diviner influence of this world,
> As it appears to unaccustom'd eyes;
> I worshipp'd then among the depths of things
> As my soul bade me;
>
> A.xi.230-5

He perceived this power in the 'mighty depths of waters', and felt nearer to it in nooks, recesses, and 'hiding places', in Nature as well as in man, which were symbolic of the dim, unexplored, and unexplorable regions in existence. Alike

in man as in Nature, depths are recognised 'howe'er removed/ From sense and observation'(1) as the inexhaustible wells of power, where the 'prime and vital principle' - the 'active Principle' - is continually at work:

> Oh! mystery of Man, from what a depth
> Proceed they honours! ...
> the hiding places of my powers
> Seem open; I approach, and then they close;
>
> A.xi.329-30, 336-7

> 'tis thine,
> The prime and vital principle is thine
> In the recesses of they nature, ...
>
> A.xiii.193-5

In one of the images removed from both versions of The Prelude Wordsworth refers to the interaction of human and Natural powers as taking place at a certain level of depth; for as man feels his belonging in Nature he tends to

> act or suffer
> As from the invisible shrine within the breast
> Nature might urge, ...
>
> (Variant of A.iii.86-8)

At that level of depth the 'essences of things' (A.ii.344) work as one essence: they are the 'one brooding spirit' in existence, both in man (variant of ii.345) and in Nature (xiv.71).

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(1) The Excursion, ix.3-4.

The identification of man's internal powers with Nature's 'interior life' can best be seen in one of the poet's earlier attempts, in a manuscript of The Prelude, to define his concept of the 'mighty mind'. In a try-out passage written while he was working on Book IV, early in 1805, Wordsworth first refers to the 'brooding' spirits or minds of man and Nature as two presences, then hastens to confirm that they are one(1). He next attempts to describe how man should, in order to reach the 'higher reality', derive the feelings and thoughts instrumental to his search from 'his own nature'; put differently, man's mind contains all the elements - the 'dim', the 'vast' and the 'infinite' - which can lead him to the higher truth. Hence the image in which the poet admonishes man to try

> To feed his soul upon infinity
> To deal with whatso'er be dim or vast
> In his own nature (blending) in a form
> Of unity through truth-inspiring thoughts
> By one sensation, either be it that
> Of his own mind the power by which he thinks
> Or lastly the great feeling of the world,
> God and the immortality of life
> Beneath all being evermore to be
>
> (de Selincourt, p.620)

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(1) De Selincourt, Op. Cit., p.620.

When the poet comes to incorporate this image in his text of 1805 - as part of his vision on Mount Snowdon - the mind that 'feeds upon infinity' which belongs to man here becomes the 'mighty mind' of Nature, or the 'majestic intellect': and whatever is 'dim or vast' in its own being is now equivalent to a 'sense of God' - the 'under-presence' - the 'infinite' power 'beneath all being':

> a fracture in the vapour,
> A deep and gloomy breathing-place through which
> Mounted the roar of waters, torrents, streams
> Innumerable, roaring with one voice...
> in that breach
> Through which the homeless voice of waters rose,
> That dark deep thoroughfare had Nature lodg'd
> The Soul, the Imagination of the whole...
> it appear'd to me
> The perfect image of a mighty Mind,
> Of one that feeds upon infinity,
> That is exalted by an under-presence,
> The sense of God, or whatso'er is dim
> Or vast in its own being,
>
> A.xiii.56-9, 62-5, 67-73

The significance of this change is clear enough: Wordsworth may speak of man's and Nature's minds as two things but, ultimately, they do not represent two <u>different</u> things for him. He applies different names and qualifications to them but recognises that this is merely due to 'sad incompetence' of human speech; the multiplicity of epithets does not suggest a multiplicity of entity.

It is remarkable that Wordsworth, who generally prefers the unobstrusive, indirect approach, should explicitly state in some images in The Prelude that 'higher' minds are 'from the deity' (A.xiii.106), or that they have the 'deity infused in them'. These minds, he tells us, find no difficulty in recognising this 'fact', especially in moments of inspiration, when they are 'moved' in a particular way:

> the Power which these (minds)
> Acknowledge when thus moved, which Nature thus
> Thrust forth upon the senses, is the express
> Resemblance, in the fulness of its strength
> Made visible, a genuine Counterpart
> And Brother of the glorious faculty
> Which higher minds bear with them as their own.
>
> A. xiii. 84-90

They know - every man does - that participation in the 'Sovereign intellect' is a reality (A.v.14-17):

> for there's not a man
> That lives who hath not had his godlike hours,
> And knows not what majestic sway we have,
> As natural beings in the strength of nature.
>
> A.iii.191-4

And the poet may have known this 'majestic sway' himself; he was

> Accustom'd in my loneliness to walk
> With Nature majesterially, ...
>
> A.iii.379-80

In Nature he knew

the deep quiet and majestic thoughts
Of loneliness...

A.iii.210-11

* * * * *

In the revised version of The Prelude a certain image of depth that carries far this symbolic identity of the human and universal minds becomes more articulated; this is what David Perkins, in his recent study of Romantic symbolism, has called 'the image of the cavern or abyss'(1). Both minds are presented as 'brooding' over an abyss which is dark and infinite. Its depth stands for both its mystery and infinity, as it is essentially an abyss of the mind itself, unexplored and unexplorable. Wordsworth could not find a name for the power that 'usurped' his consciousness when he suddenly realised that he had crossed the Alps, but he knew that it came from a depth in his being which he called 'the mind's abyss':

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(1) The Quest for Permanence.

> That awful Power rose from the mind's abyss
> Like an unfathered vapour that enwraps,
> At once, some lonely traveller.
>
> vi.594-6

This power which he called the Imagination belongs to man's mind as much as it belongs to Nature's mind, for the two minds, indeed, are one. On Mount Snowdon, he intimated that in the 'dark deep thoroughfare' in front of him Nature had lodged the 'Soul, the imagination of the whole'; the steep which he overlooked appeared to him

> the type
> Of a majestic intellect, ...
> the emblem of a mind
> That feeds upon infinity, that broods
> Over the dark abyss,
>
> xiv.66-7, 70-2

The Miltonic echo in this image (Cf. Paradise Lost, i.21) does not suggest a direct borrowing, for the abyss image in The Prelude as well as elsewhere in Wordsworth is central to the poet's concept of the human and universal minds: a vast depth of dark and infinite powers. Though it is hard to calculate the amount of Boehmnistic influence in this image, it is impossible to disregard the evidence furnished by Stallknecht in this respect. Boehme says in A Treatise of Christ's Testament, Chap. I, 'every visible and invisible

Being, spiritual and corporeal, have taken their Original in the Exhalation of the Eternal ONE, and stand with their Ground therein, for the beginning of every Being is nothing else but an Imagination of the Abyss, ...'(1). The Abyss is obviously the divine mind; and the Imagination its forming hand, as it were, which shapes all beings. But then Boehme goes on to say that each being, human or Natural, brings 'itself by its own Longing into an Imagination, and modelleth and imageth itself, and apprehendeth the Image-likeness, and breatheth it (or, exhaleth it) forth from the Eternal One to a viewing of itself'(2). Everything therefore shares in the 'unsearchable Deep' of the cosmic mind; each has the unfathomable depth of mind or imagination and is possessed of the same vital and eternally active power of which the abyss is emblematic. And this is exactly in harmony with Wordsworth's vision of the 'mind's abyss'.

The image of the cave appears but inconspicuously in the literal narrative(3); Wordsworth lists it, for instance, among the spots where Nature's 'presences' dwell (i.A.496);

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(1) Italics of Stallknecht, Op. Cit., p.112.
(2) Ibid. italics mine.
(3) Cf. Lindenberger, On Wordsworth's Prelude, p87.

in the episode of the stolen boat, the 'rocky cave' from which he steals the boat becomes deified(1), in the course of the passage, into the 'Cavern of the willow tree' (i.394-414). However, elsewhere in the poem, it either indirectly suggests the dark recesses of the poet's mind from which issues that 'dim and undetermin'd sense/ Of unknown modes of being' (i.419-20), or is used in a totally figurative sense, as in the simile which compared his London experience with a traveller's way of looking at a cave (viii.711-51). He also speaks about 'caverns ... within my mind' (iii.246) which were left inviolate amid the social temptations of Cambridge.

David Perkins comments that the function of this image is twofold: first it is symbolic of 'an inevitable, and fearful, isolation from any external medium through which the mind can be healthfully governed', and second, as suggestive of 'fertility and creation'(2). This may be so; but I have not succeeded in recognising the second function in the images covered in this study. Potentially, of course, the cavern can stand, like all of Wordsworth's

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(1) Ibid.
(2) Op. Cit., p.24.

central images, for several things; its more apparent symbolism is that of the mind, the human and the universal. And it is chiefly as depth that this 'literally submerged metaphor' functions; it is but dimly sensed 'through the unnamed (and unnamable) depths and under-agents which Wordsworth has such frequent occasion to invoke'(1).

* * * * *

Imagery of height presents us with a more difficult question: is Wordsworth's use of height symbolism distinctively his own, or perhaps partly in the eighteenth-century tradition? The two visionary experiences on Mount Snowdon and the Alps owed as much of their special quality to height as to depth; but was height felt as an element of the experience significant merely because of its opposition to depth, or was it possibly, though unobtrusively, an equally potent factor functioning in its own right? Was it suggestive of sublimity in a traditional sense?

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(1) Lindenberger, Op. Cit.,p.87.

Heights are traditionally associated with the idea of the Sublime; indeed, the word as used by Longinus in his treatise On The Sublime simply meant 'height'. The Latin equivalent, sublimis, was often used as meaning greatness as well, but, 'always with some feeling of the original meaning of height as a dimension in space'(1). During the eighteenth century the word seems to have kept this original meaning(2), before its introduction into literary criticism by Addison, Burke, Boileau and Kant; its meaning then, though differing considerably from one writer to another, began to include a religious element(3). In eighteenth century poetry, although the word itself was inconspicuous, the endowment of 'grand' Natural 'forms' with sublimity was quite common(4). Marjorie Nicholson and Ernest Tuveson have painstakingly shown in their recent books on the development

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(1) Longinus, On the Sublime (Oxford, 1906) Introduction by A.O. Prickard, p.xviii.
(2) Prickard notes that the word was never used by Shakespeare, or Spenser; Milton uses it freely. Ibid.
(3) Cf. Coleridge's use which certainly indicated the existence of such an element when he said: "Could you ever discover anything sublime, in our sense of the term, in the Classical Greek Literature? I never could. Sublimity is Hebrew by birth". Ibid. p.xviii.
(4) Cf. J. Miles, Eras and Modes in English Poetry, (Berkely and Los Angeles, 1957), pp.48-77. This is referred to by Miles as the 'sublime-tradition' and is traced across the century from Blackmore through Akenside to Blake.

of the 'aesthetics of the infinite' that 'poetry and aesthetic theory had been preparing readers to find religious meaning in sublime scenery - above all, in mountains and caverns - for a whole century before Wordsworth'(1). In the light of their researches, his attitude would seem less the beginning of a tradition, than the culmination of a way of thinking for which the ground-work had been laid long before(2).

However, the imagery of The Prelude reveals that Wordsworth was far from being in the eighteenth-century 'sublime-tradition'; even in the revised version of that poem, his imagery of height suggests more a departure from than a belonging to it. Mountains in themselves (and for that matter all heights), as solid, huge, and remote entities, appealed but little to him; their appearance seemed to be of minor significance in itself. Indeed, in his Guide to the Lakes, he writes: 'a stranger to mountain imagery naturally on his first arrival looks out for sublimity in every object that admits of it; and is almost always disappointed'(3).

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(1) M. Nicholson, Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory, especially pp.271-369, and E. Tuveson, The Imagination as a Means of Grace, (Quoted in Lindenberger, Op. Cit., p.94).
(2) Lindenberger, Op. Cit., p.94.
(3) Prose Works, 11, 291-92.

The explanation is not hard to find; mountains do not in themselves impart feelings different from those that other Natural objects inspire: in every contact with a Natural object the human mind must interact with it deeply and intimately before it inspires any feeling at all. A holiday-maker, a stranger, is too detached an observer to be thus inspired. Wordsworth perhaps knew this from experience: as a holiday-maker himself, he was not impressed, but even rather disappointed, with Mont Blanc:

> That day we first
> Beheld the summit of Mont Blanc, and griev'd
> To have a soulless image on the eye
> Which had usurp'd upon a living thought
> That never more could be:
>
> A.vi.452-456

The reason was of course also that the reality failed to live up to his expectations; yet when he spent some time on the mountain, when he had more contact with it and thus became conscious of height as opposed to depth below, his imagination was stirred. It is significant that references to mountains and hills in The Prelude are not as frequent as one would expect them to be; neither are they built up in memorable images. A single reference to 'mountain pomp' occurs in the early text in A.vi.10, and another to 'mountain solitudes' is added to the final text

in xiii.146. The only added image of height in the 1850 text deals more with the temporal extension of the 'cliffs', their endurance, than with their height:

> yon shining cliffs,
> The untransmuted shapes of many worlds,
> Cerulean ether's pure inhabitants,
>
> vi.463-65

As a dimension in space, height is the counterpart of depth: as symbolic of the mystery, the 'awful power' beyond the reach of human thought, the two are more or less equal. The physical act of ascent is as much a journey in depth as in height; the peak of Snowdon was thus also significant because it enabled the poet to realise the depth below - indeed, he was not as conscious of the peak itself as of the 'deep gloomy ... breach', the 'dark deep thoroughfare' where, it appeared to him, Nature had 'lodg'd the Soul, the imagination of the whole' (xiii.57-9, 62-5). When in his continental tour he saw 'Nature's Alpine throne' his eye was 'delighted'; but the moment of inspiration did not come until he had climbed the mountain, and seen from above the deep 'courts of mystery'.

> Between the portals of the shadowy rocks
>
> A2.vi.452

and the 'deep, broad stream' flowing below in 'silent majesty',

with 'mountains for its neighbours' (A.vi.581-6). So was it when at Lake Locarno he became conscious of the 'lofty steep' overlooking the depth below. Again, when 'beneath the rock' he stood listening to the 'language of the ancient earth', and 'drinking the visionary power' (ii.A.321-328), he was as aware of the height of the rock as of his own position at its foot. Similarly, the huts hidden 'beneath the crags', (A.i.596-8) heeding the 'moon's call' at evening, owed part of their significance to the depth of their position under the high crags above.

* * * * *

Heights (as well as depths) can inspire a feeling of the 'sublime' in which the most prominent element is fear, powerful, irrational, and indescribable. Perhaps all men have experienced this when climbing a mountain or looking down into a deep well, or descending into a dark dungeon; the perils of climbing are its immediate cause. However, of this common kind of fear there is only one instance in The Prelude, although many episodes are recorded elsewhere

which illustrate the poet's early experience of fear. When plundering birds' nests (Cf. A.i.335 et seq.) he suddenly became aware of the 'perilous ridge' on which he hung alone, and the 'half-inch fissures in the slippery rock' to which he clung. Mary Moorman records the following incident which is not recorded in The Prelude: as a child he was fascinated by the ruins of a castle, a few hundred yards up the river from his father's house, at Cockermouth. It was one of his favourite haunts, 'there he scrambled up the old red walls after the wallflower's "golden progeny", and there, descending into the dungeon, he found himself face to face with "soul-appalling darkness". The experience thrilled him'(1). This experience or similar ones proved useful for the poet when he was working on The Borderers; a central part of the action takes place in 'The Area of a half-ruined Castle - on one side the entrance to a dungeon -' (Act II, Scene III).

However, Wordsworth seems to have thought but little of this common fear: he calls it 'soul-debasing' and clearly distinguishes it from the other 'superior' kind that is

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(1) W. Wordsworth, A. Biography, pp.17-18.

equivalent to awe. This latter feeling is what he describes as the 'fostering' power which, together with beauty, contributed so much to his making(1). Most of the incidents in which he felt afraid suggest that awe rather than common fear (to use 'common' in its characteristic pejorative sense) was the emotion that stirred in his heart: he felt terrified to face an 'unknown' power whose dwelling lay completely beyond the reach of his thought and experience.

His crossing of the Alps, for instance, was not in itself a terrifying experience; nor was even his realisation that he had done so. Yet he tells us that he felt almost lost: he felt as if suddenly he was transferred to another world the boundaries of which he had crossed unconsciously: the moment was 'awful'. So was it when he was literally lost, and having led his pony downhill he came to a gibbet-post commemorating a crime committed ten years before. There was nothing to be afraid of, yet the spot - desolate and mysterious - was another world to him, a remote and awful one. Nor was there anything terrible in effect about

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(1) Cf. The Prelude, i.320-25, i.336-9, i.337-400, i.405-14, i.464-75, ii.306-10, v.307-9, v.417-19, vi.624-33, vi.645-8, D2 variant of xii.329-35, xiv.162-8, A.xiii.224-6.

the huge cliff which frightened him after he had stolen the boat: it was simply a symbol of Nature's mysterious power magnified by his conscience, but it did not suggest immediate punishment or indicate impending danger. It just seemed unearthly, as if it belonged to an unknown world, an unexplored region of existence, with all its 'unknown modes of being' which it conjured to disturb his dreams.

It is remarkable that when as a young boy he had reason to be afraid, on seeing the dead man's body taken out from the water where he had drowned, he was not; and the reason he gives for this is as remarkable: he had seen such sights often enough in the world of romance to be familiar with them. Boyish fear was unknown to him; and yet to the power of fear he assigns an important role in his making. We are often made to feel in reading The Prelude that this fear owed its importance to its connection with the idea of the sublime - a connection that could have been partly due to the influence of Burke. In his Philosophical Inquiry into the Origins of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful (1756) Burke says: '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 with terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the sublime;

that is, it is productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling' (I.vii.). Professor Havens remarks that this view of Burke's was accepted by most writers of the late eighteenth century 'some of whose publications Wordsworth probably knew before 1798, when he called attention to the discipline of fear in the first book of The Prelude'(1). The reading of Burke or of 'similar theorists', Havens adds, may have directed his attention to the subject and made explicit his ideas on it.

The degree of Burke's influence on Wordsworth cannot be stated with any certainty; we have no material proof of the poet's admiration for this treatise in particular. However, even if Wordsworth had not read the treatise himself, he might have had a clear idea of its doctrines from Coleridge who was a regular reader of Burke's writings. This is more than possible since Burke's attitude to the sublime is basically different from other eighteenth-century attitudes - Addison's for instance - in treating the sublime as a feeling, and not as an objective condition in certain Natural objects. Burke's approach to the sublime was nearer to the thought of

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(1) Havens, Op. Cit., p. 47.

the young friends, Wordsworth and Coleridge, than that of any other eighteenth-century writer who, as a rule, drew upon Longinus's treatise.

The other influence suggested is that of Kant; but, without going deeper into the matter, it must be remembered that Kant produced his Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime in 1764, that is eight years after Burke had produced his treatise, and that some of Kant's views echo Burke's even verbally: Kant says, for instance, 'The sublime must always be great;... A great height is just as sublime as a great depth, except that the latter is accompanied with the sensation of shuddering, the former with the one of wonder. Hence the latter feeling can be the terrifying sublime, and the former the noble'.(1). So whether Wordsworth had read the German philosopher (he 'scarcely' knew German)(2) or obtained the main ideas of his treatise again through Coleridge, Burke's influence will always be more probable.

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(1) I. Kant, Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime, tr. J. Goldthwit, University of California Press, 1968, pp.48-9.
(2) Rader, Op. Cit., p.67.

CHAPTER III

III

Nature revisited

a)

Nature imagery in the 1850 Prelude;

A general remark was made at the beginning of Chapter I of this thesis about the consistency of Wordsworth's early vision, as it is reflected in Nature imagery in the 1805 Prelude. It was also pointed out that the general character of the images is completely in harmony with the character of the imagery of the great decade. Alike in The Prelude as in the Lyrical Ballads, for instance, man's dependence on Nature is greatly emphasised, though this dependence is sometimes portrayed as emotional attachment similar to that between a child and his mother, sometimes given the form of deification. In form, the images of both The Prelude and the poems of 1798-1807 are likewise consistent, being mostly simple, swift, shifting similes. The early Prelude testifies to the genuine critical stand of a poet whose artistic integrity - the correspondence of his theory and practice - has often been called in question. Hardly a score of personifications and elaborate metaphors are traced in the

several thousand lines of that poem(1).

In revising his poem, Wordsworth had enough 'artistic honesty'(2) to preserve the broad lines of its structure and major themes: The Prelude remains as much the poem on the 'growth of his mind'(3) as he intended it to be. He did not fundamentally alter the main course of events and experiences which for him illustrated best his growth; but many of these events acquire a different significance in the final text as they are freshly approached by the mature poet; many are re-interpreted in the light of his ripened views. Other changes can be seen as attempts by the poet to be as truthful to his spiritual history as possible, redressing imbalanced or exaggerated expressions, correcting the earlier awkwardly formulated opinions, and pruning the lax or diffuse statements of his feelings. In doing this, he was careful

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(1) An exception of course is the conflagration of needless personifications at the end of Book III, lines 626-43 in the A text. One wonders if a recollection of Shakespeare's Sonnet No.45 (in Sir Denys Bray's order) beginning: "Tir'd with all these, for restful death I cry", is behind this. This is quite likely, especially as there are distinct echoes of the sonnet in the lines referred to (Cf., for instance, 'Honour misplaced' A.iii.635 that recalls Shakespeare's 'honour shamefully misplac'd' (1.5) and that nowhere else in The Prelude does Wordsworth attempt such a device so lavishly.

(2) James Logan, Wordsworthian Criticism, p.105.

(3) De Selincourt, Op. Cit., p.xxiii.

not to change certain 'facts' (at least what we take to be facts) of history which, he thought, he had no right to tamper with, and which he distinguished from his young views on them: these he tempered at will. He preserved the biographical skeleton of his narrative, hoping that historical veracity would outweigh, or at least balance the later interpretations of certain happenings of his youth. But the changes introduced into the text, though limited in both their scope and nature, are considerable in their effect; we do not doubt that 'many of the later changes in the text of The Prelude are criticisms directed by a man of seventy winters against his own past',(1) especially regarding his views of his life at Cambridge, his attitude to the French Revolution, and his philosophy of life and religion. De Selincourt has admirably outlined and explained the general trend of this change; we need not discuss this aspect of the revision here.

It may still puzzle some readers why the poet was not more thorough, to use a bold word, in modifying his youthful views in The Prelude; many of the early views are

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(1) Ibid. 1 xiv.

completely untouched although they obviously represent a stand which the poet abandoned in later life. The design of the revision, though intricate and often hard to follow, provides a possible explanation of this: the poet's main purpose was to improve the literary quality of his poem, and most of the modifications of the early views followed as after-thoughts. Most of the changes are technical, concerned with the rephrasing of crucial utterances on major themes, the rejection of halting lines and lame expressions, and the use of a more symmetrical syntax in many places in the poem. In other words, the poet thought of bringing the poem into accord with the later modifications of his faith(1) during and not before the actual revision; he must have felt it then his right to offer the reader what appeared to represent his thought best. And this is perhaps how he started to remove those images savouring too much of panentheism, and the lines he thought might lend support to the accusation that he held such 'heretical' beliefs - in short, anything that might be interpreted as mixing God with Nature(2).

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(1) De Selincourt, Op. Cit.p.lxxi.
(2) Op. Cit. p.lxxi.

It is remarkable (and it certainly supports the view above) that the poet never goes out of his way in the revision of the literary aspects of The Prelude to declare that he has recanted an earlier belief or modified a long-held opinion. Where the original text was, or seemed to the poet to be, satisfactory from the purely literary point of view, he left it alone even when the images and passages of Natural description were richly tinged with panentheism and bore a distinct stamp of his early religion of Nature. The result is that in the posthumous text of 1850 we have side by side images suggesting two different - if not indeed opposed - beliefs; the final Prelude combines two strains of thought basically at variance with each other: the one in the spirit of Tintern Abbey, the other in that of the Ecclesiastical Sonnets.

A further factor which led to the existence of inconsistent sets of images in the poem is the fact that the successive revisions of its text were performed at different times of the poet's career, and that each revision rejected or added something to the text without superseding the previous one - each modifying the 1805 text but not, as a rule, the preceding revision. From de Selincourt's edition we learn that the earliest attempt at revising

The Prelude was made as early as 1807, barely three years after the completion of its composition; another attempt which produced a major manuscript (C) is ascribed to the years 1817-19; further efforts were made by the poet in or about 1828, and a final (though by no means the final) revision is thought to belong to 1832-35. Except in certain cases, as in the opening lines of most Books of the poem, many of the alterations introduced in these successive revisions were not removed; some of them were slightly modified or retained - even in their original form - and so have come to stand in the text side by side with the latest changes. This can sufficiently be seen by even a casual comparison of the manuscripts of the poem, especially MSS A, A2, C, RV and D which are printed in de Selincourt's authoritative edition of The Prelude.

To balance the later improvement and deterioration in the style of The Prelude requires abler minds than mine; but the changes are felt to have generally enriched the text, though in many instances at the expense of the original vision that represents the authentic voice of Wordsworth. It would not serve our field of study - the development of imagery - or contribute much to the understanding of the later vision of Wordsworth, to dwell on the significance of

individual accretions to the text of his poem or even to relate them, in any framework of reference, to the basic themes of the poem which survived the successive revisions. It will be more useful to contrast the qualities of the characteristic Nature-imagery in the 1805 version with those of some of the typical additions in the posthumous Prelude: the differences will throw light on the general trend in the revision, and help us to grasp its essential spirit.

The most striking difference perhaps is the shift of interest in the later imagery from 'invisible' to 'visible' Nature. Natural beauty becomes a conscious theme of many an added metaphor; lengthy descriptive passages which reveal an unusual delight in form and colour find their way into the text. But the addition of these does not indicate a genuine change in the poet's vision as much as it represents an attempt to achieve the double objective of 1) decorating the poem with 'natural beauties' and 2) emphasising to the doubting readers that Nature was sought after for itself, not for the deity with which people accused him of identifying it. It is as if Wordsworth wanted to place Nature away from both man and God, at least at a safe enough distance to free himself from the accusation of investing it with holiness, or of humanising it.

These added images of Nature reveal the unmistakable preference of the older poet for complex and elaborate forms, many being highly-wrought and very well thought of by critics. Personification, the very eighteenth-century poetic device Wordsworth had so violently attacked in the Preface, is now liberally used with hardly any gain for the poem. It will suffice for the first part of this chapter to give a few examples illustrating the general qualities of these added images - their distancing of Nature and complexity of form - before we discuss in the second part a more important feature of the accretions to the text: imagery of, or intended to suggest a belief in orthodox religion. Consider, for instance, the change made in the following simple statement about mathematical abstractions, their relation to the law of Nature, and

> how they would become
> Herein a leader to the human mind,
>
> A.vi.146-7

which in the 1850 text was replaced by the personification:

> I meditated(d)
> On the relation those abstractions bear
> To Nature's laws, and by what process led,
> Those immaterial agents bowed their heads
> Duly to serve the mind of earth-born man;
>
> vi.122-6

or the change of:

> I turn'd my face
> Without repining from the mountain pomp
> Of Autumn, and its beauty enter'd in
> With calmer Lakes, and louder Streams;...
>
> A.vi.9-13

into:

> I turned my face
> Without repining from the coves and heights
> Clothed in the sunshine of the withering fern;
> Quitted, not loth, the mild magnificence
> Of calmer lakes and louder streams;...
>
> vi.9-13

or the following added personification with its conspicuous alliteration:

> That summer, swarming as it did with thoughts
> Transient and idle, lacked not intervals
> When Folly from the frown of fleeting Time
> Shrunk,...
>
> iv.346-9

Sometimes the change is very subtle; few words in a given image are affected in the revision, yet the final effect is remarkable. Consider, for instance, the change of:

> And yet the morning gladness is not gone
> Which then was in my mind....
>
> A.vi.63-4

into:

> ... ; yet for me
> Life's morning radiance hath not left the hills,
> Her dew is on the flowers....
>
> vi.50-2

The later version of this image, though clearly well wrought, falls short of producing the original effect or, indeed, the original meaning. In the early metaphor a merger is achieved between a Natural element, the morning, and the human mind: the gladness of the morning is not only felt or shared by the poet but is in his mind; it is as though the morning belonged to the mind as much as the mind transferred gladness - by definition a human feeling - to the morning. By means of this compressed yet simple form we see the morning through and in the human mind, as well as human feeling spread out in Nature, 'infused' in the Natural scene. Wordsworth is not merely saying that his early childhood happiness survived in his heart, in spite of his advance in age; he is also, which is more important, recording an instance of this kind of early happiness - an instance when 'subject' and 'object', to use Coleridge's terms, coalesced(1).

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(1) Cf. I.A. Richards, Coleridge on the Imagination, p.44 et seq.

In the latter image the mind does not participate in the Natural scene; it is the eye rather than the mind that absorbs it. The component elements of the image are all drawn from Nature - radiance, hills, dew, flowers - and help to give it a considerable visual richness. But, in spite of the broader symbolism that can be read into these elements, the image does not achieve that compactness of form or that significant merger of human and Natural that we find in the rejected image. It can even be said to be the product of 'fancy', defined in Coleridge's terms, as opposed to the 'fusion' of the elements in the earlier metaphor that can be ascribed to the 'esemplastic power' of the 'Imagination'.

The description of Natural beauty is, by and large, characteristic of most of the added lines in The Prelude, not only the imagery. And sometimes it is against the very spirit of the early poem. The depths of Nature, - the dark 'recesses', 'grottos', and 'distant nooks' - which embodied for Wordsworth the inscrutable mystery of existence, and in which he 'worshipped', have become in the revised version loaded with 'works of art' and now seem to have been sought after because of their beauty: consider the modification of the following lines:

> In summer among distant nooks I rov'd
> Dovedale, or Yorkshire Dales, or through bye-tracts
> Of my own native regions,...
>
> A.vi.208-10

to make them read:

> In summer, making quest for works of art,
> Or scenes renowned for beauty, I explored
> That streamlet whose blue current works its way
> Between romantic Dovedale's spiry rocks;
> Of my own native region,...
>
> vi.190-5

Or consider the addition of the following lines in Book iv:

> With exultation, at my feet I saw
> Lake, islands, promontories, gleaming bays,
> A universe of Nature's fairest forms
> Proudly revealed with instantaneous burst,
> Magnificent, and beautiful, and gay.
>
> iv.7-11

The tendency to paint more picturesque scenes appears to have started immediately after the great decade, or even as early as 1807, the date of the earliest known revision of The Prelude. Extant drafts of many lines (even passages) which were intended to replace earlier 'plain' ones reveal this; it will be interesting to watch the poet at work on his images - approving of one, rejecting another, then finally removing both from his 1850 text. After composing the following lines in Book III:

... ; and let the stars
Come out, perhaps without one quiet thought.

A.iii.257-8

he returned to them attempting a recast which in MS A2 reads:

and let the stars
From day's imperial custody released
Commence their vigils without one calm thought.

A2, iii.257-8(de S., p.85)

but then, apparently realising that the added metaphor sits rather uneasily in his text, he removed it altogether from the final version, replacing the original lines. A similar example is the poet's several attempts to recast his vision at night of the Antechapel of King's College, Cambridge, and Newton's statue which stood there. In these attempts, the emphasis is particularly laid on the moon shining 'fair', the 'dimmer influence of the stars', the 'mellow gleams/ Of moonshine on the branchy windows playing', then all these 'beauties' are removed from the final version. In the early text we have the lines bare of any Natural ornament:

And, from my Bedroom, I in moonlight nights
Could see, right opposite, a few yards off,
The Antechapel,...

A.iii.56-8

and the first correction reads:

> And in deep midnight when the moon shone fair
> Or even by dimmer influence of the stars
> In wakeful vision rapt I could behold
> Solemnly near and pressing on my sight
> The Antechapel...
>
> A2, iii.56-58(de S.p.74)

and the second:

> And from my pillow I had power to mark
> Solemnly pressed upon my stedfast gaze
> By glimmering starlight or with mellow gleams
> Of moonshine on the branchy windows playing
> The Antechapel...
>
> B2, iii.56-58(de S.p.74)

then hardly any reference is made to these 'beauties' in the 1850 text. The rejection of these variants can be regarded as in itself a recognition by the poet that such decorative embroidery was needless after all, or that too much of it could hamper the easy progress of his 'song'. It is surely one of the instances in which the critical acumen of the older poet helped the text, as de Selincourt has remarked(1); although this acumen was not always so helpful. For sometimes the impulse to stud the text with metaphors was too powerful; the poet might indeed hesitate in deciding which metaphor to use, then settle on a new image altogether.

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(1) Op. Cit., p.iv.

The following simple statement in A:

Till he was left a hundred yards behind

A.iii.9

was replaced in A2 by:

Till he who strode indifferently along
With youthful pace was left as far behind
As ere at sunset stretched his spindling shade.

A2, iii.9 et seq.(de S.p.70)

but was rejected in the final Prelude for:

Till he was left an arrow's flight behind.

iii.12

Owing to the factors described earlier, the added images in the posthumous text vary in their structure and implications - although they mostly share the basic quality of being decorative, of hardly profiting the original meaning. Some take the form of a casual metaphor created in a word or two as in the following:

drinking in a pure
Organic pleasure from the silver wreaths
Of curling mist,...

i.563-5

which in A was:

drinking in
A pure organic pleasure from the lines
Of curling mist,...

A.i.590-2

Some are similes intended to illustrate the original meaning, perhaps, besides having a decorative function; the following is a typical example:

> I rose not, till the sun
> Had almost touched the horizon; casting then
> A backward glance upon the curling cloud
> Of city smoke, by distance ruralised;
> Keen as a Truant or a Fugitive,
> But as a Pilgrim resolute, I took,
> Even with the chance equipment of that hour,
> The road that pointed toward the chosen vale.(1)

i.86-93

which in A was:

> nor rose up until the sun
> Had almost touch'd the horizon, bidding then
> A farewell to the City left behind,
> Even with the chance equipment of that hour
> I journey'd towards the Vale that I had chosen.

A.i.96-100

And other metaphors do little more than cumber the original images - the 'seed' images from which they grew. A memorable example is the change introduced in the following:

> The heavy rain was falling, or the frost
> Raged bitterly, with keen and silent tooth,...
> From Esthwaite's neighbouring Lake the splitting ice,
> While it sank down towards the water, sent,
> Among the meadows and the hills, its long
> And dismal yellings, like the noise of wolves
> When they are howling round the Bothnic Main.

A.i.563-70

which in the final version came to read:

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(1) My Italics.

> Incessant rain was falling, or the frost
> Raged bitterly, with keen and silent tooth;...
> From under Esthwaite's splitting fields of ice
> The pent-up air, struggling to free itself,
> Gave out to meadow grounds and hills a loud
> Protracted yelling, like the noise of wolves
> Howling in troops along the Bothnic Main.
>
> i.536-43

The introduction of the new metaphor of the 'pent-up air, struggling to free itself' breaks up the original analogy (and contrast at the same time) between the keen and silent tooth of the frost, and the loud wolfish howling of the ice. In the original image the attributes of the fierce animal - the keen tooth and the loud howling - are given to two Natural elements that are very akin if not strictly identical: frost and ice; the frost is raging bitterly, though silently, with a keen tooth, while the ice, its wolfish counterpart, sends dismal yelling among the meadows. In their contrasting conditions of silence and noise, they combine to create an image of animal ferocity that turns the Natural scene into a giant wolf.

In the latter version, the image of the imprisoned air 'struggling to free itself' is not allied to the original metaphors of tooth and wolf - it does not fit into the 'pattern of images', to use C. Day-Lewis's phrase, of the

early lines. The sounds which the poet heard in reality may have indeed belonged to the air coming out from under the ice and not from the splitting ice itself as it sank into the water (although this is difficult to imagine), but truth to life in this as in other images is of course immaterial to poetic effect; the new metaphor may have appealed to the poet because it seemed to represent more cogently, if not accurately, the noise he had heard. Whatever the case, its introduction disrupts the original pattern and cannot be seen as an improvement on it.

Although examples have so far been given from the first six Books of The Prelude, our defined scope of study, others can be given from any other Book which leave no doubt about the similarity of the broad lines of revision throughout the poem. In a study of this nature, a strict limitation of scope can result in false conclusions; and that is why the imagery of the other Books has also been taken into account. It can safely be said that the change in any part of The Prelude is representative of the change in most other parts. But it may still be pertinent to cite one or two instances from, say, Book XI in 1805 (XII in 1850) to illustrate the poet's tendency in the revision to add to his text elaborate metaphors of natural beauty. Consider then how the early correction of

lines 9-13 in the A text, in which animism is clearly implied, is handled in the revision; the early correction reads:

> Ye sunbeams, glancing over the green hills,
> Ye spirits of air, that league your strength to rouze
> The sea whose surface in your gentle mood
> Ye deign to ripple into elfin waves
> Innumerable,...
>
> A.xi.9-20 (de Selincourt, p.430-1)

and the final text, after removing all reference to 'spirits' and modifying the line to 'Ye breezes and soft airs', turns the simple wave-image into the complex:

> Ye waves, that out of the great deep steal forth
> In a calm hour to kiss the pebbly shore,
> Not mute, and then retire, fearing no storm;
>
> xii.21-3

A few lines further, spring is treated as a mother in whose 'love' the poet rejoices, and he is joined in his delight by her other 'children':

> Plants, insects, beasts in fields, and birds in bower.
>
> A.xi.28

In 1850 this line is replaced by the following three which contain a personification hardly to be distinguished from those of the eighteenth-century:

> Piping on boughs, or sporting on fresh fields,
> Or boldly seeking pleasure nearer heaven
> On wings that navigate cerulean skies.
>
> xii.35-7

b)

Added images from orthodox religion

As has been said, the changes introduced in any part of The Prelude are, as a rule, representative of the changes introduced in most other parts. Yet, because of the inconsistency of the revision in rejecting and adding images, and also because of the different subjects with which that poem deals, some of its parts tend to furnish more readily than others examples of a given category of images - rejected or added. As it happens, the images drawn from orthodox religion in the 1850 Prelude are more frequent in the last three Books and are therefore cited in this chapter alongside those from the first six Books.

These added images can easily be classified in two sub-groups: the first draws upon formal aspects of religious practice, that is, acts and places of worship (prayers, churches etc.), and the second deals with the spiritual basis of religion, such as the concept of God as a transcendent reality, man's weakness, and the belief in another world.

Images in the first sub-group are marginal, and hardly affect the central vision. They represent the superficial gloss which de Selincourt identified as 'pietistic embroidery' intended to 'create a familiar atmosphere of edification' and to defend the poet against those who accused him of 'not distinguishing between Nature as the work of God and God himself'(1).

Images in the second sub-group are central to the vision inasmuch as they represent a real departure from the religion of Nature, from the semi-mystical experience of boyhood and youth. As was said in the last chapter, some critics insist that the poet's early religion was in no way incompatible with Christianity, that his mysticism was more proof than disproof of his early Christian faith. Edith Batho points out that Wordsworth's early training was in the tradition of the High Church. To him, she tells us, 'the Bible was more familiar than any other book, and next to it came the Prayer Book and the works of the great Anglican divines which were commonly used for purposes of devotion. He was brought up

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(1) This accusation, made by a Miss Patty Smith who suspected that The Excursion confused the concepts of God and Nature, apparently perturbed the older poet, and necessitated a reply in defence of his faith in a lengthy letter. The Correspondence of Henry Crabb Robinson with the Wordsworth Circle edited by Edith Morley (O.U.P., 1927 i.pp.79-80).

on the Church Catechism, and if, as has been declared, no one who has learnt the Shorter Catechism of the Church of Scotland can ever escape from it, the same is true of the Church Catechism'(1). Miss Batho goes to great lengths in trying to reconcile the poet's panentheism to Christian mysticism; she often quotes Dean Inge (as does Professor Havens) in support of her point(2). Whether this is possible or not, we can safely leave it to theologians to determine(3).

Images of the first sub-group deal mainly with prayers and places of worship; there are, of course, other general references to Christian attributes in traditional personifications, but these are not as numerous. Most memorable perhaps are the following lines:

> How gracious, how benign, is Solitude;
> How potent a mere image of her sway;...
> Votary (in vast cathedral, where no foot
> Is treading, where no other face is seen)
> Kneeling at prayers;
>
> iv.357-8, 362-4

The added image of prayer recalls the change of an image in Book XIII (1805) in which 'love divine' is defined as

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(1) The Later Wordsworth, p242.
(2) Op. Cit., pp.290-1, and Havens, Op. Cit., pp.162, 177, 199.
(3) De Selincourt, Op. Cit., lxix.

proceeding 'from the brooding soul' (with its panentheistic suggestions), in favour of another that makes a direct reference to 'Knees of prayer', and redefines this love as 'Lifted

> on the wings of praise
> Bearing a tribute to the Almighty's Throne.
>
> xiv.186-7

Similarly, instead of the simple 'holy life of music and of verse' in Book II, we have in the final text:

> punctual service high,
> Matins and vespers of harmonious verse!
>
> i.44-5

and instead of the description of Coleridge as 'the most intense of Nature's worshippers', he is now said to have

> full long desired
> To serve in Nature's temple, thou hast been
> The most assiduous of her ministers;
>
> ii.462-4

Temples in themselves are not suggestive of orthodox faith, especially when used in connection with mountains and the landscape. However, the fact that they replace animistic images, and others dealing with Nature's 'overflowing soul' is quite in tune with the later trend in Wordsworth's thought. Instead of the lofty invocation to solitude in the last Book of <u>The Prelude</u> (11. 123-6 in A), with its

animistic undertones, we have in the final text:

> -compassed round by mountain solitudes,
> Within whose solemn temple I received
> My earliest visitations, (1)
>
> xiv.139-141

Sometimes the revision inserts a personification that is quite incompatible with the rest of the images and which could never have been produced in the great decade. As if indeed conscious of this, the poet has carefully, and perhaps also self-consciously, put it between brackets:

> For (not to speak of Reason and her pure
> Reflective acts to fix the moral law
> Deep in the conscience, nor of Christian Hope,
> Bowing her head before her sister Faith
> As one far mightier), hither I had come,
>
> iii.83-7

These Christian images are either inserted without the context needing them or they replace ones which vaguely deal

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(1) In this particular case, however, the revision has not fundamentally altered the image. The modification merely makes the visitation occur in a temple instead of the open air. Many attempts to recast also show this tendency. The following example was never included in the final text:

> the earth...
> will be to him
> A temple - made for reverence and love.
>
> XI57, 59-60, MS. 18a,
> (de Selincourt, p.613)

with holiness or God, as is the case with i.44-5, ii.462-4, and xiv.186-7, all quoted above, and as it is also with the following:

> And now a third small Island where remain'd
> An old stone Table, and a moulder'd Cave,
> A Hermit's history.
>
> A.ii.63-5

which is altered to

> And now a third small Island, where survived
> In solitude the ruins of a shrine
> Once to Our Lady dedicate, and served
> Daily with chaunted rites.
>
> ii.62-5

The removal of the cave, with its 'depth' symbolism, as well as the 'hermit's history', which in effect is the poet's, in favour of the 'shrine' with its 'chaunted rites', is quite in line with the general trend of the revision. References to hermits are, as a rule, removed, and in certain instances, replaced by more orthodox images as in A.i.114-5, A.iii.594, 598-9.

* * * * *

Images in the second sub-group are, as was said, more central to

the vision. In these we first hear in The Prelude of 'fallen mankind' (de Selincourt, p.77), 'penitential tears' (vi.448-56), Christian 'meekness' and 'humble faith' (xiii.28), 'faith' in eternity and God (xiv.284-5), 'belief' in God (vi.132), and the 'Holy writ' (xiv.125). Man in these images is not only weak but a 'poor creature', 'crawling' towards 'death'. The earth is no more the 'paradise', nor Nature indeed the 'ultimate' of the early years. The 'night of death' is now in sight

> let me dare to speak
> A higher language, say that now I felt
> What independent solaces were mine,
> To mitigate the injurious sway of place
> Or circumstance, how far soever changed
> In youth, or to be changed in manhood's prime;
> Or for the few who shall be called to look
> On the long shadows in our evening years,
> Ordained precursors to the night of death.
>
> iii.99-107

It is generally supposed that the drowning of his brother John (6th February 1805) not only dealt a severe blow to Wordsworth's morale but made him, even in spite of himself as Jones suggests(1), contemplate the existence of 'another world' in more or less Christian terms. Indeed, a letter

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(1) John Jones, The Egotistical Sublime, p.52. Jones asserts that Wordsworth does not here embrace Christianity; it is forced on him, he argues, by the exclusion of alternatives.

written immediately after the accident announces his failure to find an answer to the question 'why was he taken away?' or to the seeming contradiction, or 'difference' as he puts it, between divine and human wills, 'except on the supposition of another and a better world'(1) (his italics). Professor Havens notes that the death of his brother is thought to mark the beginning not only of the poet's gradual turning towards 'revealed religion' (the religion of Nature having proved inadequate in the face of death), but also of a transition to the kind of stoicism we read in the Ode to Duty(2). The influence of the sad event has often been traced in the latter poem(3), although there is good reason for ascribing it to September 1804, four months before his brother's death(4). The early revisions of The Prelude provide ample evidence of the effect of the bereavement on the poet's religious thought. Man's independence is no more spoken of, and God's lofty purposes, however inexplicable to man, are vindicated. Thus we have the reminder in the final text:

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(1) Early Letters, (ed. de Selincourt), p.460.
(2) Haven, Op. Cit., p.198.
(3) Herford, C.H. Wordsworth, p.152.
(4) Cf. T.L.S. for May 30, and June 20, 1935. In these two contributions by E.H. Hartsell and Nowell Smith respectively, the probable date of the Ode to Duty is given as above - before and not after John's death. Cf. also Haven's comment on this in Op. Cit.,p.198-9.

Dust as we are, the immortal spirit grows
Like harmony in music;...

i.340-41

which in the early text was:

The mind of man is fram'd even like the breath
And harmony of music,...

A.i.351-2

and for the original 'shadings of mortality' and 'scatterings of childhood' (A.iv.240, 243-4) we have a reminder of death:

Whatever shadings of mortality,
Whatever imports from the world of death...
Were, in the main, ...: strong,
Deep, gloomy were they, and severe; the scatterings
Of awe or tremulous dread,...

iv.248-9, 251-3

The 'upholder of the tranquil soul' of the early version, who was simply a 'Life' secure 'underneath all passion' (A,iii.117-8), is in the final text invested with further qualities. He

tolerates the indignities of Time,
And, from the centre of Eternity
All finite motions overruling, lives
In glory immutable.

iii.121-4

His is

th' invisible eye that still
Is watching over us:

(a variant of V.384-5 in
MS D. de Selincourt p.157)

Never in the early images were place and time described as 'injurious', 'melancholy' or 'doleful'. Yet in the revision such epithets creep in and create a totally different atmosphere. The following image will furnish another example of this. Its proto-image in the 1805 text offers a concept of God in which the mind's power and the life of Nature are included. This is now rejected. Neither man's finite Nature nor the infinity of space and time has a place in the new concept. God here is the Supreme Existence, surpassing everything and superior to all:

> ... from the same source I drew ... a sense
> Of permanent and universal sway,
> And paramount belief; there, recognized
> A type, for finite natures, of the one
> Supreme Existence, the surpassing life
> Which - to the boundaries of space and time,
> Of melancholy space and doleful time,
> Superior, and incapable of change,
> Nor touched by welterings of passion - is,
> And hath the name of, God.

vi.129-39

There are many references to the divine will, not in the vague terms of naturalistic religion, but in explicitly Christian terms. Sometimes this is done by the addition of a mere line, such as the last line in the following image,

> Finally, whate'er
> I saw, or heard, or felt, was but a stream
> That flowed into a kindred stream; a gale,
> Confederate with the current of the soul,

> To speed my voyage; every sound or sight,
> In its degree of power, administered
> To grandeur or to tenderness,...
> Led me to these by paths that, in the main
> Were more circuitous, but not less sure
> Duly to reach the point marked out by Heaven.
>
> vi.742-48, 51-53

or by the addition of personifications and elaborately descriptive passages as is the case of vi.420-489 (1850). References to God in this record of Wordsworth's visit to the Chartreuse, leave no doubt that they are to the Christian Deity. No earlier panentheism could be read into any of the images in that passage, although they show more interest in the supernatural elements of religion than in its formal aspects as in

> ye purging fires,
> Up to the loftiest towers of Pride ascend,
> Fanned by the breath of angry Providence.
>
> vi.445-7

and

> Vallombre's groves
> Entering, we fed the soul with darkness; thence
> Issued, and with uplifted eyes beheld,
> In different quarters of the bending sky,
> The cross of Jesus stand erect, as if
> Hands of angelic powers had fixed it there,
>
> vi.480-485

It is significant that overtly religious lines like the following

be the house redeemed
With its unworldly votaries, for the sake
Of conquest over sense, hourly achieved
Through faith and meditative reason, resting
Upon the word of heaven-imparted truth,
Calmly triumphant;

vi.456-61

should be preceded by the following image which after the initial personification, stresses the distinction between Nature (the portals of the shadowy rocks) and the real temple, where man actually sheds 'penitential tears'.

But Oh! if Past and Future be the wings
On whose support harmoniously conjoined
Moves the great spirit of human knowledge, spare
These courts of mystery, where a step advanced
Between the portals of the shadowy rocks
Leaves far behind life's treacherous vanities,
For penitential tears and trembling hopes
Exchanged - to equalise in God's pure sight
Monarch and peasant:

vi.448-56

Man leaves the world behind, and the world here includes Nature, on entering the Chartreuse. It is therefore remarkable that such distinction could be made, especially as that convent is situated in the heart of the landscape and, to the eye of the early Wordsworth, could not possibly be isolated from it. A remembrance of Tintern Abbey will leave no doubt about the changed eye of the poet.

CHAPTER IV

IV

Childhood Imagery

The theme of childhood is central to The Prelude, and indeed to the whole of Wordsworth; it represents his particular as well as the age's 'new sensibility' (however great the difference between these two may be in reality). Childhood imagery in The Prelude has an added significance for us because of the fundamental changes it undergoes in the final version of that poem, which are for the most part negative, and because of the light this throws on the development of Wordsworth's vision of man and Nature, or, more precisely, the 'man-Nature' theme. An attempt to discuss childhood imagery at some length is therefore justified.

At the outset one is compelled to make the necessary distinction between the image of the Romantic child as it is reflected in the literature of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and the image of the Wordsworthian child that is primarily his own creation and a landmark in the literary history of the period. Before Wordsworth,

by at least a generation, there was what Peter Coveney has called a 'minor tradition' of eighteenth-century verse about children(1). This tradition, however, was so varied in its approach to the child as to represent no coherent literary trend or indicate a change in sensibility. Gray's remembrance of his childhood (in Eton College, for instance) is a common cry over temps perdu; Southey merely expresses a familiar nostalgia for the carefree days of childhood; Lamb longs for the 'old familiar faces' connected with early boyhood, registering the sense of loss he suffers in the recollection of that time rather than the time of childhood itself; and Cowper can barely be said to have started a new trend in recording how even the pains of his childhood had endeared it to him (as he does in The Task, for instance).

On the other hand, there was an incipient and rather inarticulate movement towards connecting the child with Nature in the poetry of Thomson, Bruce, Lovibond, and, more important of course, in Beattie's The Minstrel. The most articulate attitude to children that can be indicative of the 'new sensibility' is that of Blake; indeed, his

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(1) The Image of Childhood, p.52.

celebration of the innocence of children is more a revolt than a contribution to an already active tradition. And he was conscious of this revolt, determined and consistent in his attack upon the mechanical philosophy of the previous century, especially Bacon's 'experimental method', Newton's materialistic physics, and Locke's 'sensationalism'. Children for him represented the original state of innocence, as opposed to the religious concept of original sin, and the innate capacity for 'Imaginative Vision' of which man is capable. He insisted that experience is no enemy of innocence; a child's innocence can and should be carried in man's heart throughout his life, for then it will give significance and spiritual substance to his experience; it will be found that experience only vindicates and develops the original innocence of man.

The spirituality of Blake's children, as well as those of Wordsworth, has often been attributed to a change in the sensibility of the age, to that 'reaction away from the pessimistic concept of human nature propagated by religion through its doctrine of original sin, and by the brutal strictures on human motive contained in Hobbes'(1);

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(1) Op. Cit., pp.41-2.

and this change has in turn been attributed to the influence of Rousseau. The signs can be traced in English literature years before the appearance of Rousseau's Emile, the gospel of the new sensibility, in the verses of Vaughan, and Traherne, in the thought of Shaftsbury and Hutcheson; but Rousseau's work is credited with giving the first 'authoritative expression' to this new sensibility by directing attention with forceful emphasis to childhood as the period of life when man most closely approximated to the 'state of Nature'(1). There can be little doubt about the influence of Rousseau on English thought; Roddier counts as many as 200 treatises revealing that influence which were published in English before the turn of the century(2). Helped by the German Romantic thought (of Schelling, say, and the Schlegel brothers)(3), Rousseau's views must have had a far reaching influence, and probably permeated the very fabric of English culture at that juncture. Professor Willey talks of the needs of that period for new spiritual resources, of a thirst for an approach to reality which is free from the mechanical dryness of the

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(1) Op. Cit., p.42.
(2) H. Roddier, J.J. Rousseau en Angleterre au XVIII^{e} siecle, L'oevre et l'homme. Paris, 1950. (quoted in Ibid. p.46)
(3) I. Babbitt, Rousseau and Romanticism, p.85 et seq.

preceding age, and which would re-instate intuition as an instrument of knowledge(1). Rousseau must have helped to provide such an approach.

The difficulty which we may have to contend with at this point is: if Rousseau had really had the influence on English thought that is generally attributed to him, would it not be natural enough, and indeed very logical, that Wordsworth - whose views on man and Nature betray a great similarity to the French man's views - should have fallen under his spell? This may be so; and yet a thorough reading of the poems of the great decade - where that influence is generally supposed to exist - will not easily confirm this view. One reason may be found in what Coveney has called Wordsworth's attempt to integrate two worlds which were in direct antithesis: that of eighteenth-century rationalism, and that of the nineteenth-century 'emotional anarchy of the romantic subjective "agony"'(2). We hear of an eighteenth-century sense which Wordsworth possessed and which enabled him to maintain an equipoise between the Hartleian concept of the child as a tabula rasa,

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(1) Basil Willey, Nineteenth Century Studies, p.10.
(2) Op. Cit., p.70.

impressed, and only impressed by the informing 'interwining' influences of Nature, and the contemporary image of the child (present in Blake and Coleridge) as a being innately inspired and virtuous(1). W.J.B. Owen has drawn attention to this 'sense'; and Coveney goes a step further in dissociating Wordsworth's child from the 'intuitional transcendentalism' of these two poets, asserting that Wordsworth's is essentially a Hartleian, and probably, for the most part, Lockean concept. Other critics have long descanted on that equipoise in Wordsworth; although to many it seemed a paradox that a major, perhaps also the greatest, romantic poet should possess enough bon sens to control his treatment of a theme so susceptible of emotional vagueness as childhood. But was this bon sens really an eighteenth-century sense of balance and 'reasonableness'? Was it not perhaps a result of the poet's attempt to be as artistically honest and severely truthful to his impressions of childhood as he possibly could? Or was it due to the intrusion of his 'philosophy' on his poetry, the imposition of an interpretation in eighteenth-century terms on the nineteenth-century emotional material?

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(1) W.J.B. Owen, Preface to The Lyrical Ballads, pp.106-7

Obviously, we cannot dwell on these questions in this study as they belong to a wider and more comprehensive inquiry into the workings of Wordsworth's mind. However, to identify the peculiarly Wordsworthian child is to answer, correctly if not fully, these questions. It is surprising that no identification has yet been attempted that would cover all the elements of the poet's concept of childhood and which would at the same time be free from the modern tendency to psycho-analysis. The regular approach is either one that isolates for study a single aspect of the Wordsworthian child, or another that seeks an explanation of some child-images in the 'modern' practice of psychological interpretation(1). The first method is inadequate because it is insufficiently comprehensive, at least inasmuch as the isolation of any poetic aspect involves a falsification of it(2). The other method, though the reasons for its popularity are understandable enough, can hardly be accepted as an objective approach to

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(1) These are rather 'recent' than 'modern' methods; for the 'modernity' of a given approach does not solely indicate its contemporaneity, at least not to Arnold, Renan, Sainte-Beuve or Goethe; 'what all these writers mean by the modern spirit is the positive and critical spirit, the spirit that refuses to take things on authority'. Babbitt, Op. Cit., p.5.

(2) Consider the analysis of the Immortality Ode, or the Lucy poems, in isolation, as representative of Wordsworth's child; more of this, later.

reality: its most apparent flaw is that it colours with its presuppositions whatever results it may achieve. It appeals to our age because it speaks the age's language, and for an explanation to be well received it must restate its material in terms of the current interests and assumptions(1). It is also necessary for an explanation to seem satisfactory that its terms should seem ultimate, incapable of further analysis. Professor Willey observes that if we think that the terms of an existing explanation are not ultimate, we shall be demanding a new one in terms that 'perhaps for the moment do seem to us to be ultimate... Thus, for example, we may choose to accept a psychological explanation of a metaphysical proposition'(2). It all depends on which of the two systems seems to represent to us a truer approach to reality, to meet some need of our nature, the deep-seated demand for assurance.

In the case of Wordsworth, as in all poets, psychological interpretations will be of very little use, if not indeed harmful. They will tinge our approach with their presuppositions, making us search those aspects of the

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(1) Basil Willey, The Seventeenth-Century Background, pp.10-11.
(2) Ibid.

poetry which might provide a confirmation for them, and in many cases we shall think we have found confirmation that is not there. Psychology may profit the study of literature if carefully employed; for, strictly defined, any study of the human mind, its manner of working and production, is a psychological study. The study of the minds of poets and their poetry can be safely called psychological; but the danger of the modern (or modernistic) approaches stems primarily from Freudian psychology which dominates the twentieth century as the associationist psychology of Locke and Hartley had prevailed in the eighteenth. Our generation tends to think about the workings of the mind in terms of Freud, whether or not individuals study Freud directly and seriously(1). We have striking examples of the application of Freudian psychology to Wordsworth's child-imagery in the treatment of the Immortality Ode by Lionel Trilling(2) and Cleanth Brooks(3).

We need not, however, pursue this point any further;

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(1) Owen, Op. Cit., p.106-7
(2) The Liberal Imagination, pp.123-143
(3) The Well Wrought Urn. Cf. also the late classicist F.L. Lucas's The Decline and Fall of the Romantic Ideal in which he embraces the concept of the unconscious in interpreting Romanticism, and apologises for not being able to say the last word in criticism because of deficiency in psychological knowledge.

we have already seen how with the help of psychology modern critics like Meyer, Bateson, Read and Fausset could find nothing in Wordsworth's love of Nature except a negative attachment that provided him with either an escape from the bitterness of a deprived childhood, a maladjustment and emotional immaturity of youth(1), or with a symbolic 'dead' universe which for him could represent his guilty conscience (following his French 'affair'), helping him to relieve his suppressed agony(2). It is enough to remember that such views contribute but little, if anything, to our understanding (not to say enjoyment) of the poetry. At best they can throw light on the man, not the poetry; and if it be argued that because of the autobiographical nature of Wordsworth's poetry we need the man in order to understand the poetry, we can confidently reply that it is not so. The remarkable thing about Wordsworth is that we do not need the guide of psycho-analysis, or even biography, for an understanding of the poetry. 'His singular position', Abercrombie has remarked, 'consists in this, that we have, directly given in his art, the very information about his art which in most

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(1) G.W. Meyer, Wordsworth's Formative Years, pp.4-5.
(2) Cf. Bateson, Op. Cit., p.153 ff., and H. Read's Wordsworth, and The True Voice of Feeling.

poets we can only obtain by inference, and seldom quite reliably'(1). One may expect many objectors to this view, especially as Cleanth Brooks who is a staunch defender of the autonomy, and shall we say, absolute freedom of art from dependence for explanation on life material, has allowed consulting a poet's biography only in the case of Wordsworth(2). But the attempt to do with Wordsworth what we should do with all great poets, namely to study his art without the help of modern psychology, is certainly worthwhile.

This is why we shall be primarily concerned in this chapter with identifying and examining the image of the child as it is reflected in the metaphorical language of the two versions of The Prelude, using a minimum of non-literary sources.

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(1) L. Abercrombie, The Art of Wordsworth, p.37.
(2) Understanding Poetry, pp. 631-682; Cf. particularly footnote to page 642.

Images of childhood in The Prelude can be broadly classified in two groups: the first concerns the metaphor of man as Mother-Nature's child (which was discussed in chapter I of this thesis), and the second those metaphors and similes which in their variety portray the peculiarly Wordsworthian child. Images drawn from diverse sources - plants, nakedness and clothes, darkness and light - combine to give us a glorified child, invested with vast spiritual powers, 'pure' because 'naked' of artificial social attire, 'soul-illumined' by 'visionary gleams', yet at the same time belonging, even physically, in this world. This child almost completely disappears from the final version of that poem.

It is significant that most of the images that make up this child, in The Prelude as well as in the poems of the great decade, were produced during the limited period of the five years 1798-1802, in which the Lyrical Ballads and a large portion of The Prelude were written. Before 1798 we have no trace of this child in Wordsworth's poetry, and after 1802 a completely changed attitude to whatever is connected with childhood in the poet's work. As far as

child-imagery is concerned, the revision was in the main negative: from Books I-VI alone, about fifty-seven images were removed and only three added; whole passages in other Books were rejected (as that long passage which is thought to belong to Book VIII but was never incorporated in the final text)(1); and many variants of the crucial utterances on this theme in the early text were toned down in the 1850 version (as is the case with the variants of ii.244-8, 261, 434-5 in the RV manuscript, and the variants of ii.264-5 in the D text)(2).

During the composition of The Prelude (1805), Wordsworth's attitude to childhood must have undergone a certain change. Many images dealing with central elements in his early conception of the child are found in roughly written drafts of that text, in try-out passages and tentative lines which were never included in either text of The Prelude. There is no doubt that these drafts may reveal to us deeper layers of the poet's experience; indeed, the conception of the child which they reflect is most coherent and completely in line

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(1) De Selincourt, Op. Cit., p.561 et seq.
(2) Cf. also the earliest version of ii.324 - ? which was found in the Alfoxden Notebook, and is presumably an early draft of some lines of The Excursion, I; de Selincourt, Op. Cit., pp.523-4.

with the treatment of childhood in the poems of the great decade(1). These drafts will be useful to us (especially those recorded in MSS RV and Y) because of the light they throw on childhood imagery in the early Prelude(2).

The spiritual position of the child, as it is reflected in the imagery of the original version of The Prelude (as well as the imagery in its early drafts) has two contrasting, yet complementary elements: the first is the child's independence from the world of men or the man-made world, the second his belonging deeply in the universe. His independence is largely due to his 'heaven-born freedom', that is, his freedom from dependence on adults in his recognition of spiritual 'truth'. The poet suggests, in fact, that the child does not even search for 'truth' but that he is possessed of a faculty that enables him to recognise it early in life without either a conscious effort on his part or an added help from the discursive intellect. This faculty is intuition; it is his most

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(1) H. Darbishire, Wordsworth, p.96.
(2) MSS W, X, Y and M have been of much use in this respect. The possible date of the composition of the first three is, according to de Selincourt, February-April 1804. Many of the passages recorded there, however, date back to 1798. In MS M, Books I-V 'must have been written' before March 6th 1804. De Selincourt, Op. Cit., p.xxx.

prominent, most active innate power; it enables him, in his reception, assimilation and response to the impressions of Nature, to hold an unobtrusive communion with the 'Eternal Spirit' that resides in the universe directly and without the interruption of the presuppositions that distort the vision of adults, and therefore to perceive the spiritual realities of existence:

> ... oft the Eternal Spirit, He that has
> His life in unimaginable things,
> And He who painting what he is in all
> The visible imagery of all the world
> Is yet apparent chiefly as the Soul
> Of our first sympathies - O bounteous power,
> In Childhood, in rememberable days
> How often did thy love renew for me
> Those naked feelings which when thou wouldst form
> A living thing, thou sendest like a breeze
> Into his infant being! (1)

Hence the child's vast power:

> our childhood sits,
> Our simple childhood sits upon a throne
> That hath more power than all the elements.
>
> A.v.531-3

This power, Wordsworth suggests, is the possession of every child who is addressed as:

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(1) H. Darbishire, Op. Cit., p.97. This is a variant of A.i.574-6 ? first published by de Selincourt in his 1926 edition of the 1805 Prelude.

Mighty Prophet! Seer blest!
On whom those truths do rest,
Which we are toiling all our lives to find,

'The Immortality Ode'

We need not of course dwell on Coleridge's attack on these lines, as Professor I.A. Richards has made an admirable analysis of (and a reply to) **that** attack(1); but it is important to remember at this point the sense in which Wordsworth used these metaphors in connection with the child. The poet is not indeed attributing any power of 'thought', 'reflection' or 'conscious intuition'(2) to the child; he consistently implies that the child's intuitive power is unconscious and involuntary, however active and penetrative: the child is an 'eye'(3) that 'cannot choose but see'(4); the child pursues his 'self-creative, self-realizing growth... through the most active period of growth '(5) unchecked by the preconceptions of adults, and thus <u>feels</u>, if he does not <u>understand</u>, the realities of existence. For both Coleridge and Wordsworth this power belonged only to the 'best philosopher' **whom** they considered not so much a man well-versed

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(1) <u>Coleridge on Imagination</u>, p.131 et seq.
(2) <u>Biographia Literaria</u>, p.260.
(3) <u>Immortality Ode</u>.
(4) <u>Expostulation and Reply</u>, 1798
(5) <u>Coleridge On Imagination</u>, p.135.

in the traditional systems as one gifted with an insight which is uninhibited by the postulates of the 'meddling intellect'. When Coleridge referred to Wordsworth's proposed poem 'on man, society, and nature' as the first philosophical poem in English, he could not have expected his friend to use the cryptology of the received systems; he knew that Wordsworth was not fit for that task, and must have expected him to express the 'profound truths ... which will stand the severest analysis'(1) as they were spontaneously and poetically intuited. It is significant that Coleridge's views on children, notwithstanding his unrelenting attacks on Wordsworth's 'thoughts and images' of childhood which he considered 'disproportionate' to the subject, were not in fact different from his friend's(2). He, like Wordsworth, saw in the infant's 'silence' a 'holiness' that condemned 'vain philosophy', which Coleridge used in this pejorative sense to indicate dry reasoning of the Spinozistic type(3).

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(1) Biographia Literaria, p.263.
(2) Ibid. p.246.
(3) Cf. the following lines from the Eolian Harp:

> Well hast thou said and holily disprais'd
> These shapings of the unregenrate mind,
> Bubbles that glitter as they rise and break
> On vain Philosophy's aye-babbling spring.

Cf. also Coleridge's To an infant which in one respect at least anticipates Wordsworth's Rainbow.

The six year old child who is addressed as 'best philosopher', far from being 'a highly improbable not to say impossible child'(1), is considered by Wordsworth as capable of seeing what adults cannot see; his vision is not yet obscured by the rationalist arguments or the materialist modes of social life, inasmuch as he is yet free from the grip of the world of 'getting and spending'. He is free from the need to act in a certain manner, or to think or feel in any prescribed social pattern; his sight is not yet inhibited. In this he resembles the artist who is not governed by practical ends in his approach to life, whose vision is solely his own and ideally always fresh(2). In this sense the child is primarily a solitary. This solitariness, however, must be distinguished from isolation in the modern sense of the term in which it could include

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(1) Irving Babbitt, Rousseau and Romanticism, p.195.
(2) A. Symons, The Romantic Movement in English Poetry, p.79. Cf. Coleridge's view of the freshness of the artist's vision as similar to that of the child; (Colier's report of Coleridge's 8th lecture on Shakespeare, 1811-12, in Cleridge's Shakespearean Criticism, ed. Raysor, II, 148-9). Cf. also the modern view of freedom from practical ends in the artist's use of language, which was taught by T.E. Hulme, after Bergson, and which informed the Imagist movement of the early twentieth century (Coffman, Imagism, A Chapter for the History of Modern Poetry, Chapter III.)

an element of social alienation; for the child is not incapable of communication with the world of men, but is in a position where such communication is almost needless. Not that he lacks the ties which make him inveterately belong in humanity; these he possesses in abundance; nor is it because he cannot understand their speech, for speech itself is not needed, and is rendered useless as a means of communication in the case of the child: in his 'silence' resides his power(1). Communication with 'mankind' can indeed affect the child's higher communion with Nature which is basic to the development of his innate powers:

> From mankind,
> Like an earlier monk or priest, as if by birth
> He is sequester'd; to her altar's laws
> Bound by an irrefutable decree;
> No fellow labourer of the brotherhood,
> Single he in state, monarch and king;
>
> MS Y, 202-7, de S.576.

In Nature the child comes nearer to the recognition of his own powers: he feels that his soul is a part of the 'Eternal' or 'Sovereign Spirit', and so claims, even

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(1) Cf. I.A. Richards's argument in Coleridge On Imagination, p.134., also Professor A. King's explanation of child's silence in his Wordsworth and the Artist's vision, pp.129-34.

unconsciously, 'spiritual sovereignty' over the universe:

> Like an Indian, when, in solitude
> And individual glory, he looks out
> From some high eminence upon a tr(act)
> Boundless of unappropriated earth;
> So doth he measure the vast universe,
> His own by right of spiritual sovereignty.
>
> MS Y, 208-13, de S.577

Wordsworth's early interest in druids must have owed much to this child-image. As a young boy, he used to think of himself as

> A youthful Druid taught in shady groves
> Primeval mysteries,...
>
> (variant of A.iii.82 et seq.)

and as a child, the young 'initiate'

> had seen
> Thrice sacred mysteries mid Druid groves
> Or where grey Temples stood on native Hills...
>
> (variant 2 of A.iii.90-3, de S. 75-76)

Indeed, many of the solitary figures in the Wordsworthian landscape are laden with child-symbolism. They are mostly unvitiated souls, voluntarily shunning society, facing and indeed merging with Nature, without the help of social modes of seeing or acting. They are not 'yoked' to the blind machine of city-life, but have in their hearts the very purity and innocence which every child enjoys. This innocence, as Professor Walsh has compendiously put it, belongs

to disposition, to judgment and to action; 'it is both a quality of sensibility and a mode of insight. It includes candour which has not yet come to be acquiescence in the routine corruption of the adult world, single-mindedness untainted by the hypocrisy of conventional valuation, spontaneity undrilled into the stock response, and a virtue of intense, of the fiercest honesty'(1).

It is certainly not without significance that Wordsworth could not find the 'old men who have surviv'd their joy' (A.V.211-13) anywhere except in the country. These people have carried their childhood innocence in their hearts all the way to maturity, have fled the detrimental influences of city life - fatal to the child in their hearts - and so are still capable of communicating directly with 'the world of things'(2) and are thus able to recognise their active participation in the life of the universe. In them, as in the child, 'soul and sense are one'(3); they can, like children, recognise in the 'visible imagery' of Nature the 'invisible' spirit which animates it and consequently, Wordsworth suggests, feel it always alive, always stirring in the depths of their hearts. It is

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(1) William Walsh, The Use of Imagination, p.19.
(2) A. King, Op. Cit., p.145.
(3) H. Darbishire, Op. Cit., p.98.

probable that the spirit of childhood surviving in these 'dwellers in the valley' accounts for much of the poet's interest in them, for the infinite trust he put in their emotions as the most genuine, most representative of the human heart at its purest. Many of these landscape figures are children, most of whom, it is to be noted, are not only born in the landscape but also die there. Some of these countrymen who 'grow beside human door(s)', who 'come to us with some of the immobility of natural objects, set there among rocks and stones ... scarcely less interpenetrated with the unconscious lesson of nature'(1), merge when they die with these very Natural objects, 'with rocks, and stones, and trees'.

Wordsworth's interest or preoccupation with the theme of death-in-Nature is indicated at least by the number of poems dealing with it in the great decade. There are many poems in which dead or dying children figure. Lucy dies in a series of poems: '<u>A slumber did my spirit seal</u>' (1799), '<u>Three years she grew</u>...' (1799), '<u>She dwelt among the untrodden ways</u>' (1799), '<u>Strange fits</u>

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(1) A. Symons, <u>Op. Cit.</u>, p.91.

of passion...' (1798), 'Lucy Gray' (1799), 'I travelled among unknown men' (1801); in other poems we have other dead children: 'We are seven' (1798), 'The Thorn' (1798), 'The Two April Mornings' (1799), 'The Seven Sisters' (1800?), 'Ruth' (1799). In other poems children are either lost in Nature, as in 'The Emigrant Mother' (1802), 'The Sailor's Mother' (1802), 'The Affliction of Margaret' (1801), 'The Forsaken Indian Woman' (1798), or they belong in Nature because fatherless and motherless: 'Her eyes are wild...' (1798), 'Song at the feast of Brougham Castle' (1807), 'The Childless Father' (1800), 'Alice Fell' (1802). Even lambs are portrayed as either dead or orphans, as in 'The pet lamb' (1800), 'The Idle Shepherd Boy' (1800), and in 'The last of the Flock' (1798). In The Prelude we have an outstanding example of his treatment of this theme, the well-known piece 'There was a boy...' which the poet first published in 1800 then thought it highly representative of the incidents which contributed to his making and so incorporated it in the text of The Prelude (A.v.389-422). The boy who could merge with Nature from his early years, whose mind could receive 'unawares' the visible scene,

> With all its solemn imagery, its rocks,
> Its woods, and that uncertain Heaven receiv'd
> Into the bosom of the steady Lake
>
> A.v.411-13

'died in childhood' before he was 'full twelve years old', and so again merged with Nature in a spot 'Pre-eminent in beauty' like the 'vale/ Where he was born and bred'. This child, like the children of the poems of the great decade, is a soul on whom 'immortality broods like the day'; he could not admit the idea of death, nor could ever see it as an end of life; and the poet could have seen in the dead child an instance of the merger of the human, at its purest and 'immortal' stage, with the Natural. He could have used this death-in-Nature theme as a metaphor, though carried to an extreme, for expressing his vision of man's belonging in Nature.

The child's belonging in Nature is in fact forcefully stressed even when his solitariness is most persistently dwelt on. At a certain stage in his development the child feels this belonging, both in humanity and in the universe, though it is doubtful whether he can ever be fully conscious of it in the way an adult can be. Wordsworth suggests that this feeling may begin through 'pure motions of the sense', the reception and response to Natural impressions, which may lead to a realisation by the child that the laws of his physical being bind him intimately to life around him; but this sensuous attachment has 'intellectual' aspects (as was

shown in the discussion of the evolution of the child's imagination, in Chapter I of this thesis), and is bound to disclose to the child his limitless affinities with existence, and his spiritual belonging:

> Soul of things,
> How often did thy love renew for me
> Those hallow'd and pure motions of the sense
> Which seem in their simplicity to own
> An intellectual charm, that calm delight
> Which if I err not surely must belong
> To those first born affinities that fit
> Our new existence to existing things,
> And in our dawn of being constitute
> The bond of union betwixt life and joy(1).

With the realisation of this double belonging, the child achieves a no less important recognition: that the 'universe in which/ He lives is equal to his mind, that each/ Is worthy of the other', and

> Therefore he cleaves
> Exclusively to Nature as in her
> Finding his image, what he has, what lacks,
> His rest and his perfection.
>
> viii.199-202.MS Y, de S.p.576

Man's belonging in Nature, as Wordsworth saw it, could therefore furnish at least one way of explaining the numerous deaths of children in the poetry of the great decade: they are

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(1) H. Darbishire, Op. Cit., p.97. (The same variant of i.575).

like plants in growing out of the earth, but unlike them in never reaching decay, in returning to Nature, as was said, in their 'immortal' age. There are of course other ways of interpreting this phenomenon in Wordsworth's poetry; but it must seem difficult to explain it away merely in psychological terms as an expression of the poet's repressed feeling of guilt, or, perhaps, his unconscious death-wish (Bateson contends that it was his sister, Dorothy, that Wordsworth wished dead)(1), for such explanation would necessarily exclude all other aspects of Wordsworth's poetic vision. The poet could not have produced all his verses for his personal satisfaction, or used his art as an oblique means of relieving his individual pains, however far we stretch the 'egotistical sublime' theory. He had something to say to humanity, and say it he did. The uniqueness of his attitude to the question of belonging - his extreme, uncompromising, (often baffling) utterances on the unity of human and Natural, of sense and soul - could have contributed to the misunderstanding by directing the critics to his biography for an explanation. But it was not with him, Coveney reminds us, 'a romantic assertion that "I felt

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(1) Bateson, Op. Cit., p.153 et seq.

this, and therefore it is significant", but rather "I felt this, and this is its general significance." His concern with his own childhood became the means of establishing general truths about childhood itself, and that, in turn, only for establishing truths about the whole nature of man'(1). As a child, Wordsworth experienced much of what is recorded in The Prelude; but that poem cannot be considered, in the final analysis, as merely a record of his own experiences: it is also a poem which embodies his vision of 'man, nature, and God' during the great period of his career. So, while it is legitimate to relate the utterances on childhood to his own early life, we must not forget that the interest should lie in the poetic vision rather than the biographical reference. His own feelings about the 'mighty unity' of existence, for instance, have contributed to his vision of the development of the child; the personal feelings helped to create an image which can be regarded as independent and impersonal. He tells us that as a child he was thrilled to discover that the life in his body was matched by the life of animals and plants; he joyously trod, nay, 'beat with thundering hoofs' the earth as if in this he

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(1) Coveney, Op. Cit., p.69.

recognised the 'gravitation and filial bond of Nature' which tied him to it. In his daily exploration of his and Nature's life, he was reluctant to admit that there 'were things not as we are'; and when finally he was compelled to admit this, his unifying vision hastened to redress his imaginative imbalance by assuring him that the difference between himself and Natural objects, or at least his consciousness of such difference, was but the 'very littleness of life'; such consciousnesses were

> but accidents
> Relapses from the one interior life
> Which is in all things, from that unity
> In which all beings live with God, are lost
> In god and nature, in one mighty whole
> As undistinguishable as the cloudless east
> At noon is from the cloudless west when all
> The hemisphere is one cerulean blue
>
> MS RV, variant of ii.434-5,
> 11.9-16. de S.p.525

The child's feeling of the unity of existence no doubt originated in the poet's own experience. Wordsworth recounts many incidents of his childhood which testify to this fact, and even praises Coleridge who, the poet had previously believed, partook of his belief in universal unity, for taking him out of the 'abyss of idealism' - the overwhelming feeling of unity - and introducing him, or at least helping him to accept the existence of the world of

men, and perhaps its banalities and quotidian pettiness - its very 'littleness':

> Thy gentle Spirit to my heart of hearts
> Did also find its way; and thus the life
> Of all things and the mighty unity
> In all which we behold, and feel, and are,
> Admitted more habitually a mild
> Interposition,...
> Of man and his concerns,(1)
>
> A.xiii.252-8

But, when we have recognised the origins of these elements in Wordsworth's vision of childhood, when we have traced them in the workings of his mind, the composite image of the child in The Prelude (as well as in poems of 1798-1807), to which all these elements contribute, will have a poetic existence in its own right, even independently of its sources in the poet's personal life. This point will perhaps be better shown in the discussion of Wordsworth's

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(1) In the revision the poet removed all reference to 'unity'. In its place he added 'More rational proportions' and

> mystery,
> The incumbent mystery of sense and soul,
> Of life and death, time and eternity,
>
> XIV.285-8

all of which is obviously in line with his later orthodoxy.

imagery of light, later in this chapter.

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Images from plants in The Prelude reflect three elements of the poet's vision of the human soul in childhood: first, its belonging physically in the universe; second, its continuous growth and self-realizing creativity; third, its freedom, or 'wildness'. It is clearly impossible to deal with these elements separately; we shall therefore discuss the central metaphor in the bulk of plant-imagery with reference to these elements of the poet's vision of childhood.

This central metaphor is that the child, like a plant, grows out of the earth; his soul is fresh, and the experience is 'new' to him(1). Although a 'new' life, the child is not (even as a plant) strictly a stranger in existence: his soul is but a part of the 'universal soul' of 'all the worlds', old and new, the 'Eternal Spirit' which cannot be conceived in terms of time. In its 'new' form the child's soul, the

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(1) Variant of ii.264-5; de Selincourt, pp.56-7, MS D.

new seed sown in the earth, cannot be seen as strictly separated from the eternal spirit, its 'home'; it is not 'abandon'd' by that spirit(1), and still belongs to it, even now it belongs so deeply in the earth. Wordsworth's vision of the immortality of the human soul drives him repeatedly to the Platonic idea of previous existence, once expressed in the 'Immortality Ode', and later rejected (in the Fenwick note on the Ode) as too shadowy to be recommended to faith(2). Early readings of many lines in The Prelude betray the fascination of that idea for the young poet; indeed some existing images in the 1805 text express the same idea, even while maintaining the seed-metaphor of the child's soul:

> O Heaven! how awful is the might of Souls,
> And what they do within themselves, while yet
> ... the world (is)
> Nothing but a wild field where they were sown.
>
> A.iii.178-81

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(1) Variant of ii.261, MS RV.
(2) Cf. the following image which survived the revision of The Prelude and still stands, albeit with a minor alteration, in the final version:

> It might demand a more impassion'd strain
> To tell of later pleasures, link'd to these,
> A tract of the same isthmus which we cross
> In progress from our native continent
> To earth and human life:...
>
> A.V.558-62

The apparent paradox of multiple belonging, spatially as well as temporally - which, in the light of Wordsworth's panentheism, is no paradox at all - enriched his use of plant-imagery; the contrasting aspects of plant-life appealed to his imagination (rather than his eye) mainly, perhaps, because of their very 'contrarieties'; and it was not merely with poetic wonder that he approached them. Plants have roots in the earth, they grow out of it and assume a fixed, stationary position in the universe; and yet they are free in their obvious self-sufficiency, their harmony with the elements, and their self-realising growth; they are silent (like children) but seem to harbour inscrutable secrets of existence; and though they die, though many are short-lived (as the children in the landscape), they represent in their perpetual change the ideal of permanence: the life-renewing principle. In his treatment of the human-plant metaphor, Wordsworth does not follow a definite line or confine himself to a single aspect of the metaphor: he transfers some qualities of plant life to man, other human qualities to plants, delighting in the seminal principles of life in both, rather than in the pictorial aspects of either. For, if man belongs in the earth as a plant, it was the poet's creed that each flower 'enjoyed' the air it breathed; if he

used to look on men in the landscape as trees walking, he frequently saw trees in Nature as men standing(1). And it is this quality about Wordsworth's approach to this theme that gives it imaginative fecundity. Consider how plants in the following image, the children, are endowed with all what they, as plants, can never have, physical movement and noisiness:

> We were a noisy crew, the sun in heaven
> Beheld not vales more beautiful than ours,
> Nor saw a race in happiness and joy
> More worthy of the ground where they were sown(2).
>
> A.i.505-8

The same impulse makes Wordsworth attribute to the seeds that are sown a freedom, a will to choose where they are reared. They are said to be 'wild', the field where they are sown is likewise 'wild' - which must have seemed to Wordsworth to represent the ideal of freedom a seed **can enjoy.** In the following image the seeds, the children, choose to attach themselves to 'aged trees', to 'the grave Elders':

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(1) Cf. W. Raleigh, Wordsworth, Chapter IV.
(2) In 1850, the last line is replaced by:

> Richer, or worthier of the ground they trod.
>
> i.482

> the ring
> Of the grave Elders, Men unscour'd, grotesque
> In character; trick'd out like aged trees
> Which, through the lapse of their infirmity,
> Give ready place to any random seed
> That chuses to be rear'd upon their trunks.
>
> A.iii.573-8

His portraiture of certain trees in The Prelude and the Lyrical Ballads is quite indicative of his metaphoric vision of human and plant life. The distinctively Wordsworthian tree is always singled out for such portraiture, 'of many, one', deliberately described in accurate detail, like most of his landscape figures. It is almost a solitary, for we hardly feel the society of trees about it, and it is standing there in self-sufficiency and pride as only a soul of 'resolution and independence' can stand. Such trees are generally imbued with symbolic significance which usually bears on human life connected with them, which can be seen if we compare the great tree of his Cambridge days with the one he describes in 'The Thorn' and relates to Martha Ray's life. When at Cambridge, the poet's sight was full of this tree; he renders as accurate a description of it as can be found anywhere in his poetry, but the symbolic undertones of the tree are unmistakable:

> A single Tree...
> With sinuous trunk, boughs exquisitely wreath'd;
> Up from the ground and almost to the top
> The trunk and master branches everywhere
> Were green with ivy; and the lightsome twigs
> And outer spray profusely tipp'd with seeds
> That hung in yellow tassels and festoons,
> Moving or still, a Favourite trimm'd out
> By Winter for himself, as if in pride,
> And with outlandish grace.
>
> A.vi.90-100

This tree is obviously related to the poet's vision of Cambridge, when he saw the university's young life as

> A congregation, in its budding-time
>
> A.iii.222

and felt them to be

> ... the growth
> Of life's sweet season,...
> That miscellaneous garland of wild flowers
> Upon the matron temples of a Place
> So famous through the world...
>
> A.iii.224-8

Wordsworth's life in those days, despite what he came to say about it later, was an uninterrupted concert whose dominant strain was growth; the single tree provided him with an unequivocal symbol of his life then. The creeping ivy, like the seeds that rear themselves on the trunks of aged trees (A.iii.573-8) do not stifle the life of the tree; they add life to it. How different is this from the image of the creeping mosses on the 'poor Thorn' -

Martha Ray's counterpart!

> Up from the earth these mosses creep
> And this poor Thorn they clasp it round
> So close, you'd say they are bent
> With plain and manifest intent
> To drag it to the ground;
> And all have joined in one endeavour
> To bury this poor Thorn for ever.
>
> 'The Thorn' (1798)

The symbolism in most images of trees in his early poetry, which are mostly 'sunken' or unobtrusive, derives also from Wordsworth's habit of combining literal with figurative meanings of certain verbs like 'plant' and 'transplant', 'ripen' and 'wither' (A.vi.292-6). It is sometimes difficult to extricate the figurative implications from many literal descriptions for separate analysis; the compound of figurative and literal often seems so perfect as to defy the breaking up - especially where Wordsworth uses a verb once in the one, once in the other meaning. Such is the case, for instance, with the famous lines:

> Fair seed-time had my soul, and I grew up
> Foster'd alike by beauty and by fear;
> Much favor'd in my birthplace, and no less
> In that beloved Vale to which, erelong,
> I was transplanted.
>
> A.i.305-9

Freedom is 'planted' in him 'from the very first', (A.vi.44), and when he recalls the days of his intense poetic experience

but does not find Coleridge with him, he chooses to 'plant' him there! (A.vi.246-8). 'Power' was 'sown' in him early in life (A.v.195), and certain 'habits' were likewise 'sown' 'even as seed(s)' (A.ii.212). It is as if his 'seed-time' was not only the time of implanting qualities in him, but the time when he himself, as a child, was a seed which is 'sown' and 'grown' and 'transplanted'.

The growth of the seeds into full-blown plants, or into budding flowers, appealed to Wordsworth's sense of change-in-time, or 'mutability'. He was so preoccupied with the theme of growth (which is indeed the central theme in The Prelude), that he needed to reassure himself that there are certain objects which do not change, or rather, should not look changed to us when we are past childhood. His delight in 'the faces of the changing year' was balanced by his fear of mutability. The rainbow aroused his sense of wonder in childhood (A. MS Y. 29, de S.572); and now he is a man he still remembers, if not actually re-lives that wonder. When he realised that the change was inevitable, that it was his eye that changed, he was genuinely perturbed and seemed at a loss how to redress this 'growth'. Many of the poems of the Lyrical Ballads strike this note effectively.

In The Prelude the images of the huge cliffs, the 'untransmuted shapes of many worlds' owe part of their significance to their permanence, their non-growth. When he returned home from Cambridge during the summer holidays, he was 'surprised' at the change of the 'prospect', in spite of the relatively short interval, as if the human scene suddenly bloomed into vernal freshness:

> The prospect often touch'd me with surprize,
> Crowded and full, and chang'd, as seem'd to me,
> Even as a garden in the heat of Spring,
> After an eight-days' absence.
>
> A.iv.184-187

He was as sensitive to the change as is 'sodden clay, on a sea River's bed at the ebb of tide'. The pale-faced babes in arms that he had left in leaving home had become 'rosy prattlers, tottering up and down':

> And growing Girls whose beauty, filch'd away
> With all its pleasant promises, was gone
> To deck some slighted Playmates homely cheek.
>
> A.iv.197-9

Wordsworth's delight in growth, as has been said, was always tinged with fear of the inevitable consequence of growth: decay. The non-growing objects may seem dead: but they are permanent; they represent timelessness of another quality, not the life-renewing but the life-giving, as the earth and the sea, or the life-attending presence, as the

mountains and immutable rocks in the landscape. Non-growing objects represented a different order of being, and as such helped to balance the imaginative identification of child and plant; they assured the poet that the modes of changing life which he could understand were not the only 'modes of beings': others existed which were inexplicable - or 'unknown' - to him.

The existence of both the changing and the unchanging in the poetry - the 'violet' by the 'stone' - can also be seen as a result of the poet's imaginative balance of the transitory and the permanent. It has been remarked that Wordsworth's nature imagery lacks organization, that it is almost unplanned, as if seen through an eye swiftly travelling between objects but is casual in its choice(1). To explain this, it was suggested that Wordsworth had two conflicting poetic 'voices', the one matter-of-fact and literal, the other figurative and profound(2), and that while the one produced accurate description and dwelt on the minutest detail (even to the point of absurdity), the other stopped at no particular and penetrated to the essential, yet general,

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(1) Cf. Wimsatt's 'The Structure of Romantic Nature Imagery', in English Romantic Poets, pp.25-35.
(2) Bateson, Op. Cit., Chapter I.

élan vital. This is plausible enough, of course, but it does not fully explain the balance in the poetry between plant-life and the stones on the way-side or the 'grim shapes' of crags at the horizon. The central metaphor of the child as a growing seed, of the human soul as a growing plant, may provide another angle of seeing this balance of animate and inanimate in the imagery. The poet's early attachment to Nature made him feel that he was a part of it(1), that vegetal growth was so intimately related to his own that it was seen as an internal force - a power of heart and mind. In rocks and heights, on the other hand, the appeal was not so much internal; Wordsworth could not as easily achieve an imaginative identification with these 'awful presences'; indeed, their awe-inspiring shapes and 'incumbent mystery' were the powers which primarily appealed to his mind. They were never accepted as elements of his inner consciousness, and when they intruded on his mind, they 'were the trouble of (his) dreams' - they even banished the 'images of trees' and 'green fields' (A.i.423 FF.). His experiences in Nature which brought him nearer to the recognition of the 'awful power' were always dominated by

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(1) A. King, Op. Cit., p.60.

these 'huge and mighty' objects: his travel was 'halted' as if thwarted by an external force which was basically unfamiliar to his mind(1), and which required an effort of the will before it was admitted to his consciousness.

It is therefore possible that Wordsworth's imaginative balance of these two categories of Natural objects - the growing, changing, decaying and the fixed, immutable, permanent - may account not only for the lack of the 'picturesque'(2) element in his poetry, but also for the puzzling phenomenon of its lack of organization. The deceptive simplicity of his verse has prevented many readers from recognizing his basic metaphors: his Nature poetry is not a painting of the shapes and the colours but a process of exploring their relationships both within themselves and with man(3). And if the internal symbols - plant-life - seem sometimes to be casually mixed with the external ones - the 'Black drizzling crags' - it will be because inner and outer were but features of the same face,

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(1) G. Hartman, Wordsworth's Poetry 1798-1814, pp.33 et seq.
(2) Cf. Bateson's argument to the contrary in Op. Cit., p.56.
(3) Havens, Op. Cit., pp.96-100.

The types and symbols of Eternity,
Of first and last, and midst, and without end.

A.vi.571-2

* * *

b)

Images of nakedness and clothes

Images of nakedness and clothes in The Prelude 1805 contribute to the complementary views of the child in that poem both as a 'pure' soul basically independent in his 'heaven-born freedom', and as an active participant in the life of the universe, deeply belonging in it. In all these images there is an essential metaphor (though used with variation) of the child's naked belonging to life: he is naked of social attire and in fact need no such attire, but is clothed in the 'garb of human life' or 'nature's outward coat'. This garb which assures the child of his belonging in humanity, Wordsworth asserts, is more than the 'fleshly robe' which all men wear; it also stands for the occurrences of everyday life, the simple acts of men in domestic or family life. In fact the only direct use of the metaphor of the 'robes of flesh and blood' in The Prelude is found in both versions of that poem, and appears to be casual:

> ... Tremblings of the heart
> It gives, to think that the immortal being
> No more shall need such garments;...
>
> A.v.21-3(v.22-4 in 1850)

For the garments, with which the spiritual essence of anything is clad, are not confined to those of flesh and blood: the material building of a church, its man-made structure, is also a garb that envelops its 'ghostliness' - its spiritual essence:

> -'Stay your impious hands,'
> Such was the vain injunction of that hour
> By Nature uttered from her Alpine Throne,
> 'Oh leave in quiet this transcendent frame
> Of social Being, this embodied dream
> This substance by which mortal men have clothed,
> Humanly clothed, the ghostliness of things
> In silence visible and perpetual calm...
>
> A2.vi.23-30, de S.198

In an early sonnet, '<u>Brook! whose society</u>...', which was composed in 1806 though not published until 1815, the clothing of the spirit is also material but is neither man-made nor fleshly:

> It seems the Eternal Soul is clothed in thee
> With purer robes than those of flesh and blood,
> And hath bestow'd on thee a safer good;
> Unwearied joy, and life without its cares.

The garb of belonging indicates a participation in the simple, 'common' and basic human acts of daily life. These 'common' aspects of life may indeed seem inferior to

the lofty quest for spiritual realities which is the prerogative of 'higher minds' only, even in later life:

> ... surely, ... no vulgar power
> Was working in us, nothing less, in truth,
> Than that most noble attribute of man,...
> That wish for something loftier, more adorn'd,
> Than is the common aspect, daily garb
> Of human life.
>
> A.v.595-601

For this garb is by definition a 'changing' aspect; it is subject to changes in environment, to the 'play of time and circumstance':

> I had made a change
> In climate; and my nature's outward coat
> Changed also, slowly and insensibly.
>
> A.iii.207-9

But to recognize the existence of this 'common' garb is to experience the sensation, dear to Wordsworth, of being a part of a mighty unity, the unity of humanity, whatever the distance - temporal or spatial - that separates a man from other men: this was precisely what the poet felt when he saw for the first time the room where Newton had lived during his Cambridge days. The gap of time which separated them was immediately bridged, and the young poet felt so close to the great spirit who had been to him an abstraction; he began to see Newton as simply a man like himself, wearing the 'daily garb' of everyday life, and the revelation made the

moment memorable:

> Even the great Newton's own etherial Self,
> Seem'd humbled in these precincts; thence to be
> The more belov'd; invested here with tasks
> Of life's plain business, as a daily garb;
>
> A.iii.270-3

Wordsworth insists, however, that this garb must always be plain and 'common', that is, it must not thicken and become rich in colour and tissue - an 'arras woven in silk and gold' - for then its character will change, and it will turn into a barrier between the growing child and men. At no time must it be allowed to be thicker than a veil which can be put aside in moments of spiritual communion:

> Gently did my soul
> Put off her veil, and, self-transmuted, stood
> Naked as in the presence of her God.
>
> A.iv.140-2

If the growing child's involvement in the world of men exceeds a certain limit, if his interests exclusively lie in 'acting' his social part, in fitting 'his tongue/ To dialogues of business, love, or strife', this garb will be transformed into a dress enjoyed in itself, and will bar any communion, at any deeper level, with the life of man or Nature. What is worse, perhaps, it may make the child conscious of his

social position; he would then tend to mistake his belonging to consist in the accidental rather than the essential, in the artificial rather than the real:

> The surfaces of artificial life
> And manners finely spun, the delicate race
> Of colours, lurking, gleaming up and down
> Through that state arras woven with silk and gold;
> This wily interchange of snaky hues,
> Willingly and unwillingly reveal'd
> I had not learn'd to watch, and at this time
> Perhaps, had such been in my daily sight
> I might have been indifferent thereto
> As Hermits are to tales of distant things.
>
> A.iii.590-9

The metaphor of the social garb is reflected in the poet's attitude to actual clothes; he describes how uneasy he was when he became conscious of his 'garments' and the adverse effect he thought they had on his feeling of belonging: they directed his attention to himself:

> The very garments that I wore appear'd
> To prey upon my strength, and stopp'd the course
> And quiet stream of self-forgetfulness.
>
> A.iv.292-4

When he returned to his town for the summer vacation, the same feeling irritated him; he felt that his clothes separated the child William he had been from the now 'proud' student in artificial 'habiliments':

Among my Schoolfellows I scatter'd round
A salutation that was more constrain'd,
Though earnest, doubtless with a little pride,
But with more shame, for my habiliments,
The transformation, and the gay attire.

A.iv.63-7

* * * * *

In The Prelude the image of the 'naked child' is explicitly connected with that of the 'naked savage' (A.i.291-304). Unlike Shakespeare's image of the 'naked babe' (which is opposed to the adult's garb of maturity or 'cloak of manliness')(1), Wordsworth's image of nakedness does not exclude the elements of maturity altogether, or merely indicate simplicity and naivete; neither is it meant, in fact, to indicate only the freshness of the 'new-minted' life of the child, as has been suggested(2). In the poetry of the great decade, the nakedness of children has a distinct metaphorical implication of boldly facing the world without any social garments or masks.

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(1) C. Brooks, The Well Wrought Urn, Chapter I.
(2) A. King, Op. Cit., p.128.

Garments seem to be imaginatively equated with the social guises needed for 'acting' the play of life, which is clearly suggested by the poet in his description of the way in which the child is taught, in the process of growing up, to assume different roles, or masks:

> The little Actor cons another part;
> Filling from time to time his 'humorous stage'
> With all the Persons, down to palsied Age,
> That life brings with her in her equipage;
> As if his whole vocation
> Were endless imitation.
>
> 'Immortality Ode'

Nakedness, in the sense of wearing no masks, was considered by Wordsworth as the privilege of the child, who certainly lives his real self, trusting in Nature's powers and needing to hide nothing. According to Professor Willey, both W.H. Hudson and Wordsworth believed that the child shares a faith in Nature with the primitive man, a sense 'of something in Nature which to the enlightened or civilized man is not there, and in the civilized man's child ... is but a faint survival of a phase of the primitive mind'(1). This faith is clearly reflected in Wordsworth's

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(1) B. Willey, The Eighteenth Century Background, pp.261-2

images of 'savages' or 'wild' men who people the remote lands in his poems. Though these are not literally naked as are infants, their bold feelings, severe honesty, little concealed and barely controlled thoughts indicate a metaphorical nakedness of their souls; such qualitities constitute the essence of Wordsworthian freedom or 'wildness'.

'Wildness' is perhaps the closest equivalent in Wordsworth's vocabulary to nakedness. It has been suggested that in the Romantic vocabulary generally, especially that of Wordsworth and Keats, the meaning of 'wild' is often extended to imply a sense of the grand, unconfined and awe-inspiring; but this does not seem to apply to Wordsworth's distinctive use of the term(1). In the Lyrical Ballads, children living 'in the strength of Nature' are wild; when the mother in 'The Forsaken Indian Woman', to give a well-known example, remembers how her child 'stretched his arms, how wild!', the 'strength of Nature' is immediately suggested:

> Through his whole body something ran
> A most strange working did I see;

The mere fact that it is a child often means that he is wild

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(1) T. Balslev, Keats and Wordsworth, p.13.

(cf. 'Characteristics of a Child Three Years Old'); the following lines from 'To H.C. Six Years Old' may clearly demonstrate this:

> O THOU! Whose fancies from afar are brought;
> Who of thy words dost make a mock apparel,
> And fittest to unutterable thought
> The breeze-like motion and self-born carol;
> Thou faery voyager! that dost float
> In such clear water, that thy boat
> May rather seem
> To brood on air than on an earthly stream;
> O blessed vision! happy child!
> Thou art so exquisitely wild,
> I think of thee with many fears
> For what may be thy lot in future years.
>
> 1-14 (1802, published 1807)

Other uses of 'wild' can of course be found that are more or less orthodox; but even these are combined with adjectives suggesting the usual Wordsworthian sense, such as 'casual', 'truant', 'unruly' and 'vagrant'(1).

In The Prelude there is a key passage in which the poet sees himself, while sporting in Nature without any clothes on, as a 'naked savage' who 'spreads' his 'being' in a manner that makes him merge in the Natural scene. This passage contains an essential element of the child-image of the great decade: breathing 'the air/ That

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(1) A.iii.524-30

sanctifies its confines', and partaking 'of that celestial light/ To all the little ones.../ Not unvouchsafed'(1). This light which seems to radiate from the soul of the child as much as it clothes it is perhaps connected with nakedness; for social veils are not transparent, and their presence must affect the vision of the child:

> Oh! many a time have I, a five years Child,
> A naked Boy, in one delightful Rill,
> A little Mill-race sever'd from his stream,
> Made one long bathing of a summer's day,
> Bask'd in the sun, and plunged, and basked again
> Alternate all a summer's day, or cours'd
> Over the sandy fields, leaping through groves
> Of yellow grunsel, or when crag and hill,
> The woods, and distant Skiddaw's lofty height,
> Were bronz'd with a deep radiance, stood alone
> Beneath the sky, as if I had been born
> On Indian Plains, and from my Mother's hut
> Had run abroad in wantonness, to sport,
> A naked Savage, in the thunder shower.
>
> A.i.291-304

Vitality and animal joy, which are expressed in the free movements of the child, have attracted attention more than the nakedness or the light. Indeed, critics have found in passages like this one enough proof that Wordsworth was a 'naturalist'(2), or that he held a 'sensationist philosophy'(3); and a modern critic has chosen to call

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(1) 'Maternal Grief' (1810?)
(2) A. Beatty, Op. Cit., p.108 ff.
(3) Rader, Op. Cit., pp.151-9.

boyhood in Wordsworth 'the stage of sensation' which is characterised by 'glad animal movement' quoting this very passage as evidence(1). However, the scene of the naked child, at large in the sun, amid Nature's 'lofty heights', seems to acquire a special significance inasmuch as it represents an image of 'primeval purity' so favourite with Wordsworth. An added significance comes from the particular use of light as symbolic of 'celestial attendance' on the child, or simply 'light divine'(2). The child, whilst naked, is here clothed with it; he requires no other garments. Any worldly clothing may indeed shut it out.

* * *

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(1) Rader, Op. Cit., pp.85-8. Rader comments that as the child advances, his body seeks expression in 'glad animal movements' and his senses expand with a fresh vitality. 'Nothing clouds those early sensations, because perception is unrigidified by the 'frost' of 'custom', and the mind interposes no haze of abstraction between itself and its objects. Typical is the account of the boy William as a 'naked savage', swimming in a side-channel of the River Derwent' (p.88). Rader realises, however, that the 'objects of sense were clothed with a strange radiance because sensations were informed by the "immortal mind"'. (my italics) Elsewhere in his book, Rader stresses the transcendental quality of these early sense-experiences; this point will be taken up with greater detail in the next portion of this chapter.

(2) A.v.625-9.

c)

Images of light and darkness

Images of light illustrate, and indeed emphasize, the identity of the light-within and the light-without the child. It is only in the 'dawn of life' that the light of Nature is accompanied by 'soul-illuminating gleams'; the child's intuitive vision is neither dimmed by social masks nor obstructed by the veils of analytical reason and is, therefore, as receptive of Natural light as it is radiant in itself; the child's mind is also a giver of light:

> ... An auxiliar light
> Came from my mind which on the setting sun
> Bestow'd new splendor,...
>
> A.ii.387-9

The whole period of infancy is seen by the poet as 'bathing' in light; when he remembers his early years, it is lit with celestial light:

> Those recollected hours that have the charm
> Of visionary things,...
> And almost make our Infancy itself
> A visible scene, on which the sun is shining.
>
> A.i.659-663

And this light, the images suggest, belongs to the mind as it belongs to Nature; when the grown up fails to see it, it is because it no longer 'lives' in his mind, and when he does, it is because it has survived his change:

> Four years and thirty, told this very week,
> Have I been now a sojourner on earth,
> And yet the morning gladness is not gone
> Which then was in my mind.
>
> A.vi.61-4

The interdependence of the light-within and the light-without is stressed throughout The Prelude. In the presence of the former, the latter acquires 'new splendour' (A.ii.389), and in the presence of Natural light the child, even from babyhood, enjoys the experience of inner light:

> There doth our life begin; how long it is,
> To pass things nearer by, ere the delight
> Abate or with less eagerness return
> With flashes from the eyes of babes in arms
> When they have caught, held up for that intent,
> A prospect of the Moon,...
>
> MS Y, 6-11, de S.571

The growing boy also knows this delight:

> There would he stand
> In the still covert of some (lonesome?) rock
> Would gaze upon the moon until its light
> Fell like a strain of music on his soul
> And seem'd to sink into his very heart.
>
> (first draft of A.ii.324-9)(1)

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(1) The lines occur in the Alfoxden Notebook and are thus among the very first drafts of The Prelude to be written. The passage is one of 'fragments of passages in The Excursion, Bk.I. De Selincourt, -.523.

Nature's 'visitation' to man is expressed in images of light; 'she' opens the clouds and, as 'with the touch of lightning', inspires him from 'his earliest dawn of infancy' with her power (A.i.362-7). When at 'the first hour of morning' the light seemed only half-earthly, the poet was entranced and the moment was 'holy'; the visible scene appeared 'a prospect in (his) mind' (A.ii.359-71).

That Nature's light should have this symbolic significance may be shown strikingly in a single poem - the 'Immortality Ode' - which was contemplated and partly written during the composition of the first five books of The Prelude. The central paradox in the 'Ode', which is based on the discrepancy between internal and external light, that is, the light of Nature failing to illumine the mind of the young man or simply ceasing to be the 'visionary gleam' which it was, seems to be a direct consequence of Wordsworth's contemplation of the child-image in The Prelude, 1805. He often qualifies the light which the child sees, in this poem as is the Ode,

as 'visionary', and sometimes applies more definite adjectives to it than the equivocal 'celestial', calling it 'light divine' and 'glory'. Such epithets suggest that the light in the soul of the child as well as in Nature cannot be either wholly subjective or strictly objective; it must radiate from an ultimate source, from an 'invisible' source higher than both man and Nature, however 'interfused' in their life. And this can be easily explained with reference to the poet's panentheism: the light must emanate from 'nature's self', or God - a vision which is expressed with great subtlety, as in:

> when the light of sense
> Goes out in flashes that have shewn to us
> The invisible world, doth Greatness make abode,
>
> A.vi.534-6

> Even forms and substances are circumfus'd
> By that transparent veil with light divine;
> And...
> Present themselves as objects recognis'd,
> In flashes, and with a glory scarce their own.
>
> A.v.625-9

Wordsworth prefers to describe the vision of this light as occurring in 'flashes'. One wonders why, even in childhood, light does not flow incessantly or clothe the world all the time. It is possible that the vision is only intermittent and short-lived, that the spirit cannot grasp the divine light except in moments of intense feeling. This is quite

likely especially as the poet links, sometimes equates, poetic with religious inspiration:

> ... to the open fields I told
> A prophecy: poetic numbers came
> Spontaneously, and cloth'd in priestly robe
> My spirit, thus singled out, as it might seem,
> For holy services:...

A.i.59-63

He describes his poetic dedication in terms of light, and the moment of that dedication was certainly endued with a spiritual quality rare in depth and significance. Harassed by the 'toil of verse', he felt that

> gleams of light
> Flash often from the East, then disappear
> And mock me with a sky that ripens not
> Into a steady morning:

A.i.134-7

Or, when in his boyish sports he was overcome with a genuine moment of inspiration, the poet could not identify with any certainty the quality of the light - though he never doubted its significance for him:

> Thus, often in those fits of vulgar joy
> Which through all seasons, on a child's pursuits
> Are prompt attendants, 'mid that giddy bliss
> Which, like a tempest, works along the blood
> And is forgotten; even then I felt
> Gleams like the flashing of a shield; the earth
> And common face of Nature spake to me
> Rememberable things;

A.i.609-16

Throughout the great decade, particularly during the composition of The Prelude, light imagery continued to convey this symbolic significance; the part it plays in that poem, as has been said, is similar to its function in the 'Immortality Ode'. Miss Darbishire remarks that the imagery of light presides over the whole Ode, that it is inseparable from its main theme (which is the child's vision of the immortality of the human spirit), that it is 'so much one with it that it may be said to be the theme as truly as the underlying thought'(1). In fact other poems which were produced later than 1807 also maintain this light-symbolism; and it is doubtful whether Wordsworth abandoned the imaginative equivalency of the 'sensuous and spiritual visions' at any period of his life. But though its symbolism continued, light-imagery seemed to have undergone considerable change both during and after the great decade; it will be useful to examine, even briefly, this development.

First let us consider the chronology of the composition of The Prelude and some other poems of the great decade. From the evidence furnished mainly by de Selincourt, we learn that a long interval interrupted the writing of The Prelude(2);

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(1) H. Darbishire, Op. Cit., p.67.
(2) Op. Cit., pp.lii-liii

in this interval several poems were produced which seem to have been closely related to it, like sparks to the parent fire, though not strictly dealing with its main theme; among these are 'To The Cuckoo', 'My heart leaps up...', and the 'Immortality Ode'. During March 1802, and, significantly, on consecutive days (23rd-27th) Wordsworth wrote and revised the first two, and completed four stanzas of the latter(1). One of the prominent themes in these poems - the memory of childhood enabling the growing man to see the 'visionary' light which is becoming more and more difficult to behold - derives from the main element in the image of the child in the first five Books of The Prelude, his supreme spirituality or capacity for seeing the 'visionary' light. The Ode, 'so far as it was carried at that time, ended with the fourth stanza; and was not completed in its entirety until 1806'(2). But, so far as it was a complete piece in 1802, it ended with lines 56-7:

> Whither is fled the visionary gleam?
> Where is it now, the glory and the dream?

The notion in the following stanza, which came only four years later, that this light, innate in the child's soul, originally comes 'from afar', borne in the heart of the child

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(1) The Journals of Dorothy Wordsworth, ed. H. Darbishire,
(2) Garrod, Op. Cit., p.113.

who arrives in this world 'trailing clouds of glory' - this notion was not excogitated (or borrowed from Plato) as an independent answer to the questions in stanza IV of the Ode; it was the direct consequence of working out the basic elements of the child-image in The Prelude. In his auto-biographical poem, Wordsworth had to fall back on his inspired moments of childhood; he was deeply dismayed to discover that some of those moments cannot be retrieved: the correspondence of the light-within and the light-without was not always possible. Can his alarm at the discovery not account, even partly, for the very attempt to record his early experiences whose spiritual quality first assured him of his poetic capacity and encouraged him to take up that career? To investigate and record seems to have been a method of obtaining reassurance; and he certainly needed this before embarking on his proposed great 'philosophical' poem. He knew during that difficult time that what came to the child easily and without 'seeking', could not as easily come to the man; to recapture the 'fugitive' light depended now on a willed and intensive effort of memory. Memory seems to have been charged with the task of restoring the earlier vision; through conscious and prolonged reminiscence he hoped to regain the lost light, but

this was not always possible. In the voice of the cuckoo and in the rainbow he could, even momentarily, re-live the visionary hours of his boyhood; but his recurrent recourse to memory for such 'celestial light' was not rewarding in the same way, although it made him tackle a very important problem in all literature, namely the 'relationship of the subject and Time' rather than the 'relationship of subject and object'(1).

Wordsworth must have realized that the light of childhood was, whatever his efforts, irretrievable before he went back to the 'Immortality Ode', as can be seen in the following passage from The Prelude (written just before stanzas V-VII of the Ode):

> I am lost, but see
> In simple childhood something of the base
> On which they greatness stands, but this I feel,
> That from thyself it is that thou must give,
> Else never canst receive. The days gone by
> Come back upon me from the dawn almost
> Of life: the hiding-places of my power
> Seem open: I approach, and then they close;
> I see by glimpses now; when age comes on,
> May scarcely see at all,...
>
> A.xi.330-9

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(1) C. Salvesen, The Landscape of Memory, pp.35-6.

As Wordsworth went back to the Ode, the conflict in him seems to have been resolved; not that he despaired of having glimpses of his earlier vision, but he was generally more inclined to accept the fact that he had changed, that human nature is bounteous and could compensate for the loss of that light by the ever-living joys of the human heart, and the philosophic mind.

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The early implication that Nature's light is also God's takes a more orthodox turn in Wordsworth's later poetry, which is quite in line with the general trend in the imagery of his later work and the revised version of The Prelude. The change in light-symbolism, however, must not be interpreted as part of the poet's deliberate attempt to suggest a belief in orthodox religion - as is the case with the religious images added in the 1850 Prelude - or be attributed to the diminishing of his 'organic sensibility' with the approach of middle age(1).

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(1) J. Smith, A Study of Wordsworth, p.48.

Many critics maintain that the light which Wordsworth says illumined his vision in childhood was mainly due to the lively sensuous experiences of his early years, that for him 'the truth of things (came) in flashes, in gleams of sense-perceptions'(1), and that, consequently, it was only natural that he should cease to see the light - the flashes - when his 'organic sensibility' weakened.

From the images, however, it is clear that the light of the poet's childhood is not just that of sense; sometimes it may be quite the reverse. Wordsworth in fact uses light in two metaphorical senses. The first pertains to the freshness and special character of the child's vision, the second to the spirituality of the child's 'Being' - and in this sense it is almost wholly supra-sensuous. Although it is difficult to draw a definite line of demarcation between the two uses of light in the imagery, the distinction between them is important. For the poet who deplored in his youth the loss of the light of childhood was mainly complaining about the loss of the vision of childhood which he could now regain only on rare occasions; but when in maturity he became certain that such childhood vision was irretrievable,

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(1) Garrod, Op. Cit., pp.117-18.

he still found ways of beholding the light - the spiritual - 'through intense experience of heart and mind'(1). This later light could not have been different from the one which showed him the 'invisible world' in childhood and illumined the innermost regions of his soul, but, coming through conscious meditation and deliberate 'seeking', it began to have different appellations, and to be conceived as more or less equivalent to the traditional, even archetypal, light of God.

It is interesting that the poet did not easily admit that he had lost the 'splendid vision' of childhood; he may have realized that he lost it early enough, as the lines in the 'Immortality Ode' clearly indicate, but he often resorted to willed acts of memory in his continual attempts to relive his inspired moments. This may account for the fact that, in the early revisions of The Prelude, images of light were left without modification, that it was not until his second major revision of the poem in 1832 that the character of light began to suffer a change. It may still be in order to illustrate this from the poem written as late as 1818 which reiterates the basic idea in the 'Immortality Ode', and, in the sense that it expresses the poet's ability

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(1) H. Darbishire, Op. Cit., p.67.

to have a 'glimpse of glory' which he was wont to have in childhood, is perhaps a sequel to the earlier poem, if not strictly a reply to it. In Ode Composed upon an Evening of Extraordinary Splendour and Beauty, the sight of the landscape itself does not bring back the light, yet by an act of sheer will power, the poet succeeds in merging past and present(1) - the memory of past splendour not just relived but actually fused in the moment of present inspiration:

> Such hues from their celestial urn
> Were wont to stream before my eye,
> Where'er it wandered in the morn
> Of blissful infancy.
> This glimpse of glory, why renewed?
> Nay, rather speak with gratitude;
> For if a vestige of those gleams
> Survived, 'twas only in my dreams.
> Dread power, whom peace and calmness serve
> No less than Nature's threatening voice,
> From THEE if I would swerve;
> O, let thy grace remind me of the light
> Full early lost, and fruitlessly deplored;
> Which at this moment on my waking sight
> Appears to shine, by miracle restored;
> My soul, though yet confined to earth,
> Rejoices in a second birth!
> 'Tis past, the visionary splendour fades;
> And night approaches with her shades.(2)
>
> 61-80

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(1) Salvesen, Op. Cit., p.5.
(2) From the note affixed to this poem, it appears that the poet was in fact conscious of the connections between the experience recorded here and the loss of the 'visionary gleam' which was deplored, though 'not fruitlessly' in the 'Immortality Ode' (Garrod, Op. Cit., p.121); Wordsworth's note says: 'Allusions to the Ode entitled 'Intimations of Immortality' pervade the last stanza of the foregoing poem' (Wordsworth's Poetical Works, ed. T. Hutchinson, revised by de Selincourt, p.360).

It is necessary to remember that this ode was written in 1818 after Wordsworth's religion had taken a more orthodox colouring; the date is significant because it reveals to us that the central image in the 'Immortality Ode' - Nature appearing to the child in a robe of 'celestial light' - survived the initial change in the poet's religious beliefs, and that even as late as 1818, when The Excursion had long been published, light was still imaginatively equated with the child's visionary power. The radical change in the poet's use of light-symbolism, however, did not occur until several years later, when he was well past his sixtieth year. Then he was engaged more energetically than before in revising his autobiographical poem - which he now accepted as an independent poem , and not as the introductory piece to his proposed major work, 'the antechapel to the Gothic Cathedral' - rejecting the early phrases which savoured strongly of panentheism in favour of others that told of his religious change, and, in the same spirit, removing or modifying many of the early light-of-the-mind images as, for instance, A.vi.534-6, the first draft of A.ii.423-9, A.vi.61-4, 11.6-11 in MS Y, or the draft of A.i.643-4 in MS E. For him, at this time, light became less symbolic of the child's vision, and began to be used more often to symbolise the heavenly powers, that is, to become explicitly God's light; it now neither wholly belongs

to the mind nor to Nature: it is also God's.

This later development is shown in a group of poems written at the time of his second important revision of The Prelude and entitled Evening Voluntaries(1). In some of them light, especially that of the moon, is given an explicit religious quality which is a reflection of the general mood of these poems. In the fourth poem we hear of 'grace divine'; in the twelfth the moon is hailed as 'the Sailor's Friend' and then addressed:

> So call thee for heaven's grace through thee made known
> By confidence supplied and mercy shown,
> When not a twinkling star or beacon's light
> Abates the perils of a stormy night;
>
> 13-16

while in XIII, the poet asks the moon, which is the 'Glory of night', to tell people

> ...how the voiceless heaven declare
> God's glory;
>
> 42-3

This use of the moon as conveying 'God's glory', and

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(1) According to H. Darbishire, (Op. Cit., p.120) 'the most important revisions were made in 1820, 1832 and 1839'. These poems were mostly produced during the years 1832-35. The last two were written as late as 1846.

as sharing in 'that blest charge', cannot be traced in either the early poetry or The Prelude 1805. It has been suggested that Wordsworth always had the same feeling about the moon, stars and all heavenly lights, but that as a young man he simply did not give his feeling such an explicit significance. However, a review of his use of light in the great decade, nay, in the output of just the two years 1798-99, will reveal to us a variety of symbolic uses of the moon. It is impossible to discuss these fully or even enumerate them in this context, yet it is instructive to note some of these main symbolic uses: a) the moon may overtly stand for the heavenly presence attending on man's soul, as in 'Peter Bell' (written in 1798, published in 1819), or indeed in 'Tintern Abbey', 1798 (Therefore let the moon/ Shine on thee in thy solitary walk); b) it may symbolise the human spirit itself - to heaven ascending when the moon is descending - as in 'Strange fits of Passion...' (1799) or in 'Lucy Gray' (1799); c) it may act as a detached heavenly presence, barely involved in the human situation, though seeming to control it from afar, as in 'The Idiot Boy' (1798). A wider variety of symbolic uses can perhaps be traced in Wordsworth's images of the stars and the sun, which are distinctively his own, and which can be better understood

if placed beside Shelley's imagery of the celestial phenomena which fascinated him or even Keat's early images of the moon and stars (although Keats is 'predominantly a poet of the earth')(1). Both Shelley and Keats conform more easily than Wordsworth to the world of 'romantic twilight' of which Wimsatt speaks(2), the world of subdued lights that reflect faint, delicate and wistful passions - not to say 'mawkishness'(3). But, in spite of its characteristic spirit and peculiar suggestiveness, the imagery of celestial lights in both poets of the second Romantic generation will be found to have much in common with the 'consecrated images' of heavenly bodies that are traditionally used by all poets at all times(4), whilst sharing very little with Wordsworth's images. Indeed, we can hardly trace a single use of the moon, the glorified Cynthia in Keat's Endymion, as symbolic of the communion of the human soul with higher reality or, which is more distinctively Wordsworthian,

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(1) Pettet, Keats, Chapter I.
(2) Wimsatt, 'The structure of Romantic Nature Imagery' in English Romantic Poets.
(3) Keat's Preface to Endymion. Cf. Professor Walsh's discussion of this quality in 'John Keats', in From Blake to Byron, ed. B. Ford, p.227.
(4) C. Day Lewis, The Poetic Image, Chapter I; Cf. also R. Wellek's notes on 'general and private symbolism' in Theory of Literature Chapter XV.

the presence of such higher reality itself in the mind of man(1).

The contrasting images of light and dark landscapes, rather than twilight ones, are used in Wordsworth to represent two states of the human spirit: the inspired and the dull, respectively. A recent Wordsworthian scholar has made a study of the light landscape, rightly interpreting it as that of 'life and love'; we therefore need not discuss this here(2). In The Prelude, however, the impression one gets is always of a light landscape. In this The Prelude represents a further stage of the poet's development, especially when we put it side by side with the earlier poems and juvenilia in which the dark landscape prevailed (particularly in The Vale of Esthwaite, Guilt and Sorrow, and The Borderers).(3). This was perhaps partly due to the poet's early love of themes which inspired Gothic fear; but was it not also due to eighteenth-century influences?(4).

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(1) Cf. R.H. Fogle, The Imagery of Keats and Shelley, and also T. Balslev, Wordsworth and Keats.
(2) F. Marsh, Wordsworth's Imagery, p.28.
(3) Cf. E. Welsford's Salisbury Plain. The book, throughout, is a discussion of the function of light and darkness in the earlier poems.
(4) An Evening Walk and Descriptive Sketches are notable exceptions.

In The Prelude, the child's experiences in the landscape are dominated by light symbolism: it is either the sun shining and making visible the spirit of Nature(1), or the moon, representing the 'soul-illuminating' gleams which are sent from mysterious heavenly sources to 'soothe and delight'(2). The dark landscape seems to have disappeared completely by the time Wordsworth started The Prelude; in it we can hardly trace a single moonless night. Not that in real life Wordsworth did not delight in them; but his object in recalling the 'reminiscences of his early life' was mainly to remind himself of his inspired moments, of 'all that Nature had done for him in his childhood'(3); hence the light in which they 'bathe'.

In reviewing the light and dark landscapes, Dr. Marsh comments that 'the scenes from the first book of The Prelude in which Wordsworth describes his early awakening to the "sense/ of unknown modes of being" in the universe' belong to the dark landscape(4); but this, obviously, is not so.

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(1) Cf. particularly: A.i.605-8, A.i.291-304, A.iv.152-61, A.iv.327-45, A.i.76-87, A.i.333-5, A.v.510, A.i.363-67, A.i.505-8, A.vi.210-4, A.v.583-4, A.ii.183 et seq.
(2) Cf. especially: A.ii.190-202, A.ii.138-144, A.i.383-4, A.i.392-4, A.i.318-22, A.i.596-601, A.iv.452-3, A.iv.370-99, and A.iv.76-83.
(3) H. Darbishire, Op. Cit., pp.87-8
(4) F. Marsh, Op. Cit., p.35.

Dr. Marsh's argument is based on the assumption that the determining factor in the experiences, (the incident of the stolen boat is picked out for illustration), is fear - hence darkness. The basic flaw in this argument is due to the fact that it does not take into account the early version of the incident of the stolen boat which we must consider more truthful than the revised one in points of detail. The scene in the 1805 Prelude opens with lines which, though they strike the keynote of the whole experience, are omitted from the final version:

> The moon was up, the Lake was shining clear
> Among the hoary mountains;
>
> A.i.383-4

As the boat 'moved on', it left

> ... behind her still on either side
> Small circles glittering idly in the moon,
> Until they melted all into one track
> Of sparkling light.
>
> A.i.391-4

The boy was conscious of the light, of the far stars above the horizon; and his sense of being led by Nature was deep and assuring. We must remember that the whole incident of the stolen boat is recorded in The Prelude to illustrate Nature's 'visitation' to man, or, more precisely, to a 'favor'd being'. In this incident she is employing

'Severer interventions, ministry/ More palpable' than her usual approach; she is soon to shut her lights from the boy, as if she has taken 'on herself the guardianship of the moral law'(1). Indeed, the vision of light is blocked by the uncouth shape of the crag; the boy cannot see the stars now; and his consciousness is immediately directed to the moral aspect of his deed. He is left to his guilt, to darkness; he is deserted by light; and afterwards, for days

> ... in my thoughts
> There was a darkness, call it solitude,
> Or blank desertion,...
>
> A.i.420-22

It is therefore more reasonable to suppose that it was the contrast of light and darkness, and not darkness alone, that determined the character of the boy's experience. Other incidents from Wordsworth's childhood further illustrate this; the passage in which he describes snaring the woodcocks has also the key words:

> ...; moon and stars
> Were shining o'er my head;...
>
> A.i.321-2

In the intermediate manuscripts produced during the many revisions of The Prelude, the incident is always related

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(1) Sir Herbert Grierson, Milton and Wordsworth, Cambridge 1937, p.167 n.

with the moon as an integral part of the experience; indeed, in MS D2 we have this variant of 11.i.309-10 (in 1850):

> 'twas my joy
> When the full moon shone brightly, to go forth
> With store of springes o'er my shoulder hung.
>
> (de S.p20)

The landscape, thus drenched with moonlight, cannot represent the dark face of Nature; the light which the child felt to flow about him was not decorative, or intended for picturesque effects; it made him certain of the celestial powers attending on him, and ministering to his own powers.

CHAPTER V

V

Imagery of Movement and Stillness

a)

movement as reflected in the style of The Prelude 1805-50

The study of images of movement and stillness necessarily raises the question whether it is possible to abstract the quality of movement from moving objects and treat it as the content, or subject-matter of the images. So far it has been possible to group the images dealing with a major theme under a heading indicating it, childhood for instance, and at the same time to classify them in sub-groups denoting the particular aspects of the theme they metaphorically handle - the child's spiritual power as reflected in images of 'holiness' (monks, priests, sovereigns, etc.), the child's belonging as conveyed in images of plants, and so on. The two or more terms of a given simile or metaphor have thus appeared to be properly related to each other, as in classifying an image comparing children to seeds under both headings of 'child' and 'plants'. In all image-classification and analysis, care has been taken to keep Wordsworth's poetic vision full in view, so that the images would be significant

not only in themselves, but also according as they build up, or partly contribute to a major poetic trend, that is to say according as they fit in a wider framework of reference.

The images discussed in the previous chapters seem to have yielded themselves with relative ease to this method of classification. But the present image super-structure has been based on some of the dominant, or central strains of the poet's thought in the first six books of The Prelude; perhaps another super-structure can be attempted which may have a more comprehensive base. Seen in a wider perspective the images of The Prelude may offer other valuable information about the workings of Wordsworth's mind.

However, as with the imagery of all great poets, Wordsworth's images have many levels of relationship, even when they are most simple and direct; it is true they form a part of a living whole and are often deeply absorbed into the fabric of his poem, but to relate them only to the major theme they deal with is not to make them offer all they can; they may be seen from different angles, and thus be re-classified according to other principles of relationship, though these will naturally be subsidiary, or at least minor - hence the attempt in this chapter to examine the part played

by movement and stillness in the imagery of the early and later versions of The Prelude and to discuss the development in this particular aspect of the images regardless of their individual subject-matter. The attempt, of course, is not without its dangers; for if an image comparing the soul with a stream for ever flowing with 'soft inland murmur' has anything to connect it with another in which the human mind is seen as 'for ever/ Voyaging through strange seas of Thought, alone', the relation will not be so much in the fact that they both deal with movement, as in the way human powers are related to the universe through this free and continuous movement. There is indeed little to connect the image of the stream with that of the sea voyage; the former is based on a conception of man's soul as a part of Nature, springing from the earth, flowing over and into it, with free and easy power, yet always belonging in it. In the latter, the human mind, powerful as it is, is seen as essentially solitary; it is for ever trying to explore the universe which is 'strange', alien to it, and which can be fatal. Though they both deal with movement, the two images reveal two different poetic visions; their common element is of so little relevance as to be almost insignificant.

Notwithstanding these dangers (which beset the isolation of any poetic element for a separate study) it has been felt that a study of movement and stillness in Wordsworth's imagery is justifiable on many grounds: as conditions of both man and Nature, motion and stillness have a special appeal to Wordsworth's poetic sense which is perhaps reminiscent only of Shakespeare's; certain animate and inanimate objects appear in the poetry as predominantly in movement, while others are mainly seen as stationary; the alternate use of the same object once as in motion, once as still, greatly influences its symbolic implications, if not also its very character; and the combination in the same image of both moving and still objects makes it produce a different effect from that of images dealing exclusively with either. Moreover, certain images in the 1805 Prelude deal with potential, or momentarily arrested motion and seem to express the strictly Wordsworthian vision of Nature's inner power, the potential movements of all 'that seemeth still'. Images of man's movement in Nature, of Nature's imaginative movement towards him, of animals and birds which are hardly ever portrayed as in movement - all these reveal the particular part assigned to movement in Wordsworth, the examining of which has seemed worthwhile.

In comparing the images of movement and stillness in the two versions of The Prelude, one is perhaps first struck by the great number of images of movement removed from the 1805 version; and yet there is another aspect of the revision which makes itself felt even as immediately as this removal: the free, brisk and rambling movement of the style in that early text becomes regular, slower, and almost measured in the final. A number of factors account for the free rhythm of the 1805 text: repetition, which is intrinsically a ballad device, short sentences with brisk cadences, and quick-shifting ideas. A few examples from, say, Book I of The Prelude will help us to realize this. In the opening lines of that Book in MS A, the poet builds up two simple, interrelated images: the breeze which blows from fields, clouds and the sky is emblematic of the living soul of Nature; it is free, seems to be half conscious of the joy it gives the poet, as if Nature itself is welcoming him; and the poet welcomes this Messenger of Nature, greets it, seeing in its liberty an assurance that he himself has been liberated from the 'prison' of the city. These images are conveyed in two sentences, the first of which is composed of two parts separated by a colon, though weaker than the fullstop, and each of these parts is composed of two or more phrases

or clauses connected with the conjunction and:

> OH there is blessing in this gentle breeze
> That blows from the green fields and from the
> clouds
> And from the sky: it beats against my cheek,
> And seems half conscious of the joy it gives.

A.i.1-4

In the revised version the poet fuses the two parts of this sentence together, replacing the 'co-ordinating conjunction' by a 'subordinating' one(1), while, which indeed subordinates the first clause describing the action of the breeze to the second about its consciousness of the joy it brings to the poet:

> O THERE is blessing in this gentle breeze,
> A visitant that while it fans my cheek
> Doth seem half-conscious of the joy it brings
> From the green fields, and from yon azure sky.

i.1-4

The poet is more concerned here with improving the general sentence-structure, with achieving a balance between the parts of the long sentence reminiscent of the eighteenth-century manner. For this purpose he inserts adjectives here and there ('green fields' is balanced by 'azure sky', and the breeze is now a 'visitant'), and checks the celerity of the breeze by changing 'it beats against my cheek' to

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(1) Dr. Arthur Waldthorn, English, p.41-2

'it fans my cheek'; and next he omits from the early text the apostrophe:

> O welcome Messenger! O welcome Friend!

and modifies the following effusion:

> A captive greets thee, coming from a house
> Of bondage, from yon City's walls set free,
> A prison where he hath been long immured.
>
> A.i.6-8

to make it read:

> Whate'er its mission, the soft breeze can come
> To none more grateful than to me; escaped
> From the vast city, where I long had pined
> A discontented sojourner:...
>
> i.5-8

These changes have obvious effects: they suppress the spontaneous burst of feeling, the expression of relief at liberation from the 'prison' of the city - an image which is almost lost in the final version; and they place the breeze at some distance from the poet by making the lines report its work instead of directly addressing it. Further cuts in the original lines, however, were still to be made; for the complex sentence of 1850, in its regularity and symmetry, cannot absorb the repetitive words which make the early lines appear but loosely knit, such as:

... from yon City's walls set free...
Now I am free, enfranchis'd and at large,

A.i.7-9

The second line in the following was likewise omitted:

...: it is shaken off,
As if by miraculous gift 'tis shaken off,
That burthen of my own unnatural self,

A.i.21-3

Or consider the omission of the repeated verbs of movement in the following:

Scudding away from snare to snare, I plied
My anxious visitation, hurrying on,
Still hurrying, hurrying, onwards; moon and stars
Were shining o'er my head;...

A.i.319-22

to make the lines read:

Scudding away from snare to snare, I plied
That anxious visitation; - moon and stars
Were shining o'er my head.

i.313-15

Such and similar early readings - in their scurrying yet easy movement - are not only due to the poet's habit of composing aloud in the open air(1), little correcting

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(1) 'Nine-tenths of my verses', Wordsworth calculated towards the end of his life, 'have been murmured out in the open air'. (Fenwick note on the second 'Ode to Lycoris'; cf. Bateson's comment on this in his Wordsworth, pp.53-4).

what he thus composes, as he often enough avers(1) (which may be more distinctively Romantic)(2), but they can also be attributed to his early manner of writing, clearly exhibited by his poems of 1798-1807. This manner had not yet died when he started his early revisions of The Prelude - hence the prevalence of the sentence-structure characteristic of the 1805 version of that poem in most drafts of the early revisions; consider, for instance, the attempt to recast A.i.29-32:

> Whither shall we turn
> Ye aery Spirits that attend my steps,...
> Whither shall we turn
> By road? or pathway? or through open field?
> Yon upland shall we cross, or shall this wild
> And wandering Rivulet point me out my course?
>
> MS A2, de S.p.4

Wordsworth's early manner also favoured the use of swift ballad similes; for the poet then had no relish for complex, far-fetched or extended metaphors, encountered very often in his later verse(3). In his ballad period, Miss Darbishire tells us, he preferred short similes which had

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(1) Cf. the poet's notes on many of his poems, e.g. note on 'The Idiot Boy', and on the preamble of The Prelude.
(2) F.L. Lucas, The Decline and Fall of the Romantic Ideal, p.45.
(3) Cf. for instance, 'If thou indeed derive thy light...', printed after the title-page in the 1845 edition of Wordsworth's Collected Works, which is one extended image of light.

their origins in proverbial phrases of the people; these fell in completely with his idea at the time of the form poetic imagery should take(1). The early version of The Prelude is as a rule free from complex metaphors which in the later text frequently interrupt the narrative; and it is no coincidence that many of the removed images from the 1805 text belong to the ballad-type simile of the great decade(2).

A further factor which contributes to the easy flowing movement of the early Prelude is the poet's consciousness that his poem is addressed, not only dedicated to Coleridge; and this gives it a conversational air that saves it from a common poetic device, frequently used in Wordsworth's later verse, namely, the inversion of normal word order(3). 'The natural prose or conversational order of words', Dr. J.S. Lyon tells us, 'was no longer a fetish with Wordsworth by the time of

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(1) H. Darbishire, Wordsworth, p.51 Cf. the following ballad similes:

> And still the centre of his cheek
> Is red as a ripe cherry. (Simon Lee)
> His cheeks were red as ruddy clover;
> (Goody Blake and Harry Gill)
> for the creature
> Was beautiful to see - a weed of glorious feature.
> (Beggars)

(2) Cf. A.iv.301-4, A.iii.524-30, A.v.325-7, and A.v.324-5.
(3) Cf. de Selincourt's comment on other stylistic changes which are due to the change of audience, Op. Cit., p.lxii.

The Excursion, for there is hardly a line in the poem which does not show at least one inversion of normal word order, and often the inverted order is used where the normal order would be a metrical equivalent, so that the inversion is not required by the metre'(1). When such inversion occurs in conversation it gives the speech a distinctly non-conversational tone(2). It is fortunate, perhaps, that the changes introduced in The Prelude have been relatively limited in scope, since most of them betray the older poet's fondness of inversion (though the use of this device in this poem is not as awkward as it is in The Excursion). Examples from, say, Book III of The Prelude may help to illustrate this; consider the modification of the early lines:

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(1) J.S. Lyon, The Excursion, p.131.
(2) Cf. for instance:

> - He replied, "Not loth
> To linger I would here with you partake,
> Not one hour merely, but till evening's close,
> The simple pastimes of the day and place.
>
> The Excursion, ii.140-3

or

> "Me", said I, "most doth it surprise, to find
> Such book in such a place!" -
>
> The Excursion, ii.457-8

> Wonder not
> If such my transports were; for in all things
> I saw one life, and felt that it was joy.
>
> A.ii.428-30

to make them read:

> Wonder not
> If high the transport, great the joy I felt,
> Communing in this sort through earth and heaven
> With every form of creature, as it looked
> Towards the Uncreated with a countenance
> Of adoration, with an eye of love.
>
> ii.409-14

or the change of 'Thou art no slave/ Of that false secondary power' (A.ii.220-1) into 'No officious slave/ Art thou of that false secondary power' (ii.215-16); or the similar change in A.ii.104-14 (ii.98-107 in 1850), in A.ii.85-91 (ii.84-88), and in A.ii.36-41 (ii.36-40). Even a simple question like the following has not survived the revision without a similar change:

> And is there one, the wisest and the best
> Of all mankind, who does not sometimes wish
> For things that cannot be...?
>
> A.ii.22-4

For this is how it stands in the 1850 Prelude:

> One is there, though the wisest and the best
> Of all mankind, who covets not at times
> Union that cannot be...?
>
> ii.22-4

Many inversions of this kind, however, are caused by the desire of the older poet to insert religious images in his text whilst preserving the main structure of his narrative; this desire in fact accounts for many involved, or at least interrupted sentences in the later text. As with the previously cited ii.409-14, the poet altered the following lines:

> I look'd for universal things; perused
> The common countenance of earth and heaven;
>
> A.iii.110-11

making them read:

> I looked for universal things; perused
> The common countenance of earth and sky:
> Earth, nowhere unembellished by some trace
> Of that first Paradise whence man was driven;
> And sky, whose beauty and bounty are expressed
> By the proud name she bears - the name of Heaven.
>
> iii.109-14

The added lines here obviously contribute nothing of interest to the narrative, either in biographical detail or in poetic impression; they are added in the same spirit that dictated many of the added religious images (discussed in Chapter III of this thesis) and which brought about the notable change in A.iii.81-4 (corresponding to lines iii. 82-9 in 1850).

These changes have resulted, as was said, in a general slowing down of the narrative's movement, for the newly added

images and philosophic musings interrupt the course of its progress by diverting attention from the incidents illustrating the 'growth a poet's mind' to themselves - some of which are ideas that never passed through that mind in its early years. Professor de Selincourt remarks that in the revised Prelude the poet's 'lines drag their slow length along whilst he labours to express in exact intellectual terms a philosphical position which, when all is said, is more truly a faith than a philosophy'(1). Indeed, the meditative quality which has come to permeate many passages which were mainly narrative or descriptive in the early version of the poem must be also responsible for the slow movement of the narrative in the final text. At times the poet stops the narrative altogether and adds new lines, hoping to give a new significance to an already interpreted incident of his youth; and the reader of the posthumous Prelude is therefore asked to stop until the early and later interpretations of the incidents are reconciled. A good example of this is the introduction to the account of Wordsworth's meeting with the discharged soldier at the end of Book IV. The poet introduces this incident in the 1805 version merely by explaining that it

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(1) Op. Cit., p.lix.

has been a 'favourite pleasure' of his from the time of earliest youth to walk 'alone/ Along the public way' by night (A.iv.363-6), whilst in the 1850 version he adds a long introductory passage, rich in imagery, on solitude - that 'great Power' which 'is met/ Sometimes embodied on a public road'. This passage begins with the lines:

> When from our better selves we have too long
> Been parted by the hurrying world, and droop,
> Sick of its business, of its pleasures tired,
> How gracious, how benign, is Solitude;
> How potent a mere image of her sway;
> Most potent when impressed upon the mind
> With an appropriate human centre - hermit,
> Deep in the bosom of the wilderness;
> Votary (in vast cathedral, where no foot
> Is treading, where no other face is seen)
> Kneeling at prayers; or watchman on the top
> Of lighthouse, beaten by Atlantic waves;
>
> iv.354-65

By this the poet is obviously asking us to interpret the image of the discharged soldier as one of the 'great Power' of solitude, of independence and self-sufficiency (admirably done in 'Resolution and Independence'). The whole introduction is certainly intended to endow with such significance this 'poor friendless' victim of war; but it does not succeed in this; the discharged soldier, in spite of all the poet's labours, is not turned into a leech-gatherer. In fact, the mere effort of the poet to prevent him from 'lingering in the public ways' defeats the purpose of the introduction;

it is true that the poor man refuses to take this advice and may perhaps be out again in the 'wilderness' begging for help but his initial acceptance of 'charity', of food and shelter 'beneath' a human 'roof', mars the image of solitude he is intended to suggest.

In sharp contrast with the added images, the single image in the 1805 Prelude functions primarily as an organising element in the poem, as a means of expressing an idea rather than a consequence of contemplating it. This applies in fact to most image-groups, not only to those of movement and stillness; yet a few examples of these may help to illustrate the effect of the changed function of the single image on the style of that poem. Consider the removal of the following image:

> Such feelings pass into his torpid life
> Like an awakening breeze,...
>
> A.ii.244-5

or the following:

> ... I was hurried forward by a stream
> And could not stop.
>
> A.v.183-4

Neither image is ornamental; both serve to convey particular ideas and are at the same time related to Wordsworth's symbolic use of the two natural elements, air and water, elsewhere in his

poetry. The first image is thus both a vehicle for the poet's idea of the way in which the mother's feelings awaken the dormant mental faculties of the child, and an image of the revitalizing power of the breeze that contributes to the poet's general vision of breeze and breathing (cf. Chapter III of this thesis). The same can be said of the second image which both expresses an independent idea and contributes to the poet's vision of the human soul as a stream, as a hurrying river which 'soon will reach/ The unfathomable gulf, where all is still'(1); 'such stream', Wordsworth says, 'Is human life'(2), and the dark mountain-springs which give it birth resemble the inscrutable origins of human life:

> The mountain infant to the sun comes forth
> Like human life from darkness...(3)

The removal of such functional images from the 1805 Prelude, as well as the addition of other complex images which, even when of movement, are too elaborate to be absorbed in the text(4), have also contributed to the slowing down of the narrative's movement - an aspect of the poet's later career

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(1) The Excursion, III. 990-1.
(2) Ibid. III. 986-7.
(3) Ibid. III. 34-5.
(4) Cf.v. 1-3.

which he had anticipated early enough (1804)(1) and expressed it in another stream-image:

> And that unruly child of mountain birth,
> The froward Brook, which soon as he was box'd
> Within our Garden, found himself at once,
> As if by trick insidious and unkind,
> Stripp'd of his voice, and left to dimple down
> Without an effort and without a will,
> A channel paved by the hand of man.
> I look'd at him, and smil'd, and smil'd again,
> And in the press of twenty thousand thoughts,
> 'Ha', quoth I, 'pretty Prisoner, are you there!'
> And now, reviewing soberly that hour,
> I marvel that a fancy did not flash
> Upon me, and a strong desire, straitway,
> At sight of such an emblem that shew'd forth
> So aptly my late course of even days
> And all their smooth enthralment, to pen down
> A satire on myself. ...
>
> A.iv.39-55

* * *

(1) De Selincourt, Op. Cit., pp.xlix-li.

b)

Images of movement; man's movement in Nature; movements of heavenly and earthly elements.

Unlike Shakespeare, Wordsworth does not deal in his main groups of images with quick or nimble action such as jumping, leaping, diving, running, sliding, climbing or dancing(1). His animals and birds, for instance, are rarely portrayed as in movement - an aspect of them which simply did not interest him. He was more attracted to their songs, especially to the 'voices' of birds which are not as commonly seen as they are heard (e,g. cuckoos, larks and even owls) than to, say, the beatings of their wings, their quick leaps from one branch to another, or their throbbing with life as they quiver with cold in the rain or with warmth in summer heat. The 'wandering voices' of these almost 'invisible' birds, perhaps mainly because of their mystery, were more meaningful to him than the 'sweet notes' of common song-birds. It is not insignificant that

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(1) Cf. Spurgeon, Shakespeare's Imagery, p.50.

a poet of Nature like Wordsworth (to use a convenient phrase, in spite of its penumbra of vagueness) shows no great delight in the movements of animals and birds in his poetry. The animal qualities which he considered to be more essentially poetic were not physical - certainly not of shape, colour or movement; nor were they confined to individual animals or species. His main interest in animal life centred on the participation of all living creatures in Nature's 'Eternal soul', and the ways in which their life revealed the 'power' of this soul. The donkey in 'Peter Bell' and the hart in 'Hart-leap well' are not particular animals; the poet's dog is never described in The Prelude in any detail (though we know that it is a 'terrier of the mountains'); nor indeed are the linnets and thrushes (cf. 'The Reverie of Poor Susan') nor, for that matter, any other bird. In 'Peter Bell', the donkey does not even function as a living creature; Peter contemplates its spirit, after its death, and can thus absolve himself. Apart from the 'Pastorals' where we have real, living lambs, animals in Wordsworth are often portrayed in abstract forms, that is, either as pure voices, 'breathing presences' (A.iv.172-5) or hallowed and hallowing spirits in the landscape (as in 'Hart-leap well'). Even when the poet's eye shows a marked interest in the movements of an animal,

as in 'The Kitten and Falling Leaves', these movements seem to mean very little in themselves; the kitten in that poem is identified with the poet's blissful infancy, the falling leaves with the last days of life. Towards the end of the poem, all the glad, animal movements of the kitten become symbolic of the happiness the poet hopes to have in old age, on recollection of the joyful days of childhood. This idea of surviving joy, so dear to Wordsworth, dominates the close of the poem and makes all that precedes it derive as well as lend significance to it; physical action is transformed into material for rich poetic, and almost philosophic, thought.

Such was the transforming power of the poet's mind that all his boyish games and varied sports, which were very agile and lively, acquire a different character when they are recalled in The Prelude. Professor Garrod has noted with surprise that though the last part of Book I of that poem 'contains effects of poetry hardly surpassed in our literature... (these) are effects educed from material strangely commonplace and unpromising'(1). This material could perhaps have failed to yield any such poetic effects if Wordsworth had recorded his experiences immediately after they had taken place; but

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(1) Garrod, Wordsworth, p.31

in recollecting them 'in tranquillity' his mind removed what appeared to be insignificant details (the movement, shape and colour of the parts) and preserved the essential element in each and all of these experiences, namely, the movement of the human figure as a whole in Nature. Wordsworth hardly ever records particular movements of any part of the human body - hands do not move, muscles are relaxed, and the features of the face are generally placid. Unlike Keats, Wordsworth does not record the subtle play of light and shade on men's faces; indeed, human faces in Wordsworth are 'volumes' of 'mystery' which no facial movement can reveal.

Now the commonest form of man's movement in the Wordsworthian universe is a slow, leisurely walk against a background of stillness. This is often a journey that takes no definite line, and need not have a destination; 'roam', 'rove', 'stroll' and 'saunter' are verbs mostly used to describe it, indicating one of its basic prerequisites: freedom. Wordsworth resented being 'confined down' to a 'road' 'fashioned by other men' (A.v.380-3) - a resentment that is given both literal and figurative expression in The Prelude. He tells us how often he avoided the road, or the footpath, to cut across a field, to go up an 'untrodden' way that leads to no appointed spot, or to walk down the river

without any destination in mind. On the day of his return to 'Nature', the day of his poetic dedication, he felt that his inner freedom was expressing itself, spontaneously and naturally, in free, rambling walks; he felt an inner 'vigour' restored to his soul 'afresh', and realised that it was impelling him to avoid all the 'prescribed' ways and give himself to Nature's powers wherever these might lead him. It was a moment of liberation that nearly frightened him:

> : with a heart
> Joyous, nor scar'd at its own liberty,
> I look about, and should the guide I chuse
> Be nothing better than a wandering cloud,
> I cannot miss my way.
>
> A.i.15-19

As he 'looks about' he feels as if he had the earth all to himself ('The earth is all before me' echoes Milton's Paradise Lost, xii,646, where that feeling belongs to the first man on earth); and this sense of absolute liberty troubles him: he realises that he must move in some direction, but cannot decide on one, as if he ought in fact to be moving in all directions. To make the choice he seeks the ministry of Nature, yielding his whole being to 'her' impressions, expecting to be duly inspired; he asks 'her' 'spirits':

> Whither shall we turn
> Ye aery Spirits that attend my steps,
> Unseen though not inaudible impart
> Your wish in whispers, whither shall we turn
> By road? or pathway? or through open field?
> Yon upland shall we cross, or shall this wild
> And wandering Rivulet point me out my course?
>
> A2.i.29-32. de S.p.4

These spirits, it must be noted, do not follow his steps but attend on them; and they cannot in fact attend on him except when he 'seeks' them in Nature. They are the spirits of Nature that visit man only in childhood:

> ... : I believe
> That there are Spirits which, when they would form
> A favored being, from his very dawn
> Of infancy do open out the clouds
> As at the touch of lightning, seeking him
> With gentle visitation, quiet Powers!(1)
>
> (V variant of A.i.351 sqq.)

They are the 'Gentle powers/ Who give us happiness'(2), they are the 'beings of the hills'(3) and the 'powers of the earth'(4); in short, they are the spiritual presences(5) felt to animate Nature, and to be in constant movement. Whether references to such spirits in the early drafts of

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(1) In the final version of The Prelude, 'spirits' in this image is replaced by 'Nature'.
(2) V variant of A.i.318-19.
(3) V variant of A.i.428-30.
(4) V variant of A.i.490-1.
(5) A.i.490-501.

The Prelude, which were mostly removed from both texts, indicate a belief in animism is beside the point for us (Professor Havens thinks they do)(1), but they are significant in revealing how Wordsworth conceived of the internal motions of Nature, how he translated her inner powers into outward motions in the landscape. In images of such spirits, Wordsworth seems to suggest that although the child may have communion with Nature without 'seeking', since these spirits 'visit' him without summoning, the growing man cannot have any communion with Nature without visiting her himself, without literally moving towards her - hence the emphasis on the idea of man's journey in Nature(2).

The structure of The Prelude follows the typical Wordsworthian pattern of the free, rambling trip. The poet is here trying to visit his past; but he 'leaves much unvisited', stopping not only at the haunts of childhood which his memory has endeared to him but at whatever point in his consciousness he finds himself directed to - at certain 'spots of time' which emerge in his mind in no chronological order. He keeps moving backward and forward

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(1) Havens, The Mind of a Poet, pp.76-7.
(2) Bernard Blackstone, The Lost Travellers, Chapter II.

without disrupting the narrative. And this peculiar movement is valuable in depicting a pattern of consciousness that is perhaps more essential to the biographical poem than the items of biography it lists. The pattern of the journey underlies other poems than The Prelude, of course, though the emphasis on this or that aspect of it varies from one poem to the other. In this poem, the emphasis is laid, as was said, on the idea of man's journey on earth, a journey in which Nature is both visited and visitor(1), while in The Excursion, for instance, the basic pattern is that of a walking tour made an occasion of a spiritual adventure, 'an "excursion" of the mind, ... which can be employed ... in helping to shape and unify the whole of human existence in accordance with the benevolent purpose of the Divine Spirit that animates all Nature'(2). There are obvious differences

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(1) Cf. A.i.100, A.i.114015, i.257-70, A.i.277-8, A.iii.512-19, A.iv.61-2, A.vi.553-6, A.vi.581-4.

(2) Enid Welsford, Salisbury Plain, p.90. Consider how the visitation of Nature to man becomes in The Excursion a visitation by the living God:

> In such access of mind, in such high hour
> Of visitation from the living God,...
> No thanks he breathed, he proffered no requests;
> Rapt into still communion that transcends
> The imperfect offices of prayer and praise,
> His mind was a thanksgiving to the power
> That made him; it was blessedness and love!"

between the traveller in time in the one poem, and the wanderer in place in the other; yet the mere fact that Wordsworth chooses for The Excursion a pedlar (perhaps an ideal, archetypal pedlar) throws light on a central image in The Prelude: the mind must 'wander ... by its native vigour ... out of doors',(1) must 'travel with the shoal of "thinking" natures', and so realise its unity with existence.

In trying to visit his past, the poet discovers what must have been a highly significant notion for him: the present flows into the past with the same ease that the past flows into the present: time is a unity and consciousness is a continuous flux. 'Moving over the surface of past existence'(2), the poet could not separate the shadows in its depths from the 'substance', that is, he could not distinguish the past as past from the past as present in the consciousness. He discovers that memory, far from being a storehouse for the events of the past, is a perpetual movement of particles of consciousness - of ideas, feelings and sense-impressions; and this internal movement he conceives of in terms of an

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(1) The Excursion, ii.403-4
(2) A.iv.247 et seq.

ever-flowing stream. In other words, the continuity of time appears to be more like a continuous movement of a river than the 'continuity in surface texture' of sea-waves(1) - a concept of time that anticipates many modern ideas about it, notably Bergson's, and heralds a cogent trend in modern literature(2).

The motions of the soul (partly expressed in physical movement) are imaginatively connected with the movement of two Natural objects: air and water. The spiritual character of breeze, and the special significance of the act of breathing (by man and Nature alike) have already been discussed. The movement of streams has been said to symbolise the continuity of consciousness, as well as man's belonging in the earth, his physical attachment to it, throughout life. Verbs like 'flow' and 'overflow' are used in many images to denote the motions of the soul and its movement in time - the personal and the objective - (3), and the extension of man's immaterial being in time and space; sometimes the power of the imagination is also

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(1) Stallknecht, Strange Seas of Thought, p.92.
(2) Cf. Coffman, Imagism. A Chapter for the History of Modern Poetry, Chapter III.
(3) Cf. Salvesen, The Landscape of Memory.

expressed in terms of this dominant stream-image(1). It may be in order, therefore, to discuss now the changes introduced in some of the images of breeze and stream in the 1850 Prelude.

* * * * *

The first instance of checking the movement of these Natural elements in the imagery of the final text of The Prelude may be found in the following river-image; these are the lines we have in the 1805 version:

> For this, didst Thou,
> O Derwent! travelling over the green Plains
> Near my 'sweet Birthplace', didst thou, beauteous Stream,
> Make ceaseless music through the night and day
> Which with its steady cadence, tempering
> Our human waywardness, compos'd my thoughts
> To more than infant softness, giving me,
> Among the fretful dwellings of mankind,
> A knowledge, a dim earnest, of the calm
> That Nature breathes among the hills and groves.
> When, having left his Mountains, to the Towers
> Of Cockermouth that beauteous River came,
> Behind my Father's House he pass'd, close by,
> Along the margin of our Terrace Walk.
> He was a Playmate whom we dearly lov'd.
>
> A.i.276-90

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(1) Cf. i.275-6, A.i.277-8, A.ii.213-15, A.ii.416-18, iv.118-21, A.iv.216-17, A.iv.183-4, A.vi.55-7, A.vi.547-8, A.vi.553-6, A.vi.581-4, A.vi.614-5.

The main movement-effect here is predominantly of sound; it is because of its ceaseless music by day and night that the river is remembered; it is a living expression of Nature's spirit. The steady cadence of the river's music contrasts sharply with the 'harsh' and 'grating' noise of the man-made world; it balances the effect of the discord of social noise by contributing to the infant's internal harmony. Wordsworth emphasises that the sound of the river has such an influence on the child's mental life, implying that the river's voice - which he says flowed 'along' his dreams - penetrates and stirs regions of the mind which are almost inviolable to all other influences. This is why we do not see the river at all, but merely hear its voice; (though we know it is 'beauteous', and are informed about its journey from Nature to man, and the route of that journey). Nothing in fact seems to be more important about the river than its continuous, regular voice - the river is almost purely a steady sonic movement.

Now, in the final version, we begin to see the river; we see it both in movement and stillness, and at more than one place: at the towers by which it passes after leaving its mountain springs, and near the poet's home 'among grassy holms':

> For this, didst thou,
> O Derwent! winding among grassy holms
> Where I was looking on, a babe in arms,
> Make ceaseless music that composed my thoughts
> To more than infant softness, giving me
> Amid the fretful dwellings of mankind
> A foretaste, a dim earnest, of the calm
> That Nature breathes among the hills and groves.
> When he had left the mountains and received
> On his smooth breast the shadow of those towers
> That yet survive, a shattered monument
> Of feudal sway, the bright blue river passed
> Along the margin of our terrace walk;
> A tempting playmate whom we dearly loved.
>
> i.274-87

The added lines which describe the reflection of the old towers in the 'bright blue' 'breast' of the river have added a new visual dimension to the river-image; and the adjectives used (leaving the alliteration aside), especially 'smooth', suggest sheets of still water. The unruly 'child of mountain birth' seems to have been a little tamed, its flowing interrupted. It is now a proper river, winding among 'grassy holms', and can hardly be thought of as a 'playmate' - though the poet does not remove the line in which this word occurs.

The second example of checked movement in the imagery of the final Prelude is the change introduced in the following breeze-image; the lines in the early text read:

> For I, methought, while the sweet breath of Heaven
> Was blowing on my body, felt within
> A corresponding mild creative breeze,
> A vital breeze which travell'd gently on
> O'er things which it had made, and is become
> A tempest, a redundant energy
> Vexing its own creation. 'Tis a power
> That does not come unrecogniz'd, a storm,
> Which breaking up a long-continued frost
> Brings with it vernal promises, the hope
> Of active days, of dignity and thought,
> Of prowess in an honourable field,
> Pure passions, virtue, knowledge, and delight,
> The holy life of music and of verse.
>
> A.i.41-54

This image takes the form of a process in which the poet both describes and explores the effect of the breeze on him; and the quality of the movement of the breeze almost determines the structure of the whole image. The first stage in this complex process is one of 'mild' creativity: Nature's breeze evokes in the poet's soul an internal correspondent breeze which passes over the existing 'forms and images' in the mind, animating and, in this sense, creating them. Its movement is similar to that of the 'breath' of the Lord, or the wind (ruach) which moved upon the face of the waters at the dawn of creation.

But this internal breeze, now independent of the outer breeze, soon acquires greater force and becomes a tempest.

Though destructive, the inner tempest serves as a creative power of another kind: it breaks up the 'long-continued frost' of winter and announces the coming of spring. It puts an end to the state of emotional lethargy, and gives the poet a hope in a life of 'pure passions', of 'prowess in an honourable field' - diligent work on his proposed poem - and of 'active days'. This power is similar to the trumpet blast of the Book of Revelation which announces the simultaneous destruction of the present world and a new life in a world re-created; and the change in the breeze-symbolism from the 'mild' effect of the first 'creative' 'breath of Heaven' to the destructive yet re-creative force of the internal tempest is given in terms of movement. The image is not a record of a single moment but of successive and interrelated impressions which the motions of the breeze suggest, and which emphasise the basic metaphor of the correspondence of inner and outer breezes. Because the process which the image records involves action and reaction, that is, an interaction and not only an interchange, between human and natural powers culminating in a note of power, one may (without risking too much overstatement) describe it as a dramatic situation resolved into a climactic denouement.

The corresponding lines in the later version run:

> For I, methought, while the sweet breath of heaven
> Was blowing on my body, felt within
> A correspondent breeze, that gently moved
> With quickening virtue, but is now become
> A tempest, a redundant energy,
> Vexing its own creation. Thanks to both,
> And their congenial powers, that, while they join
> In breaking up a long-continued frost,
> Bring with them vernal promises, the hope
> Of active days urged on by flying hours, -
> Days of sweet leisure, taxed with patient thought
> Abstruse, nor wanting punctual service high,
> Matins and vespers of harmonious verse!
>
> i.33-45

The first thing to notice about this modified version of the image is that the key-words which build up the dramatic process are removed: the breeze is neither 'mild' nor 'creative' in the beginning, nor is it to become creative in that other sense (as the trumpet blast) when it gathers force and becomes a tempest. The force of the tempest does not suggest anything so vehement on the human level as the 'pure passions' of the early version; instead, we hear of hopes of 'days of sweet leisure' and of 'patient thought/ Abstruse' - which of course are incompatible with the power of the storm, or the 'active days' of the early version (which words the poet does not remove). The final outburst of 'powerful feeling' which the tempest inspires in the original lines and which constitutes the climax of the dramatic process is now subdued; what might be called the dramatic tension of the image is therefore much affected.

* * *

c)

Imagery of stillness and arrested movement.

The significance of the part played by movement in Wordsworth's imagery in The Prelude is due, I believe, to a similar part played by stillness. The two parts, however, are not complementary; the poet does not delight in stillness as a previous or a consequent state of a moving object: he sees in it the state in which all natural (and human) powers are in harmony with each other - a state of 'transcendent peace' and 'holy calm'. Silence usually prevails in the ideal Wordsworthian stillness, and stillness often means both the opposite of movement and the absence of sound. The 'thoughts' of the following image are the very 'silent thoughts', dear to Wordsworth:

> Transcendent peace
> And silence did await upon those thoughts
> That were a frequent comfort to my youth.
>
> A.vi.157-9

so is the 'holy calm' in:

> Oft in those moments such a holy calm
> Did overspread my soul,...
>
> A.ii.367-8

and, on the other hand, whenever silence is indicated 'calm' is at once implied:

> Thus did I steal along that silent road,
> My body from the stillness drinking in
> A restoration like the calm of sleep
> But sweeter far.
>
> A.iv.385-8

As the last image suggests, silence is akin to sleep, a state which results from an excess, not deficiency, of sense-impressions, that is from a complete sensuous satisfaction. As in Shakespeare, it is implied here that one must cloy the appetite in order to be freed from its domination ('Give me excess of it (music), that, surfeiting/ The appetite may sicken, and so die'). Wordsworth describes the ear as asleep not when it is deprived of sensuous food, but when it has excess of it; only then, he tells us, will it be cloyed and its functions suspended; only then can it therefore hear the music of the spirit:

> One song they sang, and it was audible,
> Most audible then when the fleshly ear,
> O'ercome by grosser prelude of that strain,
> Forgot its functions, and slept undisturb'd.
>
> A.ii.431-34

This is one of Wordsworth's prominent paradoxes; and if, as A.C. Bradley suggests, the road into Wordsworth's mind must be through his paradoxes not round them, we must not dwell on the

apparent contradiction of this idea(1). It avails little, for instance, to try to formulate in precise logical terms how the excess of sense impressions annuls their effect and enables man to be freed from the very pleasure he seeks to 'gather'(2). Indeed, the poet seems to be arguing: look on Nature's still beauty for as long as you can, and your senses will be charmed into a similar state of stillness, of deep tranquillity, akin to sleep: your bodily eye will see no more, and your inner eye will 'see into the life of things'.

Such a state of tranquillity is similar to sleep in at least the following aspect: it produces, among other things, a peculiar mode of consciousness which is different from and independent of (if not contrary in its work to) the 'common' wakeful modes: even man's awareness of being alive takes another form inasmuch as it is free from the customary ways of reacting to life about him, from the stereotyped patterns of perception, the laws of time, place, logic and social bonds. So, if images of movement in Wordsworth convey the idea of timelessness by picturing

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(1) A.C. Bradley, Oxford Lectures on Poetry, p.101.
(2) A.i.605-8.

time as a continuous flux, as a stream which, as a reality of the consciousness, flows on incessantly both forward and backward, images of stillness, by suggesting the idea of sleep and dreams, express as cogently the idea of timelessness, the liberation from the feeling that time passes. Stillness in Nature may, to express myself more boldly, stand for the moments when time stands still; and that is a matter which is judged only by consciousness, that is, which fails to be real outside the mind of man. Hence the recurrent images of sleep and dreams in The Prelude that carry this idea, of which the following is typical:

> Oh! then the calm
> And dead still water lay upon my mind
> Even with a weight of pleasure, and the sky
> Never before so beautiful, sank down
> Into my heart, and held me like a dream.
>
> A.ii.176-180

* * * * *

Some images in The Prelude reveal that Wordsworth, though he rarely approaches stillness as a former or a later state of a moving object, likes to build up images

which combine (if they do not juxtapose) stillness and movement as different levels: stillness may furnish a background for a moving thing, or constitute a fixed centre in a scene of movement. Indeed, the poet suggests that although he is interested in stillness for itself, that his eye 'moves' among still Natural objects 'gathering' pleasure but settling nowhere, as the following images suggest:

> Even while mine eye has mov'd o'er three long leagues
> Of shining water, gathering, as it seem'd,
> Through every hair-breadth of that field of light,
> New pleasure, like a bee among the flowers.
>
> A.i.605-8

> an eye
> Which from a stone, a tree, a wither'd leaf,
> To the broad ocean and the azure heavens,
> Spangled with kindred multitude of stars,
> Could find no surface where its power might sleep,
>
> A.iii.160-4

he is yet more interested in combining movement with stillness in a single temporal or spatial instance. As a background, stillness can give significance to the simplest kind of motion:

> And, now and then, a fish up-leaping, snapp'd
> The breathless stillness.
>
> A.v.465-6

> An open place it was, and overlook'd,
> From high, the sullen water underneath,
> On which a dull red image of the moon
> Lay bedded, changing oftentimes its form
> Like an uneasy snake;
>
> A.vi.634-8

and, as a participant in the foreground of an image, stillness works with movement to produce memorable lines as the following:

> While on the perilous ridge I hung alone,
> With what strange utterance did the loud dry wind
> Blow through my ears! the sky seem'd not a sky
> Of earth, and with what motion mov'd the clouds!
>
> A.i.347-50

> As one who hangs down-bending from the side
> Of a slow-moving Boat, upon the breast
> Of a still water,...
>
> A.iv.247-9

The poet's interest in such combinations of the moving and the still accounts for other images which deal with either arrested or potential movement; these are often marked by the special use of the verb 'hang' (as are the last cited images) or the use of verbs with similar meaning. This verb seems to indicate a state of more than stillness, and yet not motion: it seems to suggest the critical moment at which the internal life of an object may be seen as in movement whilst its outward motion is temporarily checked. Wordsworth must have sought after those moments which thus provided him with different

angles of vision, that is, enabled him to have rare views of the inner life of objects - a view that he greatly valued. An independent, fruitful study can be made of his use of the verb 'hang' which in The Prelude is used with objects quite varied in their nature and significance: the moon; clouds; abstractions like thoughts, concerns; solitude or 'blank desertion' conceived as darkness; weights, buildings and human beings(1).

It must therefore be highly significant for us to find out that in revising The Prelude, when the poet tended generally to make the lively landscape a little calmer, and to add more images of stillness (not necessarily in place of the removed images of movement), the verb 'hang' is used in more images, in many cases replacing other verbs. In the following images from the final text of that poem, 'hung', 'hung' and 'impending' replace the original 'sate', 'was', and 'the steady' respectively:

> When, in forlorn and naked chambers cooped
> And crowded, o'er the ponderous books they hung
> Like caterpillars eating out their way
> In silence,...
>
> iii.453-6

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(1) Cf. A.ii.196-9, iii.411-2, v.381-4, v.392-3, and A.vi.34-6

o'er my thoughts
There hung a darkness, call it solitude
Or blank desertion.

i.393-5

drinking in a pure
Organic pleasure from the silver wreaths
Of curling mist, or from the level plain
Of waters coloured by impending clouds.

i.563-6

It may be argued that Wordsworth was simply trying, in making these alterations, to give the best expression to his idea, by using verbs with definite meaning; but if this be true of the second image, where the auxiliary 'to be' is removed in favour of 'hang', it cannot be true of the first or the third. In fact, the change of the verb 'sate' is very significant inasmuch as it is linked with the poet's life-long vision of the creative mind as a bird 'perching' in 'lonely' thought, 'hung' - always on the point of moving - though sitting still as a 'mother dove' brooding in a grove. By 'turning in upon itself', the mind combines the internal intense activity ('poring, watching, expecting, and listening') with the apparent stillness on the surface. The significance of birds in this metaphor is obvious: they are the freest creatures in movement, and their 'quiet instincts' do not allow them to be still for long: even when brooding, a bird is always on the point of flight, and indeed it does fly at

the least disturbance. This aspect of bird-life appealed to Wordsworth's sense of movement-in-stillness; see, for instance:

> The meditative mind, best pleased, perhaps,
> While she, as duteous as the Mother Dove,
> Sits brooding, lives not always to that end,
> But hath less quiet instincts, goadings on
> That drive her as in trouble through the groves.
>
> A.i.150-5

or:

> ... ranging like a fowl of the air,
> I was ill-tutored for captivity,
> To quit my pleasure, and from month to month,
> Take up a station calmly on the perch
> Of sedentary peace.
>
> A.iii.362-6

This movement-in-stillness is not, when all is said, a quality peculiar to the 'meditative mind' of man; it is primarily a principle in all life - in the very substance of existence(1); although the opposite idea is equally valid for Wordsworth: stillness-in-movement is indicative of the 'immutable' presence at the centre of all the changing aspects of life:

> (I) felt
> Incumbences more awful, visitings,
> Of the Upholder of the tranquil Soul,

---

(1) Cf. Stallknecht's argument in Strange Seas of Thought, p. 119.

Which underneath all passion lives secure
A steadfast life.

A.iii.114-8

The religious suggestion in this image, in line with the other changes in the imagery of the 1850 Prelude, becomes more pronounced in that text of the poem:

(I) felt
Incumbencies more awful, visitings
Of the Upholder of the tranquil soul,
That tolerates the indignities of Time,
And, from the centre of Eternity
All finite motions overruling, lives
In glory immutable.

iii.118-24

CONCLUSION

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An attempt has been made in the previous chapters to examine the effect of Wordsworth's revision of The Prelude on some of its central images. The revision has been shown to be as much concerned with Wordsworth's poetic vision (as it is expressed in the 1805 version of that poem) as with the improvement of the literary qualities of that early text. The poem suffered, on the whole, more from the removal of some of its central images than from the addition of others reflecting the older poet's views. Nature has lost, through this removal, its earlier symbolism of both mother and Deity; the images portraying the child as a 'sovereign spirit', 'monarch and king' and a 'holy' man, have been rejected; and the removal of most of the panentheistic images from the early Prelude has 'obscured the statement of that religious faith which is reflected in all the poet's greatest work', as de Selincourt has remarked - the cause of the obscurity being that the poet removed most and not all these images. In revising his text, Wordsworth was careful to remove only those images which he thought lent support to the accusation that he 'mixed God with Nature'; others less bold in their panentheistic suggestion were left

unchanged. This partial revision resulted in an inconsistent poetic vision in the 1850 Prelude: the surviving panentheistic images standing side by side with the added images of, or intended to suggest a belief in, orthodox religion.

The first aspect of Nature's symbolism as mother is reflected in several groups of images: of food and drink, touch, silence and solitude. Man is portrayed in these groups as a child relying on his mother-nature for emotional food; and while his senses are being nourished by natural impressions, his mind 'spreads, tenacious of the forms it receives', and his imaginative powers are evolved and developed. Man's communion with Nature employs the sense of touch; many images portray man's contact with Nature as that of a child having 'mute dialogues' - an 'intercourse of touch' - with his mother. And as these dialogues are 'mute', man's physical contact with Nature ideally occurs in silence. The sense of privacy of the child's early experience with his mother has its equivalent in man's solitude in Nature. Nature itself is portrayed as a loving mother, lavishing kindness on her child, man, and willing him to recognise the power of love that binds them together with an indissoluble tie.

The other symbolic aspect of Nature, that of immanent

Deity, also has its origins in the poet's belief in love. However, love plays a different part in the images suggesting this symbolism: it is a universal force which makes the variety of natural appearances 'cling together' and enjoy a community of being; it implies that individual natural objects have mental life (or imagination); hence their wilful passions and their affinity with man. This power of love is at once voluntary and involuntary: natural objects and man are both free to love each other, and must of necessity do so; hence the notion that universal love is an expression of the inner unity of Nature in feeling and in will. The 'sublime thought' which Coleridge says he admires in Spinoza may well illustrate this: inasmuch as all beings are in God, the love 'with which they love themselves' and man 'is a part of that love, with which God loveth himself'.

The feeling of the unity of being led to a concept of monism which identified God with Nature. Certain images in the early Prelude explicitly suggest this unity 'In Which all beings live with God, themselves/ Are God, existing in one mighty whole.' The suggestion by some critics that Wordsworth believed in the existence of an anima mundi, which may be true of certain images in the early version, is not implied by the bulk of the imagery in that text. Rather

than an anima mundi, by which is meant a spirit in Nature acting as God's surrogate, and enacting his will, the images suggest that Wordsworth believed in a unity of existence, of which the spirit is inseparable from the material substance.

However, some images suggest that, for Wordsworth, a certain power in the universe could be recognised as continuously at work beneath the surface of everyday life, that it can be seen as a vital activity, indicating Nature's mental life. This is often symbolised by the act of 'breathing', which in Wordsworth expresses biological as well as mental life - (and it is in this sense that, in the imagery, all Nature, animate or inanimate, breathes). This internal mental activity (in Nature as in man) is often conceived as a mind of the universe, a mighty, all-pervading intelligence - majestic and insuperable. And this is identified as God.

Images of depth and height represent the places in Nature where man comes nearest to the recognition of this universal mind. Depth itself is not merely conceived spatially: it is not only a dimension in space, but a spiritual attribute (or 'essence') of things. In Nature, everything has depth, and so has man's being; in fact,

Wordsworth saw in the depths of Nature perfect symbols of human depth, as, looking into the 'mind of man', he saw another home for the 'majestic intellect' that is everywhere.

As a dimension in space, height is the counterpart of depth; as symbolic of the mystery, the 'awful power' beyond the reach of human thought, they are more or less equal. The physical act of ascent is as much a journey in depth as in height. Both can inspire a feeling of the 'sublime' in which the most prominent element is fear, powerful, irrational, and indescribable. This feeling is akin to awe, and is clearly distinguished from 'common fear', in a pejorative sense, which Wordsworth calls 'soul-debasing'.

The added images in The Prelude, in spite of their variety and the diverse themes which they express, share common formal aspects: they are complex in structure, many being highly wrought metaphors and personifications. The simple, swift shifting ballad simile is hardly used by the older poet. Most of the added images of orthodox religion, for instance, reveal the preference of the older poet for complex, elaborate, and extended metaphors. These religious images in the 1850 text can be broadly divided into two sub-groups: the first draws upon formal aspects of religious practice, that is,

acts and places of worship (e.g. prayers and churches), and the other deals with its spiritual basis: the concept of God as a transcendent reality, man's weakness, and the belief in another world. Images in the first sub-group are marginal and hardly affect the central vision. They represent the superficial gloss which de Selincourt identified as 'pietistic embroidery' intended to 'create a familiar atmosphere of edification' and to defend the poet against those who accused him of 'not distinguishing between nature as the work of God and God himself'. In the second sub-group they are central to the vision inasmuch as they represent a real departure from the religion of Nature, from the semi-mystical experience of boyhood and youth. In adding these images, the poet wanted to bring his poem into accord with the later modifications of his faith.

In the early version of The Prelude there is another central image which could not survive the revision without a radical change, that of the child - glorified, invested with vast spiritual powers, pure because 'naked' of artificial social attire, 'soul-illumined' by 'visionary gleams', yet at the same time deeply belonging, even physically, in this world. These qualities of the child, suggested by a variety of images from plants, nakedness and clothes, darkness and

light, combine to form a composite image which is in line with the one we find in the poems of the great decade, and which almost completely disappears from the final text of The Prelude. Most child images, in The Prelude as well as in poems of the great decade, were produced during the limited period of the five years 1798-1802; we have almost no trace of earlier treatment of the subject and, significantly, a completely changed attitude towards it whenever it was treated afterwards. As far as child-imagery is concerned, the revision is in the main negative: the poet, as a rule, removes rather than adds any child-images.

The early image of the child may be seen as crystallised in The Immortality Ode; the image of the child in this poem contains many elements that are central in The Prelude image. Most prominent among these is the child's supreme spirituality. In The Prelude he is portrayed as a 'sovereign spirit' whose vision of the reality of existence is very lucid, whose rich soul, great capacity for feeling, and his innocence, make him comparable to a holy man. He is compared to 'an earlier monk or priest' and endowed with the power of 'a monarch or king'. To him, intuition, the innate faculty of all human beings, imparts a knowledge of the unity of existence which assures him of belonging, spiritually and physically, in the universe.

The child, the images suggest, belongs in the universe naked of any social attire; he is only dressed in 'nature's outward coat' which still confirms his belonging in humanity. But his soul is essentially naked, that is, free from the masks which the adult needs to perform his social 'part'. The child is bold enough to face the world free from all the guises, the ways of the society; and he is therefore 'wild', in the sense in which primitive people, and simple rustics, are. Uninhibited by social conventions which are mostly 'unnatural', these people have a trust in bare and undecorated life: they retain this childlike boldness to face the world naked of social masks.

Another element which the image of the child in The Prelude shares with his image in the 'Immortality Ode', is the correspondence of the light-within and light-without the child. Only in the phase of childhood is the light of Nature accompanied by 'soul-illuminating gleams'; it is only then that the 'world and every common sight' can seem 'apparelled in celestial light'. Images of light, especially in the earlier manuscripts (produced during the composition of The Prelude) and in other poems written in 1802, confirm this. Whether Wordsworth really adopted the Platonic idea of pre-existence, and really believed that human souls owe their

internal light to the 'Celestial Palace' whence they come, cannot be verified.

In the early text of The Prelude, an important part is played by movement and stillness. This text is generally characterised by an atmosphere of vehement, free and continuous movement. A number of factors, besides imagery, account for this: the use of verbs of motion, swift sequence of words, short sentences with brisk cadences, and quick-shifting ideas. Images, simple and similar to the swift ballad similes also contribute to this. In the final text, however, we have another kind of movement: regular, slower, and, as it were, 'measured'; sentences are more symmetrical and 'the whole texture (is) more closely knit'.

Many images of movement in the early text are removed while only a few are added in the final version, a fact which would mean very little if the removed ones were not as important as they are. They are, as it were, organising elements in the poetry, a means of expressing ideas rather than a consequence of contemplating them. On the other hand, the added images, though mostly well wrought and highly imaginative, seem to be additions to the text; they are not fully integrated in the poem.

Wordsworth's interest in stillness is not just because it is a result of, or an end to, movement; to him, it is a state in which all natural and human powers seem in harmony with each other. Stillness, ideally, resembles sleep: a state of deep calm and silence. Nature seems asleep very often in the imagery, but hardly ever dead. It appears that, as senses become less active in sleep, the mind is liberated from their 'despotism' and becomes more capable of communing with the inner life in existence.

The poet's peculiar sensitivity to stillness and movement as combined factors in the imagery gives birth to a whole group of images which have as their basis arrested or potential movement. This is symbolic of internal activity beneath a calm surface, or potential creativity even in the most tranquil objects. Still objects, however, are significant also because they are stable, concrete and 'real' - a fact that is a source of delight to mystics.

Unlike Shakespeare, Wordsworth does not deal in his main groups of images with quick or nimble action. Animals and birds are rarely portrayed in the images as in movement - an aspect of them which simply did not interest him. Neither does he focus on any definite or articulate movement of any part of

the human body, nor, like Keats, the subtle play of light and shade for instance. His eye perceives the human figure as a whole, moving in the landscape, in a way that connects rather than separates him from Nature.

The commonest form of man's movement in Wordsworth's universe is a slow, leisurely walk against a background of stillness. This is often a journey that takes no definite line, and need not have a destination; it is without immediate or practical aims, and is not governed by time-limits. A temporal and spatial freedom seems to be its major characteristic. It is sometimes conceived as a part of the great cycle of existence: the long travel from 'God, who is our home', across 'earth and human life', then back to 'our native continent' in the end.

The human soul, like the human figure, is essentially conceived as moving; and the physical movement is often intended to represent the internal motions of the spirit. These motions are imaginatively connected with the movement of two natural objects: air and water. The motions of the wind, as heavenly powers, have earthly counterparts in the motions of streams and rivers. Verbs used to describe the movement of the latter (e.g. flow) are used to symbolise

the continuous movement not only of the human soul, thoughts and feelings, but also the sense of time and human consciousness; they also express the extension of man's immaterial existence in time and place, and even the power of his imagination.

In the imagery of the final version these two moving natural objects suffer a certain change. The identification of either breeze or stream with man's soul becomes less apparent and acquires a different significance. A comparison of some early images with their later versions reveals a marked attempt to give an orthodox religious flavour to the movement of these two natural objects.

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