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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

A CRITICAL EXAMINATION AND COMPARISON OF SELECTED
PASSAGES FROM THE 1805 AND THE 1850 VERSIONS
OF WORDSWORTH'S PRELUDE

by

© PATRICIA R. EGAN

A THESIS

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ABSTRACT

Working from critical principles that demand of the poet an integrated and responsible emotional, moral, and intellectual response to his subject, this dissertation examines and compares selected representative passages from the 1805 and the 1850 Prelude by William Wordsworth. On the basis of its findings, it concludes that only in the 1850 text do Wordsworth's greater wisdom and his more maturely developed skills as a narrative poet enable him to express, in emotionally controlled and rational terms, a morally sound and rational account of the workings of the human mind that is both meaningful and valuable to twentieth-century readers.

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In many a walk
At evening or by moonlight, or reclined
At midday upon beds of forest moss,
Have we to Nature and her impulses
Of our whole being made free gift, and when
Our trance had left us, oft have we, by aid
Of the impressions which it left behind,
Looked inward on ourselves, and learned, perhaps,
Something of what we are. Nor in those hours
Did we destroy
The original impression of delight,
But by such retrospect it was recalled
To yet a second and a second life.

(Wordsworth, Fragment in "Christabel Notebook,"
Poetical Works, V, 343-44)

INTRODUCTION

To F. W. Bateson, the final version of William Wordsworth's

Prelude is

a deplorable affair. In his classic edition (1926) de Selincourt, though recognising the general superiority of the earlier version, seems to me to exaggerate the poetical merit of many of the later changes. On inspection they will almost always be found to be only superficial improvements--empty elegant phrases, pretty-pretty images, pseudo-profundities.¹

While most critics of The Prelude do not respond either to de Selincourt's assessment of the 1850 text or to the text itself in such a wholly negative manner, the majority do prefer the poem in its 1805 form. While most acknowledge the stylistic superiority of the 1850 text, they deplore the lack of spontaneity and immediacy that results from the stylistic improvement. Most also insist that the 1850 version is less intellectually stimulating and honest because of the more conservative and orthodox ideas that it asserts. The working hypothesis of the present study is that a close evaluation of the major revisions will reveal the 1850 poem to be, not a "deplorable affair" replete with "empty elegant phrases, pretty-pretty images" or "pseudo-profundities," nor a work that is merely more stylistically competent, but less emotionally and intellectually moving than its 1805 counterpart. Rather, it will reveal that the final Prelude is a work in which Wordsworth's more mature, responsible, and sophisticated moral, emotional, and intellectual responses support, sustain, and enrich one another in ways perhaps as yet not fully acknowledged by contemporary criticism. In a letter to Alexander Dyce

dated April 30, 1830, Wordsworth asserts his strong opinion concerning revision when he says, "--you know what importance I attach to following strictly the last Copy of the text of an Author."² By reviewing and assessing the major criticism of the revisions to The Prelude and by closely examining selected major revisions to the 1850 text, this study will investigate the possibility that, just as closely following "the last Copy of the text of an Author" was of crucial importance to Wordsworth, so too might a close study of the 1850 Prelude be of crucial importance to those who would more fully appreciate and understand the power and scope of Wordsworth's artistic and intellectual achievements.

Any review of the criticism of the Prelude revisions must begin with the Introduction to Ernest de Selincourt's 1926 edition of the 1805-1850 Prelude, the edition that made the 1805 version of the poem available to the reading public for the first time.³ Since this Introduction seems to form the basis for the criticism of the revisions to The Prelude to the present day, I shall discuss it in some detail.

De Selincourt begins his discussion under the heading "Comparison of the texts in point of style: later improvements." He first asserts:

No one would doubt that the 1850 version is a better composition than the A text. Weak phrases are strengthened, and the whole texture is more closely knit. The A text leaves often the impression of a man writing rapidly, thinking aloud or talking to his friend without waiting to shape his thought into the most concise and telling form, satisfied for the moment if he can put it into metre by inverting the prose order of the words. It is not difficult to point in A to halting lines, and to tame or diffuse expressions, which called for drastic treatment. Thus tricks of speech, such as 'I mean', 'we might say', 'for instance', 'with regret sincere I mention this', and the like, tend later to disappear. (p. lvii)

De Selincourt praises Wordsworth for disposing of an "awkward circumlocution"

(1805, VIII, 472-5) and for shortening a "verbose" passage (1805, IX, 126-8). "The 1850 version," he claims, "while bracing the limp style of the earlier text, often gives form and outline to a thought before but vaguely suggested" (p. lvii). The example that de Selincourt gives of this result is 1850, IX, 352-4.

De Selincourt suggests that the "desire for a more exact and vivid picture leads [Wordsworth] more than twenty times in the poem to substitute, for the auxiliary 'to be', a verb with more definite meaning" (p. lviii). "In the same way," de Selincourt adds, "he gets rid of other auxiliaries which tend to weaken his sentence," he detects "many a jingle or inharmonious phrase," which he eliminates from the final version, and, "for the sake of euphony," he alters "'betwixt' to 'between', 'itself' to 'herself', and 'which' to 'that', where it could be done without confusion to the sense" (p. lviii). De Selincourt also points out that Wordsworth noticed too, "an unfortunate predilection for the words 'sweet' and 'beauteous', and banished them from many lines in favour of a more exactly appropriate epithet" (p. lix). While these changes might seem inconsequential when considered separately, de Selincourt rightly asserts that "The cumulative effect of such changes, . . . cannot easily be over-estimated" (p. lix).

De Selincourt quotes lines 62-63 of Book III in the 1850 version and alludes to the development through succeeding texts of 1850, VI, 11, and 1805, VI, 63-64, to illustrate his argument that "some of [Wordsworth's] best corrections, in The Prelude as in other poems, are among the last" (p. lix). He also suggests that a study of the development of some of the passages in the final text "is a lesson in the craftsmanship of letters" (p. lix). He concludes this section by alluding to

Wordsworth's philosophy, which, he maintains, "is more truly a faith than a philosophy" (p. lix), and he sums up his evaluation of the stylistic improvements by suggesting that, in the 1850 Prelude, Wordsworth's

first aim, as it was his great achievement, was sincerity; and the main stylistic error of his later revision lies in a too generous concession to the vulgar taste for poetical ornament. (p. lx).

This study seeks to demonstrate that, while de Selincourt's final assertion is true, we should approach it with more caution than critics have done in the past, because it is true only in a very limited sense. A careful study of the revised passages reveals that, in the majority of cases, it is a movement away from eighteenth-century periphrasis and ornate diction and toward simplicity, brevity, clarity and precision of expression that most characterizes the style of the 1850 text.

It is Bateson's criticism of de Selincourt's assessment and not the assessment itself that seems to be exaggerated. De Selincourt does not over-rate the stylistic improvements in the later Prelude; in fact, if anything, he under-rates them. As an overview of the general stylistic improvements, this discussion is, up to the comment on the "too generous concession to the vulgar taste for poetical ornament," fair, balanced, and critically sound. It is only when de Selincourt cites specific examples in the latter part of the discussion that he fails to demonstrate the full significance of the changes, not because his examples are unsuitable or because they are limited in number, but because his discussion is self-limiting in that it sharply and artificially separates considerations of style from considerations of content. Here, for example, de Selincourt certainly points out that the addition, "The marble index of a mind for ever/ Voyaging through strange seas of Thought,

alone" (1850, III, 62-3) is stylistically excellent. Because he overlooks the central ideas that inform these lines, however, he is unable both to demonstrate how these ideas influence and modify the style and how the style supports and enriches the ideas.⁴ Thus, his assertion that the lines are stylistically superior is not entirely convincing.

This artificial division of style and content imposes even greater limitations in de Selincourt's next section: "Comparison of the texts in point of style: later deterioration." No intelligent critic of the final Prelude would attempt to defend all of the revised passages, and de Selincourt is certainly right to point out that the change from

Plants, insects, beasts in field, and birds in bower, . . .

(1805, XI, 28)

to

boldly seeking pleasure nearer heaven
On wings that navigate cerulean skies,

(1850, XII, 36-37)

is an unfortunate one: "Such lines would have adorned The Seasons," de Selincourt comments, but "The Prelude can spare them" (p. lx). While this particular revision is unsuccessful and cannot be defended, the present study points out that Wordsworth's deletion of this and similar cataloguings in the 1805 text seems to come as a direct result of his desire to eliminate elements of Hartleian associationism from the 1850 text.⁵ Nowhere in his discussion of this revision does de Selincourt allude to such a possibility.

"Nothing is gained poetically," de Selincourt insists, "by changing the word 'friend' into 'the partner of those varied walks', nor 'human creature, be he who he may', to 'human creature howsoe'er endowed'."

(p. lx). But he does not suggest that nothing poetically significant is lost through these changes either. "I find it hard to understand or to forgive the transformation of 'the Woman, and her garments vex'd and toss'd' (XI. 315) into a 'female' [XII. 260]," de Selincourt complains in the same paragraph (p. lx), but precisely what is so difficult to understand or to forgive in this revision, de Selincourt never explains.⁶

But the real difficulties in this section come, as they do in the first section, toward the end of the discussion, where de Selincourt alludes to the stylistic features of his examples and ignores their intellectual content. For example, in his discussion of the preface to the meeting with the Discharged Soldier, de Selincourt praises the 1805 preface because "as it stands, it is more in key with the bare impressive narrative that is to follow than is the grandiloquent exordium of the later version" (p. lxi). He does not, however, take into consideration, as the present study does, the possibility that the "far-sought similes" that he so readily criticizes as "pompous phrase-making" in the "good but inappropriate writing" of the final preface may be used by Wordsworth, not to give the 1850 lines "a more definitely literary flavour" (p. lxi), but to prepare the reader gradually, through a rationally ordered series of examples of human isolation, for a fuller psychological and intellectual comprehension of the totality of suffering and isolation that the Discharged Soldier represents.⁷

In the section dealing with "Changes in the text due to change of audience," de Selincourt claims that "it was inevitable that when the poet reviewed it with an eye to publication, he should desire to tone down or to omit matter which, to a wider and less sympathetic audience, might seem irrelevant or superfluous" (p. lxii). Examples that he gives

of this practice are passive constructions replacing, in many cases, the "I" of the earlier text, the omission of a mention of Wordsworth's early poverty, and the elimination of place-names. "Of a still deeper interest," de Selincourt claims,

are those early readings which shed light upon his character. To Coleridge he can write lines protesting his innocence of the passions of envy and dissolute pleasure (III. 531-6), and allude more than once to that strain of constitutional melancholy (VI. 192; X. 869-70) which often destroyed his peace of mind; but while we appreciate the motives that led him to suppress these confidences, we may yet be glad to recover them. (p. lxiii)

While de Selincourt admits that much of the omitted detail is "nugatory," he still maintains that it should have been retained in the last version, because

The Prelude is a great poem, but it is also the frank autobiography of a great man. It cannot be judged solely by poetic canons, any more than a letter can be judged by the same criteria as an essay: like a letter, it owes its peculiar charm to intimate revelation of the writer. Over many of his readers Wordsworth exerts a truly personal spell. To them he is not a poet only, but a friend; and among our friends the most trivial admissions are often welcomed because, in their very triviality, they seem to bring us nearer to the object of our love. (p. lxiii)

Although Geoffrey Hartman, in one instance, alludes to it as "the noble passive,"⁸ de Selincourt is right to condemn the passive constructions of the final text. The passive voice is, in most instances in the final text, nothing more than a device that Wordsworth employs both to elevate the tone and to give an air of authenticity to his claims for greatness. De Selincourt's criticism of the removal of place-names from the final text, however, is not as full as it could be. In the last Prelude, Wordsworth is writing for the general public, and, therefore, he is concerned with universalizing his life-story. Place-names such as

"Cockermouth" (I, 287), "Patterdale" (I, 376), "the flat Plains of Huntingdon" (III, 2), "the Heights of Kendal" (IV, 2), "Blencathra's rugged sides" (VII, 8), "Coker's stream" (VII, 345), "Cambridge" (IX, 227), and "Bethkelet's huts" (XIII, 3) in too over-abundant supply as they are in the A text, detract from the story of the poet's life and impede his attempts to universalize it. In most instances these names are replaced with vivid, but general descriptions that a person unfamiliar with England could more readily and easily appreciate. As for the intimate details of his life that Wordsworth omits from the final version, we should, perhaps, accept the fact that The Prelude is, first and foremost, a record of the growth of the poet's mind and that Wordsworth is the best judge of what did and what did not influence that growth.⁹

In the next section, "The ideal text of 'The Prelude,'" de Selincourt suggests that the ideal text

would follow no single manuscript. It would retain from the earliest version such familiar details as have any autobiographical significance. Of purely stylistic changes from that text, it would accept those only which Wordsworth might have made (and some he would certainly have made), had he prepared the poem for the press in his greatest period, changes designed to remove crudities of expression, and to develop or clarify his original meaning: but it would reject those later excrescences of a manner less pure, at times even meretricious, which are out of key with the spirit in which the poem was first conceived and executed. Most firmly would it reject all modifications of his original thought and attitude to his theme. (p. lxiii)

The question that this commentary raises and that the present study seeks to answer is: do we want the poem to reflect Wordsworth's early view of the first twenty-eight years of his life or his later view of his first twenty-eight years?

De Selincourt has three sections dealing with the poem's intellectual content. These are: "Changes of idea: (a) Life at

Cambridge," (b) "Attitude to the French Revolution," and (c) "Philosophy of life and religion." Since this study deals in depth with many of these changes and attempts to refute de Selincourt's negative assertions about a number of them, I shall only comment briefly on this section. De Selincourt suggests that Wordsworth significantly changed the tone of the segments dealing with university life so that they befit "one who had sons of undergraduate age, and whose brother was Master of Trinity" (p. lxv), that his revision of the Books dealing with the French Revolution "shows clear signs of his growing conservatism" (p. lxvi), and that his inclusion of the eulogy to Burke "creates a misleading impression as to the state of his mind in that period of which the Book professes to be the record" (p. lxviii). De Selincourt concludes his discussion of revised ideas in The Prelude with a six page examination of changes in philosophy of life and religion in which he insists 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" (p. lxviii). He accuses Wordsworth of toning down "passages that savoured too much of independence" and of inserting "lines here and there which might lull asleep the watchful eye of the heresy-hunter" (p. lxxi). De Selincourt insists that there is a relapse in the 1850 "from that religion of joy which springs from feeling, the reward of 'glad hearts without reproach or blot', to a less spontaneous, a disciplined emotion" (p. lxxii), and he suggests that "the last Book in particular, which is the philosophical conclusion of the whole matter, leaves a totally different impression from that created by the earlier text" (p. lxxiii). He sums up this whole discussion as follows:

The revised Prelude represents another, less independent creed. The position into which he had now withdrawn was not for him a false position. He was sincere, now as ever. But if he was conscious of a change, as it is abundantly clear that he was, he would surely have done better to leave as it stood what he had first written for Coleridge, and, instead of disguising his former faith, to have expounded in a book of The Recluse, or elsewhere, the reasons that led him to move from it, and the manner in which it could be reconciled with the tenets of an historic Church. In truth that compromise, which provided so secure a haven for his later years, was worthy of a finer exposition than he was ever able to give it. It may have brought him peace, but it never stirred him to that rapture of which great art is born. When his poetry was commended for the purity of its moral he insisted that he, on the other hand, valued it according to the powers of mind which it presupposed in the writer and excited in the hearer. That work of his which most triumphantly stands this test belongs to the years 1798-1807; and of the vital source and hiding-places of its power the original Prelude is the frankest and most direct confession. (p. lxxiv)

If, as Bateson claims, de Selincourt exaggerates the worth of the ideas that Wordsworth modifies or introduces into the final Prelude, the evidence is not in his Introduction to the text. De Selincourt's praise of the revised ideas in the final version is virtually non-existent. In fact, this study will examine the possibility that textual evidence shows Wordsworth's later philosophical, political, and religious ideas to be not as conservative or orthodox as de Selincourt would have us believe. True, there are traces of "pietistic embroidery" in the final version as de Selincourt suggests (p. lxxi), and, in certain instances, these do detract somewhat from the account of Wordsworth's early development. But de Selincourt's strong emphasis on these changes shifts our attention to them and away from the numerous passages of a philosophical and religious nature that Wordsworth leaves unrevised in the final Prelude. These passages, when read in conjunction with the 1850 additions, seem to present problems in the assessment of the philosophical and religious orientation of the final version that de Selincourt fails to address.

The primary deficiency of de Selincourt's evaluation of the revised ideas in the 1850 Prelude seems to result not so much from what he says, but from what he does not say. In severely limiting the categories into which revised ideas fall, as in the categories themselves, de Selincourt fails to give a comprehensive assessment of the intellectual achievement of the final version. Why does Wordsworth write The Prelude? What does he say in the poem? Does what he says in the 1805 version differ appreciably from what he says in 1850, and, if so, do his assertions in the final text broaden or enrich our understanding of Wordsworth, of the world, or of ourselves? The present study seeks to examine thematic concerns that de Selincourt leaves unsatisfactorily explored and assessed: childhood and adolescent development and education, the influence of Nature and personal relationships on the developing mind, liberty, imagination, reason, and Wordsworth's concept of man in the universe. By examining these concerns, the study will, perhaps, add to our understanding and appreciation of Wordsworth's mature intellectual accomplishments in The Prelude.

Since 1926, the customary starting point for theorizing about the revisions to The Prelude has been the de Selincourt Introduction. In fact, we can classify much of the criticism of the revisions written after that date into three broad categories: criticism that shows the unmistakable influence of the de Selincourt Introduction and goes little beyond the assertions of that Introduction in its assessment of the revisions; evaluations that supplement the de Selincourt Introduction by offering further critical suggestions as to why the 1805 text is the superior version; and, finally, criticism that attempts to refute de Selincourt's charges against the 1850 text by demonstrating the

superior stylistic and intellectual qualities of that text that de Selincourt fails to acknowledge.

Most of the criticism written about the revisions falls into the first category. In its unquestioning acceptance of de Selincourt as the authority on the revisions, and in its acceptance, too, of the widespread belief that Wordsworth's artistic powers declined rapidly after the 1798-1808 interval, this criticism, perhaps, does a collective and cumulative disservice to the final Prelude, since its sheer bulk discourages further examination of that text.

Several critics in this category do not mean us to take their remarks on the revisions as being based on independent studies. Their comments merely preface discussions of The Prelude that, in many cases, do not deal entirely or specifically with the revisions per se. In The Visionary Company, for example, Harold Bloom introduces his discussion of The Prelude as follows:

The 1850 text shows better craftsmanship, but it also sometimes manifests an orthodox censor at work, straining to correct a private myth into an approach at Anglican dogma. As Wordsworth's modern editor, Ernest de Selincourt, has observed, nothing could be more significant than the change of

I worshipped then among the depths of things
As my soul bade me . . .
I felt and nothing else . . .

(XI, 234-8, 1805)

to

Worshipping then among the depths of things
As piety ordained . . .
I felt, observed, and pondered . . .

(XII, 184-8, 1850)

In the transition between these two passages, Wordsworth loses his Miltonic heritage, an insistence upon the creative autonomy of the individual soul. With it he loses also an emphasis

peculiar to himself, a reliance upon the felt experience, as distinguished from received piety or the abstraction that follows experience.¹⁰

Aside from a brief discussion of the "Vandracour [sic] and Julia" segment that Wordsworth omits from the final version, Bloom makes no further comments on the revisions. He does not attempt to defend his (or, rather, de Selincourt's) assertions about the 1850 text, but proceeds immediately to a discussion of The Prelude. His decision, in this respect, is, perhaps, a wise one, for as this study will attempt to illustrate, Wordsworth never "loses his Miltonic heritage," and his refusal to rely solely upon the "felt experience" in the 1850 text results not in a loss to the poetry of that version, but in a definite gain.¹¹

In William Wordsworth, Russell Noyes ends his discussion of The Prelude as follows:

As has already been indicated in passing, The Prelude published posthumously in 1850 differs in many respects from the poem read to Coleridge in 1806. Wordsworth made important revisions in 1828, 1832, 1839, which altered the whole manner of the poem. The original was an intimate personal epistle addressed to Coleridge when the two were on the terms of closest intimacy. Wordsworth felt that, before the poem could be given to the public, he would have to make it less personal. He also wanted to amend faults of ambiguity and loose expression. In revising, he succeeded to a considerable extent in making the language more controlled and exact and the meaning clearer. Some of the finest passages are those written in the later years, such as the lines on Sir Isaac Newton (Book III). But the stylistic changes, by and large, are injurious to the freshness, naturalness, and frankness of the early version. Revision often obscured a simple, naïve experience: or replaced the living fact with an intellectual statement about it.¹²

This is nothing more than de Selincourt's Introduction condensed and simplified. Noyes adds nothing new to our knowledge of the revisions either in this passage or in his final paragraph:

Revision also resulted in vital changes in thought as well as in expression. The early text of The Prelude gives us a Wordsworth committed to a vibrant faith in 'natural piety.' But the pressure of years and crushing personal sorrows had Christianized his creed. As a consequence, the revised Prelude is overlaid with Christian thought. Accordingly, the original sections in which he exulted in the powers of his own mind, often in terms of sensationalistic-associationistic philosophy, are shorn of their daring and deliberately expressed in terms of dogmatic Christianity. In the revision, Wordsworth also tones down his attack on Cambridge; moreover, he presents France and the revolution with less glamor and with an increased conservatism. The later Wordsworth had forgotten much that the younger poet was trying to do in The Prelude. Consequently, his revisions were ruinous to both the honesty of the original and to its energy and freshness of style. Both versions of The Prelude are, of course, important; but the reader who wishes to capture the poet when he is most himself should concentrate on the 1805 version. (pp. 123-4)

Aside from its almost total dependence on the de Selincourt Introduction, the main problem with this criticism rests in its obscurity. Noyes never explains how, in the final version, Wordsworth manages, at one and the same time, to make "the language more controlled and exact and the meaning clearer" while also obscuring "naïve experience." Nor does he explain why Wordsworth's replacement of "the living fact with an intellectual statement about it" is to be considered a flaw in the 1850 text. Precisely which "original sections . . . are shorn of their daring and deliberately expressed in terms of dogmatic Christianity," Noyes does not specify. And why, if indeed this is Wordsworth's practice in the last Prelude, a poet who expresses himself in "sensationalistic-associationistic" terms is to be considered more "honest" than one who expresses himself in terms of "dogmatic Christianity," is a point that Noyes does not fully explain. This study will explore the possibility that, in the 1850 version, the more controlled and exact language of the major revisions usually clarifies the experience that it describes, that the "sensationalist-associationist" philosophy of the A text is best

omitted from the final version, and that "an intellectual statement" about a "living fact" is often of much more significance in the last Prelude than is the "living fact" itself, as Wordsworth presents it in the A text.

In "Sense in The Prelude," William Empson does not concern himself with Wordsworth's political or religious ideologies at all, but with the style of the poem. Like de Selincourt, Empson acknowledges the stylistic superiority of the 1850 text. However, unlike de Selincourt, he strongly regrets the stylistic improvements:

. . . this improvement, which was mainly a process of packing the lines more fully, meant invoking Milton and his sense of the unrelaxing Will; whereas the whole point and delicacy of the first version was to represent a wavering and untrammelled natural growth. The improvement was, therefore, about the most destructive thing he could have done, far worse than changing the supposed opinions.¹³

Like the other critics in this category, Empson seems to value the early text for its undisciplined spontaneity and immediacy. But why "wavering and untrammelled growth" is a positive attribute of poetry, Empson does not say. Empson's criticism is not as intelligent or as balanced as de Selincourt's, but, in truth, it merely expresses overtly what de Selincourt's Introduction quietly implies. This thesis will attempt to show that what another critic in this category, Herbert Lindenberger, has to say about the 1805 text is true; that is, that "spontaneity also can make for banality, and after repeated readings of the 1805 text one wishes Wordsworth had pruned his 'untrammelled natural growth' here and there at the time he first wrote."¹⁴

"Thirteen Ways of Looking at The Prelude" is the alternate title that Herbert Lindenberger suggests for his study, On Wordsworth's

Prelude. Unfortunately, one of the ways is not through an independent examination of the revisions. Lindenberger relegates his discussion of the revisions to two Appendices at the end of his study, and, in these Appendices, he covers much the same ground that de Selincourt covered before him. In fact, according to Lindenberger, de Selincourt's assessment of the revisions has not been improved upon:

LIKE Hamlet, The Prelude exists in two versions, neither of them altogether satisfactory. The textual problem is not, as with Hamlet, a matter of getting back to the author's original intentions, but of distinguishing between two different sets of intentions--those of the poet at the time he was writing the poem and those of the aged poet reflecting and improving upon a manuscript long since laid aside. The relative merits of the two versions have provoked considerable discussion since De Selincourt first published the 1805 text in 1926; and the justness with which he appraised Wordsworth's changes, both stylistic and ideological, has not, I think, been surpassed by any later commentators. (p. 295)

Nor has Lindenberger himself made any serious attempt to improve upon this assessment. He quotes de Selincourt's comments on the ideal text and proceeds to examine many of the same examples as de Selincourt. However, he makes a provocative comment on the stylistic revisions:

In each case, the revision seems an 'improvement': we would normally bestow such critical compliments as 'tightness' or 'economy' upon it. But tightness and economy are perhaps not such absolute values in poetry as we should like to think; the 1805 Prelude, at any rate, is likely to confound them. Compare the following lines from the early version:

Spring returns,
I saw the Spring return, when I was dead
To deeper hope, yet had I joy for her,
And welcomed her benevolence, rejoiced
In common with the Children of her Love,
Plants, insects, beasts in field, and birds
in bower.

(XI, 23-28)

with these from 1850:

Spring returns,--
 I saw the Spring return, and could rejoice,
 In common with the children of her love,
 Piping on boughs, or sporting on fresh fields,
 Or boldly seeking pleasure nearer heaven
 On wings that navigate cerulean skies.

(XII, 32-37 [1850])

The later version is by all odds better 'writing,' if by this term we distinguish its greater economy, concreteness, vividness, strictness of syntax. But the poetry also sustains great loss. We no longer follow the waywardings of the thinking mind--'I saw the Spring return, when I was dead/ To deeper hope, yet had I joy for her'--while the images of the natural world, for all their 'concreteness' in the later version, have the heavy feel of a set piece ('wings that navigate cerulean skies'), which I, for one, find less in keeping with the context than the simple catalog of 'plants, insects, beasts in field, and birds in bower.' The 1850 Prelude always retains the quality of 'competent,' 'finished' verse, while the early version has a delicacy and spontaneity that the later Wordsworth was often bent on violating. (pp. 296-7)

Much of this criticism seems somewhat unfair and overstated. As I pointed out earlier (p. 5 above), Wordsworth's alteration of the last line of the 1805 passage to the last two lines of the 1850 text is unfortunate, and we cannot defend it. When we look at these passages in context, however, we realize that in no sense does the 1850 poetry sustain "a great loss" through revision. Near the beginning of the Book, in both versions, Wordsworth tells us, most emphatically, that, during this period, he had suffered "utter loss of hope itself/ And things to hope for" (1805 & 1850, XI, XII, 6-7). The only "loss" that the 1850-passage sustains is the loss of the repetition of an assertion that Wordsworth has already made, and made very effectively, since it comes at the opening of the Book. In both versions as well, just prior to this passage, Wordsworth includes another passage in which he praises the benevolence of Nature. In the 1850 text, he greatly extends and refines

this passage so that it is more convincing than the passage as it stands in the A text. Why, then, should he make yet another comment on the benevolence of Nature in this passage?

We do not follow "the waywardings of the thinking mind" in the 1805 text. We follow the "waywardings" of a mind as yet incapable of organizing and presenting its thoughts in an economical and ordered fashion. Consequently, it repeats, again and again throughout the poem, assertions that it has made earlier. What we follow in the 1850 text is the thinking mind of a mature artist as it assembles, describes, and evaluates in a rationally ordered and precise fashion those influences and events that have helped to shape it. Tightness, economy, concreteness, vividness, and strictness of syntax are, despite Lindenberger's assertion to the contrary, "absolute values in poetry." Lindenberger rightly claims that, when we evaluate the two Preludes, we must realize that "the essential difference cannot be demonstrated by sampling short passages" (p. 297), but that we must strive to see the "difference in total effect" (p. 297) between the two poems. Contrary to what Lindenberger suggests, however, this thesis seeks to show that when Wordsworth applies the above values in his revision of The Prelude, he produces a work that, unlike the A text, demonstrates what F. R. Leavis terms "the rare integrity that can so put the truth beyond question."¹⁵

Helen Darbishire, C. H. Herford, and Mary Moorman also give us the impression that the main source of authority for their comments upon the Prelude revisions is not The Prelude itself, but the de Selincourt Introduction. To be fair, I should point out that Darbishire seems to be the most independent critic to fall into this category. She cites several examples from the text that de Selincourt does not mention, and I

shall deal with the most important of these in the thesis itself. Her general conclusions, however, seem strongly to echo those of de Selincourt and show his marked influence, although not the balance that his assertions often suggest. For example, Darbishire argues that, for Wordsworth,

So pure and strong was the life his senses led that it passed, on a tide of feeling, into the life of his spirit. Here lies the mystery which he calls, in a significant phrase, 'the incumbent mystery of sense and soul'. What matters to us is not so much to understand the experience as to realise it, not so much to solve the mystery as to see where it lies. This is what the early Prelude helps us to do. In it Wordsworth told the inner workings of his mind as nakedly and truthfully as he could; and the changes most to be deplored in his later text are those which overlay or obscure that naïve immediate expression. They generally mar the poetry; they always disguise the truth.¹⁶

This criticism seems to impose some rather unfair limitations upon the reader. We must not, according to Darbishire, ask questions about the assertions that the poetry makes; rather, we must simply experience the poetry itself. But Darbishire never pauses to tell us why we should not be able both to realise the experience that the poetry describes and understand it, why we should not be able to see where the "mystery" lies as well as attempt, with the aid of the explication in the poetry, "to solve that mystery. "The text of the early Prelude," Darbishire maintains "gives us that elemental experience freed from the gloss of later interpretation" (p. 98). But why we should place such absolute value upon "naïve immediate expression" and on "elemental experience," the value of which Wordsworth does not clarify by interpretation, is the essential question that Darbishire's criticism never satisfactorily answers. For Darbishire, as for many of the critics who fall into this first category, it is not so much what Wordsworth says, but how he says

it that matters. And the more dramatic and spontaneous his assertions are, even though those assertions be of the most subjective and immature thoughts, the greater, in their opinion, the poetry seems to be.

"Majesty, dignity, sovereignty, freedom, give place to a studious humility of mind" (p. 96) Darbishire says of one passage in the 1850 Prelude, and implies it of several others. Echoing these sentiments and using many of the same examples as Darbishire, Mary Moorman and C. H. Herford come to much the same conclusion. Moorman's remarks on the revisions take up nine pages in the second volume of her Wordsworth: A Biography and they are almost a paraphrase of de Selincourt's Introduction and Darbishire's article.¹⁷ They offer us little new insight into the revisions. Herford begins his comments on the revisions in Wordsworth by making the sweeping generalization that "Revision, after fifty, of poetry composed in the golden years between twenty-five and thirty-five, is always hazardous."¹⁸ He maintains that, in 1839, Wordsworth "took the serious and, for himself as for two generations of English students of his poetry, unhappy step of submitting it [The Prelude] to a complete revision" (p. 223). But aside from drawing our attention once again to some of "Mr. de Selincourt's happiest finds" (p. 225), he does little further independent research to further our knowledge of the revisions. It is indeed unfortunate that Herford, writing a full length study of Wordsworth four years after the appearance of the de Selincourt edition, found it impossible to "give more than an example or two of the typical changes" (p. 225).

But, by far, the most unfair criticism of the 1850 Prelude comes from scholars and critics in this category who merely allude to the de Selincourt edition, and from this, move on to damning generalizations

about the later version that they in no way attempt to verify or support from the text itself. For instance, in Volume II of William Wordsworth: His Life, Works, and Influence, George McLean Harper says of the 1850 text:

It is unfortunate the work was not finished earlier and left untouched. He 'tinkered' with it all the rest of his life, tempering its boldness and removing features which he deemed inconsistent with the staid principles of his mature age.¹⁹

Neither in this work, nor in "The Crisis of Wordsworth's Life and Art," does Harper discuss the revisions to The Prelude in depth. In the 1933 article, he merely insists that he has examined the revisions with de Selincourt, and, after having done so, claims that Wordsworth "died at the age of not more than thirty-six."²⁰

Margaret Drabble also makes a sweeping generalization about the final text that she does not substantiate. "Later alterations do smooth out some of the clumsiness of the 1805 text," she concedes, "but they also smooth out some of Wordsworth's most challenging and original ideas" (p. 77). She does not allude further to the revisions in her study. H. W. Garrod devotes an entire chapter to The Prelude in Wordsworth: Lectures and Essays. He is, however, concerned mainly with the dating of various segments and does not go into detail about the revisions themselves. Nevertheless, he insists that the last forty years of Wordsworth's life constitute "the most dismal anti-climax of which the history of literature holds record."²¹ In Wordsworth's Anti-climax, W. L. Sperry quotes Garrod's dictum about the last forty years of Wordsworth's life,²² but he says nothing about the 1850 Prelude. He leaves it to the reader to assume that the final Prelude is just one more product of Wordsworth's fading years. Hugh I'Anson Fausset also begins

The Lost Leader: A Study of Wordsworth with the Garrod quotation, but he does not substantiate his claims for Wordsworth's decaying sensibility²³ with regard to The Prelude anywhere in his work. And, finally, David Perkins, in his Introduction to Wordsworth in English Romantic Writers, strongly hints that the revisions to The Prelude are representative of that period in Wordsworth's life in which "his genius, as a poet declined."²⁴

All of these critics, and numerous other who refer only to the 1805 Prelude in their individual studies of the poem, perpetuate what this study seeks to demonstrate are unfair and unfounded misconceptions about the 1850 Prelude. Like Bateson (see p. 1 above), these critics insist that the 1850 Prelude is inferior to the earlier version because it contains only superficial improvements that detract from the spontaneity and immediacy that we find in the earlier version. Collectively, these critics verify the truth of both Yvor Winters's assertion in Forms of Discovery that Wordsworth "has been preserved in amber (or something) by (and with) a good many scholars and critics for more than a century,"²⁵ and Carlos Baker's summation in "Sensation and Vision in Wordsworth" in which he argues that

Too much has probably been made of the alleged shrinkage of power in Wordsworth, as if, after forty, his stature had suddenly declined to that of a dwarf. We read of how his genius decays, of how 'tragically' he is carried off the stage on the double shield of religious orthodoxy and political conservatism. This is a 'despondency' about Wordsworth that needs to be corrected.²⁶

Certainly, this review of the criticism of the revisions to The Prelude indicates that the 1805 Prelude "has been preserved in amber (or something) by (and with) a great many scholars and critics" for over fifty years, while the 1850 version has been, for the most part, greatly neglected.

It will be the aim of the present study to attempt to correct this "despondency" in Wordsworth criticism by a close examination of the text itself. By doing this, and by eliminating the "amber (or something)" that encases the 1805 Prelude, this study will show that it is the final version of The Prelude that should be preserved through intelligent and responsible criticism by scholars and critics in the future.

As we move on to the second category of critics, we find that there are no full length studies that attempt to defend the superiority of the 1805 Prelude. Several critics, however, do make individual attempts, independent of de Selincourt, to show that the 1805 text or certain passages in it are superior to the 1850 lines. While still defending the early version for its spontaneity and dramatic immediacy, Robert Marchant and Donald Davie do so using a somewhat different approach and more intellectually vigorous arguments. Praising Book I, ll. 351-71 of the 1805 text in Principles of Wordsworth's Poetry, Marchant concentrates on the tangible imagery in the passage to make his case. "More true to immediate experience," Marchant points out, "the imagery of the 1805 version of this passage of reflection has an essential quality of complex 'thought in experience' sacrificed in the later to exclusive dignity of expression."²⁷ He suggests that the revision of this passage results in a "deadening rather than deepening" effect (p. 57), and that "The poem of 1805 comes at the marvellous in the language of tangible experience whereas the final version already has the marvellous for its theme" (p. 57). In Articulate Energy, Donald Davie attempts to refute F. R. Leavis's claim for the superiority of the 1850 version of the "Blest the infant Babe" passage in Book II. Davie stoutly defends the earlier version "because it does more to deserve that 'active' which in

1805 got italics denied to it in 1850."²⁸ "Not only are there more active verbs in the first version, but they are more energetic" (p. 114) Davie insists, as he concentrates not only on the verbs themselves, but on the sense that they supply to the passage.

Bennett Weaver and Philip Hobsbaum are even more independent in their reasons for preferring the 1805 Prelude. Weaver, in Wordsworth: Poet of the Unconquerable Mind, concentrates upon the word "memory" as Wordsworth uses it in the 1850 text in order to demonstrate that "In 1805, memory is enhanced with witchery. . . . But in the long interval between 1805 and the final revision, when age has come on, Wordsworth 'may scarcely see at all.'"²⁹ Philip Hobsbaum, in Tradition and Experiment in English Poetry, offers the original insight that "Wordsworth was essentially a narrative poet, the greatest since Chaucer, and that therefore we should consider him at his best. Such a consideration would act as a means of differentiating between the two Preludes by way of analysing, with comparisons, the efficacy of the earlier one."³⁰ Hobsbaum insists that "This should be done initially in terms of language" (p. 187), and he centers his discussion on two segments, the Mount Snowdon passages and the Discharged Soldier segment at the conclusion of Book IV.

One final critic in this group, Carson C. Hamilton, favours the 1805 version, but his over-all thesis in Wordsworth's Decline in Poetic Power is that, even by 1805, Wordsworth's strength as a poet had, for the most part, left him. For Hamilton, The Prelude, in both versions,

is the old, old story of the organization taking over the temporarily free powers, of 'thus saith' being canonized into 'thus said.' The evangelic individual becomes a member of a new-come caste; intuition and emotion become doctrinaire, Victorianized; reason becomes applied reason, utilized into the best for the most (a noble ideal but not the same ideal as the

most for the best), or it becomes the 'right reason' of 'good sense,' which means of convenience, or expediency, of formalized conservatism, discretion, of the status quo, bringing us back to the eighteenth-century best of all possible worlds.³¹

"The Prelude," Hamilton insists, "shows Wordsworth involved in immemorial forces and processes that do not encourage us to find his future instructive nor the poem ultimately instructive" (p. 307).

These five critics offer us the most original and intelligent commentaries on the 1805 ~~text~~, commentaries that are devoid of the "amber (or something)" used by so many other critics and that give us vital insights into the strengths and weaknesses of Wordsworth's earlier art. Because I deal with each of these examinations in some detail in the present study, I have given here only the briefest of summations of their respective arguments. This thesis will, however, attempt to show that Marchant's deep appreciation of the tangible imagery in the 1805 text partially obscures his insight into the new concept of Nature that Wordsworth offers us in the 1850 text. Whereas the 1805 version describes Nature as a somewhat harsh and disruptive, volatile force, the final Prelude stresses the importance of Nature as a gentle and benign influence, the source of unity, harmony, and peaceful refinement.

"Active" as the 1805 "Blest the infant Babe" passage is, it conveys the idea that it is the energy that flows from the mother to the infant that initiates the awakening of the child's sensibilities and first feelings toward the world beyond himself. Later in this study, as we trace this passage from its inception in the 1798 Prelude through its modification in the 1805 text, and finally, to its finished form in the 1850 work, we shall see that Wordsworth carefully shifts the emphasis away from the influence ~~on~~ the infant of an abstract force, "the eternal

spirit,"³² to an emphasis on the importance of the mother's energy in shaping the child's reaction to the world, and, finally, to an emphasis upon the importance of the reciprocal love the mother and the infant have for each other. We may then conclude that it is this love, and not, as Davie suggests, the mother's energy, that is responsible for the infant's first emotional awakening.

This study will also attempt to demonstrate that Weaver, in concentrating solely upon the term "memory," fails to notice several important aspects concerning the interaction of thought and memory in the 1850 text. It will also attempt to show that Weaver overlooks a vital new thematic enlargement to the final version in a passage in which he accuses Wordsworth of using the term "memory" in nothing more than "dead statement" (p. 10).

As we examine the major revisions to The Prelude in the forthcoming chapters of this thesis, we shall find that it is in the 1850, and not in the 1805 text, that Wordsworth proves himself to be the great narrative poet that Hobsbaum claims he is. Finally, an assessment of the poem in both versions may convince us that, contrary to Hamilton's assertion, the 1850 Prelude does not lead us back "to the eighteenth-century best of all possible worlds," but that it leads us forward instead, into the twentieth-century. In All Shades of Consciousness, Eugene Stelzig rightly points out that

Wordsworth is the first modern English poet. With the fulness and maturity requisite for any major achievement, his art reflects a significantly changed outlook which is taken so much for granted today that we are often only aware of it--if at all --in a limited or specialized setting.³³

One of the aims of this present study is to demonstrate that it is this

"changed outlook" demonstrated in the 1850 Prelude that makes the poem not only "ultimately instructive," but also universally and personally significant to modern readers.

"No one seems to have made any detailed study of the revisions,"³⁴ Mary Burton points out in The One Wordsworth, the only full-length study that attempts to defend the 1850 Prelude against de Selincourt's charges. In this study, Burton asserts:

Everyone writes as if he knows more about the revisions than he actually does, either vaguely generalizing from a cursory examination of the book, accepting the introduction, which the editor himself doubtless did not consider the last word on the subject, or grasping at occasional lines that appear to illustrate the critic's own preconceived ideas as to what these early manuscripts ought to reveal. (p. 22)

Certainly, no one can accuse Burton of merely "grasping at occasional lines" in her study. The One Wordsworth is the most exhaustive study of the revisions available to date, and I allude to it many times throughout the present study. Thorough as this investigation is, however, it fails to give us a comprehensive view of the revisions because, like those studies favouring the 1805 text, it is sharply divided into discussions of style and content. Thus, we never gain a true appreciation of what changes of idea really occur in the final Prelude or, how Wordsworth's stylistic and emotional responses affect these ideas. Besides this serious fragmentation of discussion, Burton's work has yet another serious flaw. As the title implies, this study defends the thesis that there is only one Wordsworth. The entire discussion is aimed at proving that the Wordsworth who wrote the 1805 Prelude is precisely the same poet who wrote the 1850 version. This untenable thesis greatly limits Burton's argument, because in spending a great deal of energy in attempting to defend the

poet by showing that "In no sense is he a different Wordsworth" (p. 227), Burton must, in many instances, bend her evidence from the text in rather ingenious ways so that her entire study is considerably weakened.

Although it is not as all-encompassing as The One Wordsworth, The Quest for Maturity: A Study of William Wordsworth's The Prelude gives us a somewhat better indication of what Wordsworth was actually working toward as he revised the poem. Here, Penelope June Stokes divides her assessment of the revisions into five distinct categories: "The Theme and Purpose of The Prelude," "The Influence of Nature," "The Power of the Imagination," "The Relationship of Heart, Mind, and Soul," and "The Touch of God." Like Burton's work, this study tends to lean too heavily toward a defense of Wordsworth, the man, instead of toward an appraisal of the 1850 Prelude as poetry.³⁵ Nevertheless, by bringing together into one chapter several revised and unrevised passages dealing with a specific topic, Stokes affords us the opportunity both to trace the changes in idea that occur from text to text and to note (and I think this is crucial) those ideas which remain the same in the 1850 text. But this study is severely limited both in depth and scope; it is, in fact, only seventy-four pages long. While it treats certain central topics in some detail, it neglects others. Thus, we do not gain as full an appreciation as we might of how ideas work together in the final Prelude or of the range of ideas that are revised into the final version. The other serious flaw in this work is that it treats only ideas and does not take Wordsworth's style or his emotional or moral responses to his ideas into consideration. Hence, while it does not deteriorate into a series of lists of stylistic improvements as does Burton's study, it presents much the same problem as The One Wordsworth in that, in it, Stokes does

not show us how stylistic and emotional responses affect Wordsworth's ideas in the final text or how his ideas alter his stylistic, emotional or moral responses. The central aim of the present study is to show, unlike Burton and Stokes, how the 1850 Prelude demonstrates the truth of Gerald Graff's assertion that "Soundness of style reflects a soundness of emotional attitude which in turn reflects a soundness of intellectual understanding."³⁶

In concluding this brief review, I shall mention a few individual critics who do not fall into the above three categories. These critics do not have as their main objective a defense of either Prelude. Instead, they briefly either defend certain of Wordsworth's more mature techniques or artistic traits, point out general trends in the revisions themselves, or praise revisions in individual lines or passages of the 1850 text that are, for the most part, somewhat neglected by other scholars. In The Unity of Wordsworth's Poetry, for example, Bernard Groom boldly defends Wordsworth's revision of the more religious passages in the later version by insisting that "If he wished to interpret an early experience in the light of his later thought, assuredly he was right to do so."³⁷ Besides drawing our attention to a great number of excellent individual revisions in the 1850 text, R. D. Havens, in The Mind of a Poet, also stresses the immense labour that Wordsworth undertook in revising key passages such as the opening lines of Book V.³⁸ Geoffrey Hartman, in Wordsworth's Poetry, applies the conclusions that he comes to while examining the 1850 lines "Clothed in the sunshine of the withering fern" (VI, 11) to the revisions as a whole and asserts that

In this image we have the culminating tendency of all the revisions, which is (1) the purging of artificial in favor of natural contrasts, and (2) the depiction, related to this, of a perfectly easy, organic transition mixing death and birth, and so diminishing the idea of change as discontinuity.³⁹

While mentioning the "poise and refinement" with which Wordsworth presents the "spots of time" passages in the 1850 text, John Beer, in Wordsworth in Time, also briefly explains and defends the appropriateness of and Wordsworth's possible reasons for removing these passages from their initial position in Book II of the 1798 Prelude.⁴⁰ These passages also come to the attention of Frank D. McConnell. In The Confessional Imagination, McConnell points out that in these lines, as in the "Stolen Boat" and "Simplon Pass" episodes, minute revisions enhance Wordsworth's handling of narrative time.⁴¹ McConnell also makes the provocative comment that one revision in the "Mount Snowdon" passages adds "a complexity which is almost a direct reversal of 1805's more simple-minded" approach (p. 157). Finally, in Revaluation, F. R. Leavis suggests that "No one is likely to dispute that the later version is decidedly the more satisfactory,"⁴² as he draws our attention to the "Blest the infant Babe" passages in Book II of the 1850 text.

But, while they do not allude specifically to The Prelude per se, two last comments, another by Leavis and one by Yvor Winters, might, perhaps, offer us the keenest insights into the most intelligent approach to the Prelude revisions. Like those critics who admire the 1805 Prelude for its spontaneity, Leavis admits, in Revaluation, that he, too, admires spontaneity in Wordsworth's verse. However, spontaneity for Wordsworth, as Leavis defines it, seems, like Wordsworth's own concept of spontaneity, to be quite different from the quality that the admirers of

the 1805 text praise. After ~~quoting~~ stating that "Wordsworth's preoccupation was with a distinctively human naturalness, with sanity and spiritual health" (p. 155), and after ~~quoting~~ Wordsworth's comment from the Preface to Lyrical Ballads, in which he insists that his poetry always has "'a purpose'" (p. 159), Leavis explains what spontaneity means to Wordsworth and why this quality in his work should make him important to twentieth-century readers:

Spontaneity, that is, as Wordsworth seeks it, involves no cult of the instinctive and primitive at the expense of the rationalized and civilized; it is the spontaneity supervening upon complex development, a spontaneity engaging an advanced and delicate organization. He stands for a distinctly human naturalness; one, that is, consummating a discipline, moral and other. A poet who can bring home to us the possibility of such a naturalness should today be found important. In Wordsworth's poetry the possibility is offered us realized--realized in a mode central and compelling enough to enforce the bearing of poetry upon life, the significance of this poetry for actual living. (p. 160)

While Leavis encourages us to appreciate Wordsworth's artistic spontaneity, not as a preliminary step toward a complex and disciplined development, but as a vital and unique quality arising from such a development, Winters encourages us to be more aware of the complexity of the development itself. Winters defines romantic poetry as poetry "which sought to free the emotions rather than to understand them,"⁴³ and, in the same study, he classifies the English romantic poets as those who "sought to free the emotions by writing about them in a more or less emotional manner" (p. 453). He then adds: "Wordsworth, of course, became less consistently romantic as he matured" (p. 453).

By quoting the preceding comments of this final group of critics, I am in no way suggesting that they, individually or collectively, defend the entire 1850 Prelude.⁴⁴ In fact, the last critic, Yvor Winters,

does not even mention The Prelude in the two works from which I quote. A thorough review of the criticism available on the revisions to The Prelude, however, indicates that these critics offer us what are, perhaps, some of the most provocative and challenging insights into Wordsworth's mature qualities and practices, qualities that are reflected in his achievement in the 1850 Prelude. These insights, if investigated more fully, will lead to a fuller and deeper appreciation of this achievement, and part of the aim of the present study will be to carry out such an investigation.

Before I explain the method of selection and approach in the present study, I should like to make a brief comment upon the long awaited, recently published, authoritative text of the 1799, 1805, and 1850 Preludes edited by Jonathan Wordsworth, M. H. Abrams, and Stephen Gill. Besides supplying an extensive, and, in most cases, extremely helpful gloss on the revisions, this edition also supplies a one-and-a-half page comparison of the 1805 and 1850 texts. If one expects to find original and sensitive insights into the 1850 revisions in this summation, however, he will be extremely disappointed. This summation is very little more than an updated and very much abbreviated de Selincourt Introduction.

The editors praise the "spontaneity and strength"⁴⁵ of several 1805 passages in this comparison. But because this thesis deals with all of these examples in later chapters, I shall not dwell upon them here. But I would like to draw the reader's attention to two very important points that these editors make with regard to Wordsworth's much commented upon later orthodoxy and conservatism, points that the reader might bear in mind as he reads this thesis. The first is that "too much can be made of Wordsworth's later conservatism; he was not an unthinking apostate,

not the 'Lost Leader' of Browning's poem. His vision never became typical of the age" (p. 523). The second is that "it is doubtful if [Wordsworth] ever rejected his pantheist and near-pantheist beliefs of 1798-1805" (p. 524). The present study supports these two assertions and throughout will attempt to demonstrate that we must take them seriously if we wish to gain a clearer understanding of and a more sensitive insight into the final Prelude.

Any thorough examination of the revisions to The Prelude is an enormous task. The only way to come to terms with it is through a clearly defined focus on the sections of the poem to be examined. Even if this study concerns itself with a fairly narrow range of revisions, it can, perhaps, offer the reader a wider range of insight into and appreciation of the revisions as a whole if what it examines is in some ways representative of the majority of revisions or is related to the universal truths that the 1850 Prelude further attempts to define or illuminate. This study will, therefore, concern itself primarily with an evaluation of those major revisions that are most representative of the changes that Wordsworth makes in the particular Book in which the selected revision or revisions are found. The study will also further restrict its examination to only those revisions that significantly alter either Wordsworth's presentation of himself at a particular stage of development or his presentation of that particular stage of development itself, or that demonstrate a marked change in his philosophical outlook at the time of composition. Because this is in no way a comprehensive examination of all the revisions, this thesis will direct its attention primarily to a discussion of the 1805 and 1850 Preludes, although, from time to time, it will draw upon selected passages from the 1798/99 Prelude and the variants

written between the 1805 and 1850 versions to illustrate more fully certain important points.

A brief word about the chapters to follow might be helpful. This study is divided into six chapters, all of which use an integrated approach to the revisions (that is, they do not separate considerations of style and content) in order to demonstrate how, together, Wordsworth's more mature emotional, moral, intellectual and stylistic responses enrich the final Prelude and contribute to its universality and appeal. Each chapter except the first and the last, however, will place considerably more emphasis upon one particular type of response.

Chapter I is divided into two parts. Part I, The "Felt Experience," attempts to answer, in part, those critics who prefer what they term the "spontaneity" of the 1805 Prelude to the sincerity and spontaneity (as Leavis defines it) of the 1850 text. It examines only four revisions whose subject is Wordsworth's early and later conception of himself as a poet. It attempts to illustrate that the poet of 1850 is far more likely to give us an intelligent, emotionally controlled and morally sound account of the growth of his mind than the poet of 1805. Part II, "Romantic Almost," deals with the purposes and themes of The Prelude in 1805 and in 1850. Its aim is to draw the reader's attention to the thematic additions and enlargements of the 1850 text and to show that, in the final version, The Prelude becomes more than a romantic poem in its attempts to fulfill the serious purposes that the more mature Wordsworth has in mind.

Chapter II, "From 'Vulgar Joy' to 'Calm Delight,'" begins a roughly chronological study of the revisions with a consideration of Wordsworth's revised comments on childhood, early education and the

beginnings of imaginative development. The main purpose of this chapter is to focus on Wordsworth's emotional responses to the theme of childhood and to show how his more maturely controlled responses to this theme help to give these sections of the poem a sensitivity, plausibility, and universality not enjoyed by their counterparts in the 1805 text.

Although all of the chapters stress, to varying degrees, Wordsworth's greater narrative skill and control in the 1850 text, Chapters III and IV, "Shaking the Mind's Simplicity" and "Copying the Impression of the Memory," treat this topic with special care. Taking up Hobsbaum's challenge that an assessment of Wordsworth's narrative art "should be done primarily in terms of language" (p. 24 above), and considering Weaver's comments on memory (p. 24 above), these chapters examine closely, although not exclusively, elements of Wordsworth's later style which it seeks to show give those sections of the 1850 Prelude dealing with adolescence and university years a realism and a psychological plausibility lacking in the 1805 text. These chapters will also demonstrate that merely copying the impression of memories will not suffice in the 1850 Prelude.

Chapter V, "This Sorrowful Reverse," attempts to illustrate that it is mainly Wordsworth's more mature, moral response to the French Revolution, to Burke, and to the political situations in England during his day that give us, in the 1850 text, not only a fuller picture of the youth who was almost destroyed by the changes and events in which he took part, but also a more vivid, realistic, and responsible assessment of the history of the time and the events that determined it.

Finally, Chapter VI, "More Rational Proportions," deals primarily with Wordsworth's assertions about the sick and healthy mind in both

versions. It attempts to demonstrate that it is due mainly to these rational, yet complex, assertions in the final text that we gain new insights not only into Wordsworth's mind, but into our own potentialities as well.

In every chapter of this thesis, including the Introduction, I group together critics who agree on certain issues regarding the revisions to The Prelude. In many cases, I attempt to refute their assertions about the 1850 text. This grouping, however, should not be taken to suggest that these critics form "schools of thought" with regard to The Prelude as a whole. Nor should my criticism of their individual, and often very particularized, assertions about the revisions suggest any holistic condemnation of their larger, complete evaluations of the poem, evaluations that are, in every case, significant contributions to the study of The Prelude.

Since MSS. D, E (1850 Prelude) and C (revised A MS. of 1816/19) have not, as yet, become part of the new Dove Cottage classification system, and since The Wordsworth Collection at the University of Alberta has not been collated against this new system, I have made no attempt, in this study, to quote from actual manuscript sources. So that no reader can mistake the method of approach in this study, I repeat here that all quotations from the 1799, 1805, and 1850 Preludes are from the 1979 Norton edition, cited above. All quotations from the variants between 1805 and 1850 are from the de Selincourt, Oxford edition, cited above, and all quotations from the 1798/99 Prelude earlier than the V MS. are from the 1977 Cornell edition, edited by Stephen Parrish, cited above.

CHAPTER I

THE POET AND THE PURPOSE AND THEME OF THE PRELUDE

I

Spontaneity versus Sincerity: "The 'Felt' Experience" and Wordsworth's Changing Conception of the Poet

In The Function of Criticism, Yvor Winters insists that what the poet must do "is make a rational statement about an experience, at the same time employing his language in such a manner as to communicate the emotion which ought to be communicated by that rational understanding of the particular subject."¹ Supporting this statement, Gerald Graff, in Poetic Statement, points out that "Ideas do matter in poetry, but no one could seriously hold that a poem is authenticated solely by virtue of the soundness of the ideas which inform it" (p. 156).² Graff also maintains that "The difference between good and bad poetry lies not only in the superiority of the good poem's conceptual understanding of its subject, but in a large part in the good poet's ability to respond adequately, stylistically and emotionally, with respect to his conceptualization" (Poetic Statement, p. 157). When evaluating poetry, neither of these critics divorces style and emotional or moral reaction to the subject from intellectual content. "In my view," Graff insists, "these two aspects, the abstract, conceptual intelligence and the dramatic process of experience, cannot be seen as antithetical without enfeebling literature and criticism alike" (Poetic Statement, p. xiv).

As I have tried to demonstrate in my Introduction, however, it is axiomatic for a number of Wordsworth scholars that the 1805 Prelude is superior to the 1850 text simply because it demonstrates spontaneity and dramatic immediacy. Harold Bloom regrets that Wordsworth's "reliance upon the felt experience" in the A text is replaced, in the later version, by the "abstraction that follows experience" (Intro., p. 13). Russell Noyes complains that the "living fact" that Wordsworth so often presents in the earlier version gives way to "intellectual statement about it" in the 1850 text (Intro., p. 13). Helen Darbishire deplores those changes in the final version "which overlay or obscure . . . naïve immediate expression." "What matters to us," she insists, "is not so much to understand the experience as to realise it, not so much to solve the mystery as to see where it lies. This is what the early Prelude helps us to do" (Intro., p. 19). And William Empson laments that the "wavering and untrammelled natural growth" that the 1805 Prelude represents is missing from the 1850 work (Intro., p. 15). And so on. Collectively, these critics seem to prove the validity of Graff's assertion, in Poetic Statement, that:

In our period, the customary starting point for theorizing about poetry is through its supposed radical opposition to discursive writing: the poem is experience, not mediated statement about experience; poetry gives no 'truth of correspondence' concerning states of affairs outside the poem, for the poem is itself the object of the knowledge it contains and aspires only to 'truth of coherence'; the poem is not an assertion of thought but a 'dramatic enactment' or 'presentation' of the process of thought. As T. S. Eliot puts it, the poet does not advocate certain beliefs but enacts 'what it feels like to hold certain beliefs.' (pp. xi-xii)

To these critics, then, the 1805 Prelude is the superior poem, not because it tells us anything more significant about the growth of the

poet's mind, but because it is the growth of the poet's mind, not because it "takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity," but because it is the "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings."³ These critics, one might say, prefer the spontaneity of Wordsworth's verse to its sincerity.

The aim of the first part of this chapter is to examine four passages from both versions of The Prelude in which Wordsworth, both stylistically and conceptually, defines himself as a poet. By doing this, I intend to demonstrate that, in the 1850 text, Wordsworth's conception of himself in the role of the poet and his emotional, moral, and stylistic responses to this conception are more responsible, rational, and adult than they are in the A text, and, therefore, that he impresses us more as a sincere and dedicated poet in that version than he does in the 1805 poem. Here, then, in all the undimmed freshness of the A text, is the first passage.⁴ It comes from the Preamble to Book I:

Enough that I am free, for months to come
 May dedicate myself to chosen tasks,
 May quit the tiresome sea and dwell on shore--
 If not a settler on the soil, at least
 To drink wild water, and to pluck green herbs,
 And gather fruits fresh from their native bough.
 Nay more, if I may trust myself, this hour
 Hath brought a gift that consecrates my joy;
 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 travelled 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 unrecognised, 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 honorable field,
 Pure passions, virtue, knowledge, and delight,
 The holy life of music and of verse.

The second passage comes from Book III: "Residence at Cambridge":

But wherefore be cast down,
 Why should I grieve?--I was a chosen son.
 For hither I had come with holy powers
 And faculties, whether to work or feel:
 To apprehend all passions and all moods
 Which time, and place, and season do impress
 Upon the visible universe, and work
 Like changes there by force of my own mind.
 I was a freeman, in the purest sense
 Was free, and to majestic ends was strong--
 I do not speak of learning, moral truth,
 Or understanding--'twas enough for me
 To know that I was otherwise endowed.

(1805, III, 81-93)

Here are the opening lines to Book VII: "Residence in London":

Five years are vanished since I first poured out,
 Saluted by that animating breeze
 Which met me issuing from the city's walls,
 A glad preamble to this verse. I sang
 Aloud in dithyrambic fervour, deep
 But short-lived uproar, like a torrent sent
 Out of the bowels of a bursting cloud
 Down Scawfell or Blencathara's rugged sides,
 A waterspout from heaven.

(1805, VII, 1-9)

Finally, here is the fourth example, the opening lines to the 1805
 version of Book V: "Books":

Even in the steadiest mood of reason, when
 All sorrow for thy transitory pains
 Goes out, it grieves me for thy state, O man,
 Thou paramount creature, and thy race, while ye
 Shall sojourn on this planet, not for woes
 Which thou endur'st--that weight, albeit huge,
 I charm away--but for those palms atchieved
 Through length of time, by study and hard thought,
 The honours of thy high endowments; there
 My sadness finds its fuel.

(1805, V, 1-10)

We can certainly "realise" experience while reading these passages--all

kinds of experience--especially the experience of following what Lindenberger refers to as the "waywardings of the thinking mind" (Intro., p. 17). What we fail, however, to "realise" and what the true "mystery" in these passages seems to be, is what this "thinking mind" is thinking about. Thus, we are left asking what Wordsworth's true conception of himself as a poet really is.

In excerpt one, the somewhat immature assertion "Enough that I am free" (l. 33) is the key to the entire passage. Despite what he claims to want from freedom in the last four lines, the first six suggest that freedom for Wordsworth in 1805 means immature and irresponsible self-indulgence both as a man and as a poet. In other words, this strong assertion suggests what the rest of the passage will demonstrate; that is, that it is enough that he is free.

The most obvious problem in this passage and in the entire 1805 Preamble is that Wordsworth is more concerned with the texture of the verse, with the effect of sensual, associationist detail and sentimental emotional expression on the reader than he is with presenting a strong argument in which he both defines and explains what freedom, creative inspiration, and the role of the poet really mean to him as a dedicated artist. Therefore, what ought to be of primary concern throughout the Preamble--a preliminary definition and defense of the primary themes informing the section and leading to the Book itself and the story of the poet's life--is subservient all the way through this opening section to superfluous detail and spontaneous and sentimentalized emotional display that are supposedly enhancing and supporting the argument, but that are, in reality, relegating both the definitions and the entire argument to a background position in the poetry.

Unfortunately, the structure of the entire fifty-four line 1805 Preamble, of which these lines constitute the concluding section, is weakly discursive, evidencing emotional indulgence at its worst. Thus, instead of a strong, well thought-out structure insisting on a controlled style, tone, and thematic treatment, we have in these lines little more than an example of an effusive, undisciplined associationalist poetic that is both indiscriminate in its inclusions and lax in its demands for intellectual rigor. The controlling theme of the Preamble and of the Introduction as a whole is supposedly poetic inspiration resulting from personal freedom and leading to the dedicated life of a poet. By allowing a rambling, undisciplined style to dictate the structure, Wordsworth ends up in this passage and throughout the 1805 Preamble creating an unfortunate assemblage of loose syntactical patterns, unsuitable diction, and mixed and inappropriate tones, that lead, in turn, to unintentionally muddled statement.

Conjunctions abound in the first six lines of this passage. They connect very loosely the catalogue of actions that are supposedly defining "The holy life of music and of verse" (l. 54). The reader is, however, so involved with realising all the experiences of the quitting and the dwelling and the drinking and the plucking and the gathering, that he completely loses sight of the poet. The "untrammelled natural growth" in this passage also distracts the reader's attention from the idea of the poet. The "wild water" and the "green herbs," and the "fruits fresh from their native bough" (ll. 37-38), offered by Wordsworth as they are, in a loosely connected series of vaguely descriptive, unrealized images, distract the reader and delude him into thinking that, in this cataloguing and accretion of detail, the poet is giving him more

of a definition and explanation of what the life of a poet involves than he really is. What Wordsworth is giving us here is an associationalist poetic that celebrates itself and only itself, and not the "holy life of music and of verse" (l. 54) that it purports partially to define.

This cataloguing of detail disguised to some extent as definition is not confined to this passage alone, nor does the listing always obscure just the definition of the life and duties of the poet. From the beginning of the 1805 Preamble, where the main concern is poetic inspiration, we have the same result. There, the "gentle breeze" (l. 1) "blows from the green fields and from the clouds/ And from the sky . . . / And seems half conscious of the joy it gives" (ll. 2-4; my italics). Because this source of inspiration is so clouded over with a hazy film of accrued detail, the reader has some difficulty, as with the definition of the poet, in determining precisely what Wordsworth means by the term "inspiration" and in determining wherein the source of the "inspiration" really lies. He finds it difficult to relate true creative inspiration, seemingly coming from a breeze blowing in several various directions and from many possible sources, with the divine breeze of poetic inspiration that Wordsworth describes later in the Preamble, just as he cannot relate the concept of a life of true poetic dedication to a berry-picking escapade or a herb-plucking expedition.

But even this "holy life" that Wordsworth aspires to its somewhat questionable, partly because of the way he represents it. Built as it is on a series of loosely connected prepositional phrases, the last segment of this passage, which should offer a strong, final summation of both the passage itself and the entire Preamble, rambles on instead, giving us little more than a randomly ordered series of generalizations

that seem somewhat tangential to a definition of the life of a dedicated artist. We question Wordsworth's order of priorities as a poet when we find "Of prowess in an honourable field" (l. 52) lodged in the middle of yet another catalogue of future aspirations listing "active days" (l. 51) as its first consideration, and "delight" (l. 53) as its last. And "Pure passions" seem to take precedence over "virtue" and "knowledge" (l. 53) here as well. Just how dedicated and "holy" this new life of artistic creativity is going to be, then, is left as a matter of some conjecture at the end of this passage.

The ordering of Wordsworth's assertions is not the only obscuring factor in this passage. Weak rhetorical tactics also add to our loss of confidence in Wordsworth as poet, because, when we come to "if I may trust myself" (l. 39) after reading the strongly charged "Enough that I am free" (l. 33) here, and even in remembering the earlier emphatic and vigorously declarative assertion, "I cannot miss my way" (l. 19), we begin to wonder seriously whether the problem is that Wordsworth has too much confidence in his inspired abilities or whether he does not have enough.

The diction, like the rhetorical strategy, contributes a mixture of tones to this passage that are somewhat out of keeping with Wordsworth's primary assertion that he wishes to spend his life as a dedicated artist. The metaphor "tiresome sea" (l. 35) augments those of the "house/ Of bondage" (ll. 6-7) and the "prison" (l. 8) that Wordsworth uses earlier in the Preamble in collectively suggesting that the city has nothing whatsoever to offer Wordsworth as a poet except imprisonment and boredom. Is Wordsworth so limited in his perspectives that he thinks "the holy life of music and of verse" can only be led in the country? Is

he implying that, for a creative artist, a mundane life filled with "active days" of plucking herbs and gathering fruit is somehow more challenging and inspirational than life in an urban setting? Can a poet not find inspiration for a poem about "the mind of man" (1805, XIII, 446) while participating in the activities that men share in a city? And what of the inspiration that he does receive in the country? First, he refers to it as a "mild creative breeze" (l. 43), then, as a "vital breeze" (l. 44) without transitional explanation. If it is so "mild," how can it be vital? And speaking of vitality, why does Wordsworth insist upon associating himself with the "wild" (l. 37), uncultivated aspects of Nature, when critics such as Aldous Huxley rightly point out that Wordsworth would never truly have been comfortable, let alone creative, in anything even remotely resembling a natural wilderness?⁵ Both stylistically and thematically, this passage, and, in fact, the entire 1805 Preamble, are somewhat irrational and immaturely irresponsible as the beginning of the story of a poet's life. They leave more questions unanswered about Wordsworth's conception of the poet than they answer.

The "living fact[s]" in Wordsworth's assertions in the second excerpt are, to say the least, somewhat startling. We again "realise" Wordsworth's reliance upon the "felt experience" in this passage, but this piece of self-aggrandizement and seeming extempore effusion helps us to "realise" little else. There is little intellect in or behind the lines. Wordsworth pompously claims that, as a youth, he was "a chosen son" (l. 82), but he does not say why or by whom he was chosen. Nor does he explain the "mystery" of the source behind his god-like, youthful ability to "apprehend all passions and all moods/ Which time, and place, and season do impress/ Upon the visible universe" (ll. 85-87). This

assertion is nothing more than sheer effusion since no person, "chosen" or otherwise, has this ability. Wordsworth's arrogant claim that he was "a freeman; in the purest sense/ Was free" (ll. 89-90) is yet another piece of pompous and self-inflated aggrandizement since no one is "free" "in the purest sense." And Wordsworth's claim that, as a youth, he was "strong" to "majestic ends" (l. 90) seems more a matter of conjecture than fact, since he gives us no indication of how he knew this as a youth or how he knows it as a more mature poet. The most startling assertion that Wordsworth makes in this passage is, however, the last: "I do not speak of learning, moral truth,/ Or understanding--'twas enough for me/ To know that I was otherwise endowed" (ll. 91-93). Does this mean that we, as readers, are supposed to assume that the poet was amply endowed with "learning, moral truth" and "understanding" as a youth, so that it is not necessary for him to discuss these matters, or does it mean that they are and were so unimportant to Wordsworth in his development as a creative artist that they are completely superseded by his other abilities, and, therefore, he does not deem them worth mention either when he is discussing his youth, or anything else? Wordsworth's inappropriate responses to the role of the poet leave us, at the end of the passage, thinking that, here, he not only fails to speak of, but also with "learning, moral truth,/ Or understanding."

What a wonderful assortment we have in the third excerpt! Breezes, walls, verses, torrents, bowels, clouds, mountain-sides, waterspouts, streams, pouring, saluting, issuing, singing, bursting, dithyrambic fervour and short-lived uproar! All in ten lines. Here, again, Wordsworth's stylistic and emotional responses to the idea of the role of the poet are immature and inappropriate. They therefore

contribute nothing to his past self-portrait or to his self-portrait as he writes the poem in 1805. After reading these lines, one might be justified in asking precisely what Wordsworth is attempting to record here. Is he trying to describe himself as he was in his more youthful days when he first began to write the poem, or is he inadvertently recording, in verse, an example of bathos such as the one that Alexander Pope assures the aspiring, young, bathetic poet that he will create if he follows his rules concerning metaphor? Pope suggests that "the first rule is to draw it from the lowest things, which is a certain way to sink to the highest. . . . The Second, that, whenever you start a Metaphor, you must be sure to run it down, and pursue it as far as it can go."⁶ The tastelessness of the "waterspout from heaven" (l. 9) metaphor within the equally tasteless simile of the "bowels of a bursting cloud" (l. 7) and their bathetic quality suggest that Wordsworth is more interested in giving us an example of what he considered (and still considers in 1805) to be creative virtuosity than he is in giving us the impression that he was and is a rational and conscientious poet.

But we find even more distressing the phrases "in dithyrambic fervour" (l. 5), "short-lived uproar" (l. 6), and "the interrupted strain broke forth once more" (l. 10), because they confirm, without a doubt, what Wordsworth only obliquely hinted at when he spoke, in the first passage, of wanting "To drink wild water, and to pluck green herbs, / And gather fruits fresh from their native bough" (ll. 37-38). A dithyramb is defined as "a Greek choral song of vehement or wild character and usually irregular in form, originally in honour of Dionysus or Bacchus," and dithyrambic is defined as "wildly irregular in form" or "wildly enthusiastic."⁷ Clearly, Wordsworth's 1805 conception of himself as a

poet is strongly related to the idea of the shaman or Bacchus-like figure who creates poetry in a wild, frenzied, haphazard, and completely spontaneous fashion (inspired, but "short lived uproar"), and who is governed only by intuition and not by rational thought. Furthermore, the phrase "the interrupted stream broke forth once more" (l. 10) suggests both that Wordsworth remembers no real maturation of his poetic abilities during the intervening years of which he speaks in this passage and that no real change has occurred in his conception of either the poet or poetry either during those years or during the time that elapsed between his writing of Book I and Book VII in 1805. This phrase simply suggests that Wordsworth's poetical "strain" was interrupted for a time, only to resume once more in precisely the same effusive style as before. In this passage, then, Wordsworth's style defines him as an emotionally immature poet who is more concerned with expressing strong, spontaneous emotion for dramatic effect than with writing good poetry.

In the fourth and final excerpt, Wordsworth expresses a rational and universally acceptable idea--that it is at his moments of greatest achievement that man is most to be pitied. Here, however, Wordsworth's style reflects his inadequate moral response to this assertion. This undercuts both the sincerity of the assertion itself and Wordsworth's authority and sincerity as a speaker on a philosophical subject. How, for example, can we possibly take seriously the opinions of a poet who casually speaks of "sorrow" that "goes out" (ll. 2-3) and who pompously claims to be able to "charm away" "huge" "woes" (ll. 5-7) as some nineteenth-century Merlin would his monsters? The charlatan's tone that the imprecise diction suggests is inappropriate to the serious sentiment that Wordsworth is attempting to express in this passage.

Wordsworth's insensitive presentation even calls into question his moral attitude to humanity here. The segment is one sentence in the A text. Occupying a central and key position in this sentence, and drawing undue attention to itself by virtue of its key placement, is the scientifically cold and inappropriate "planet" (l. 5). Rhythmically, tonally, and thematically out of place (or, one might argue, too ironically in place) in this segment, and further stressed, as it is, coming before a caesura, the word thrusts itself at the reader, calling attention to itself and away from the central assertion by acting as a pivotal point for the entire sentence. And, since it is so centrally located here, we cannot help noticing how it lends an oddity of alien connotations to the entire segment: "creature," "race," "sojourn," "planet." The tone here suggests that of a cold and objective scientist observing from afar and discussing some form of extraterrestrial life toward which he feels little emotional commitment or real compassion. This tone seriously calls into question the "sadness" (l. 10) and the grief that Wordsworth claims to feel for humanity.

Even Wordsworth's insensitive and insecure handling of meter and rhythm in this passage casts serious doubts upon his suitability as a speaker on a complex philosophical topic. Firm, mature control of rhythm and meter, were they present, could, to some extent, offset the immature bardic posing and imaginative self-deception of the "I charm," and diminish the cold, unemotional tone that the "planet" and the "creature" introduce. But, here, in the first line, for example, we wonder, as we did with the placement of "planet" in line five, at the inappropriate and insensitive placement of the adjective "steepest" in the line. The word itself introduces an ironic contrast between rhythm and denotation, since,

by disturbing the iambic beat of the line, it reverses the very effect of regularity and steadiness that the sense of the line would seem to demand.

All in all, then, this fourth passage, like the other three, calls into question both Wordsworth's abilities as a poet and his conception of himself as a poet. They show him to be, despite his claims to the contrary, insensitive and immature--artistically, morally, emotionally, and intellectually. If we turn now to the 1850 counterparts of these passages, we shall find a poet to whom sincerity means more than spontaneity and whose sincerity is a meaningful part of his poetry. Here is the 1850 version of the first passage:

Dear Liberty! Yet what would I avail
 But for a gift that consecrates the joy?
 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, not wanting punctual service high,
 Matins and vespers of harmonious verse!

(1850, I, 31-45)

And here is the 1850 version of the second excerpt:

But wherefore be cast down?
 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,
 Bear witness Truth, endowed with holy powers
 And faculties, whether to work or feel.

(1850, III, 82-89)

The third 1850 excerpt reads as follows:

SIX changeful years have vanished since I first
 Peured out (saluted by that quickening breeze
 Which met me issuing from the City's walls)
 A glad preamble to this Verse: I sang
 Aloud, with fervour irresistible
 Of short-lived transport, like a torrent bursting,
 From a black thunder-cloud, down Scafell's side
 To rush and disappear. But soon broke forth
 (So willed the Muse) a less impetuous stream,
 That flowed awhile with unabating strength,
 Then stopped for years; not audible again
 Before last primrose-time.

(1850, VII, 1-12)

Wordsworth once remarked to his nephew: "I have bestowed great pains on my style, full as much as any of my contemporaries have done on theirs. I yield to none in love for my art."⁸ We can see just how true this statement is when we examine the variants to the opening of Book V, the final excerpt. Wordsworth takes it through six revisions before he is satisfied with it. The first variant of this version, as printed in the apparatus criticus of the de Selincourt edition, is from the B² MS. It is a revision of only the first three lines, and reads as follows:

Even in the steadiest quiet which the soul
 Attains by reason and exalted thought
 Then, when all sorrow for thy transient pains . . .

(B² de Sel., app. crit., p. 136)

The second variant of the original text is found in the A² and C MSS (C being a fair copy of the corrected A text). This is a four line revision involving, once again, the first few lines:

When Contemplation's tranquillizing power
 Hath stricken deep into the soul, and spread
 Wide, like the night-calm over sea and land
 Oft doth it grieve me for thy state, O man . . .

(A² & C, de Sel., app. crit., p. 136)

The next variant gives us our first opportunity to see Wordsworth revising the entire passage. This variant comes from the D MS, one of the two final revisions of The Prelude:

Even in the steadiest quiet which the soul
Attains by reason or by faith spread wide
And striking deep, it grieves me for thy state
O Man, thou paramount Creature and thy race
While ye on earth shall sojourn. Not for woes
Which thou must bear, that heavy weight doth oft
Mount like a cloud touched with a light from Heaven,
Or melts away, but for those palms atchieved
Through length of time by study and hard thought
Precious reward of high endowments; there
My sadness finds its fuel.

(D, de Se., app. crit., p. 136)

The next two revisions are the first and second reworkings of the D version. Here is the first:

Even in the steadiest calm to which the soul
By any power less than religious faith
Can rise, it grieves me for thy lot, O Man,
While thou on earth shalt sojourn: not for woes
And pains to which the happiest of thy kind
Are born; that burthen, heavy though it be
Mounts
[Continues hereafter as D]

(D² de Sel., app. crit., p. 137)

And here is the second corrected version of D, the D³ variant:

When Contemplation's tranquillizing power
Hath striken deep into the soul, even then
I grieve not seldom for thy lot, O Man,
Thou paramount Creature and thy Race while ye
On Earth shall sojourn; not for pain and woe
Which all must by inevitable doom
Partake, that burthen heavy though it be,
Mounts like a cloud or touched with light from Heaven
Doth melt away; but for those palms achieved
Thro' length of time, by study and hard thought
Guerdon of ~~sage~~ and high endeavours, there
The sadness finds its fuel.

(D³, de Sel., app. crit., p. 137)

Havens comments that "The six variants of these opening lines show with how much labor the serene beauty of the final version was achieved" (Mind, p. 381), and here it is:

WHEN Contemplation, like the night calm felt
 Through earth and sky, spreads widely, and sends deep
 Into the soul its tranquillizing power,
 Even then I sometimes grieve for thee, O Man,
 Earth's paramount Creature! not so much for woes
 That thou endurest; heavy though that weight be,
 Cloud-like it mounts, or touched with light divine
 Doth melt away; but for those palms achieved,
 Through length of time, by patient exercise
 Of study and hard thought, there, there, it is
 That sadness finds its fuel.

(1850, V, 1-11)

The main change that we see between these passages and those of 1805 is not merely one of poetic style, although, of course, that is of vital importance. Wordsworth's total response, emotional, moral, and intellectual to the concept of the poet and the poet's responsibilities changes appreciably. Along with this change comes a change in his attitude toward creative inspiration and a new response to the idea of personal freedom. We can see precisely what these changes in attitude are, and how Wordsworth expresses them if we examine the passages in detail.

The Norton editors tell us that "The revisions of 1805, lines 33-54, sound for the first time in the poem the characteristic voice, or tone, of 1850" (Gill, p. 30). This is true. In the revised version of this first passage, Wordsworth does not attempt to manipulate our emotions with the display of Hartleian associationism that he uses in ll. 33-38 of the 1805 passage. Instead, he begins with a direct statement of his theme. He makes the ethically valid, rationally grounded, and universally

acceptable assertion, that freedom is of no value unless it is accompanied by an inspiration to accomplish something worthwhile for humanity. Rather than speaking of merely being free, as he does in the A text, he uses the more explicit and meaningful "Liberty," a noun that has more mature connotations of independence from arbitrary or despotic rules than the 1805 term. He insists, in the first two lines, that while liberty is very precious to him, it is certainly not the only thing that will satisfy him. It is not the end that he is seeking, but merely an effective means to that end. In order to make this point clear, he uses a strong caesural pause in the form of an exclamation mark after "Liberty!" This stresses the fact that he is finished with this subject and is ready to go on to discuss creative inspiration.

The syntactical unit of the first two lines is simple and straightforward, yet it is functional and flexible in that it bends precisely at the point that allows half the interrogative statement to remain in the first line to be balanced by the antithetical second half of the statement in the second line. Thus, the syntax here supports the structure of the opening lines by giving them firmness and conciseness as well as enabling them to express the main theme of the passage with clarity, assurance, and economy. This stylistic firmness and economy reflects Wordsworth's more mature, serious approach to his subject as well as his more controlled emotional ability to handle the subject with calm directness.

Wordsworth retains, in the 1850 version, those lines from the 1805 passage that demonstrate meaningful flexibility of syntax and places them immediately after his opening thematic statement. He also tightens the syntax of his concluding lines so that they reiterate in strong lines

the main idea that he presents at the beginning of the passage. Here, the syntax does not allow for a cataloguing of vague generalities, what David Perkins, in Wordsworth and the Poetry of Sincerity, refers to as the "legacy to Wordsworth from the generalizing habits of Augustan verse."⁹ It allows, through one prepositional phrase, only two sets of antitheses: "Days of sweet leisure," but leisure "taxed with patient thought," and "patient thought/ Abstruse," not in isolation, but used "in punctual service high." Both of these antitheses are then neatly resolved in the concluding and succinct "Matins and vespers of harmonious verse," indicating that freedom will lead to mornings and evenings of religious work that will, in turn, lead to the creation of great poetry. The strong, syntactical control here reflects his emotional control and the high seriousness with which he is approaching the subject of the poet and his responsibilities.

The diction of the passage also reflects Wordsworth's more serious approach. It is more appropriate to the dedicated artist and to what he wishes to express than is the diction of the 1805 passage. While we may wonder why Wordsworth wrote the 1805 version, we have no doubt what his intentions were when he revised it in its 1850 form. Terms such as "Liberty," "consecrates," "congenial," "taxed," "patient," "Abstruse," "punctual service high," "Matins and vespers," and "harmonious" add serious and, in some cases, religious overtones to the passage that are appropriate to the dedication to poetry that Wordsworth wishes to express. This meditative language adds a sincerity of tone to the passage that is decidedly lacking in the 1805 version, while also reflecting the already successfully dignified and controlled mind of the poet who wrote the passage.

Havens, while listing the emendations in this passage, complains that "the final text lacks something of the spontaneity of the original lines," and that the "patient thought/ Abstruse" of its conclusion "hardly suggests an extempore effusion" (Mind, p. 291). Why should it? There is little intellectual, moral, emotional, or, for that matter, artistic, value in "extempore effusion." Effusion, "extempore" or otherwise, as this study seeks to show, does not make a great poet, whereas "patient thought/ Abstruse" does, and that is why it is in this passage. There is nothing particularly restrictive or forbidding about the phrase. It incorporates the simple "Miltonic device" of placing a dependent adjective on either side of a noun, and Wordsworth adds it to formalize and elevate the style of the conclusion in order to remind us both of Milton's dedication to his art, and of his own sincere desire to dedicate himself to his (see Mind, p. 291).

Wordsworth achieves some other interesting results with his revisions to this passage. The "correspondent breeze" of this version, replacing the "corresponding mild creative" breeze of the 1805 text, suggests that, here, Wordsworth is thinking in a less dependent and deterministic way about Nature and her ability to inspire. He suggests the more mature concept that both he and Nature are separate entities, reacting separately, and yet, together, to a life-force that permeates each. In the A text, the "mild" inner breeze seems to depend almost wholly on the external, natural breeze to give it what little power it has. The inner breeze of the 1850 passage, seems, however, more vigorous and independent. It moves, Wordsworth tells us, "with quickening virtue," indicating that it awakens his other creative powers quickly and with a life of its own. This last phrase seems to indicate, too, a further step

away from Hartley's mechanistic theories of the mind, for it suggests that once the mind has been stimulated in a small way to begin artistic creativity, it can carry on the function of stimulating itself to further activity without the benefit of external stimuli.

This passage displays, then, in its diction, rhetoric, and syntax, a basic orderliness that reflects the serious and competent mind of the poet. It follows a rational progression of thought throughout and comes to an evaluative conclusion at the end of the passage. It begins with a rhetorical question that is essentially the beginning of a final moral judgment on the subject of the value of personal liberty that has no form of personal responsibility accompanying it. It builds on the idea that, without creative inspiration leading, in turn, to dedicated art, personal freedom is valueless. By explaining and defining the nature of this creative inspiration as a twofold experience coming both from external and internal sources, Wordsworth assumes more personal responsibility for his own creative inspiration than he did in the A text. He then acknowledges, in his final statement, that the personal liberty and the creative inspiration that he is experiencing must be resolved and used so that they work together in the creation of "harmonious verse," that is, verse that, in turn, will both liberate and inspire others to a life of worthwhile dedication.

Throughout the 1850 Preamble, Wordsworth builds his argument to this resolution. The rhetoric of the entire Preamble is mature, rational, morally responsible, and emotionally controlled. There is no side-tracking of the main issues with superfluous detail as there is in the A text, and there is no attempt to manipulate the reader emotionally with associationalist connotations. The argument is, however, not without its

strong emotional content. A tone of deep sincerity and commitment permeates the entire Preamble, and what is even more convincing about this tone is that it is accompanied by a more realistic description of the experience Wordsworth is both undergoing at the time and hopes to undergo in the future.

There is still a "blessing in this gentle breeze" (l. 1) of the 1850 version, but the breeze itself is described simply as a "visitant" (l. 2) and not as a "messenger" (l. 5) as it is in the earlier version. This simple revision removes from the opening lines any implication that the breeze is some mysterious bearer of mysterious truths that the poet has somehow been singled out to receive. The term "visitant," in the 1850 text, also prepares us for an important fact that Wordsworth will stress later in the introductory section: the fact that inspiration does not come and remain forever, but comes and goes intermittently, much like a visitor and without the consent, or lack of consent, of the poet. The "Whate'er his mission" (l. 5) also opens up the possibility that the breeze might just be blowing for other reasons than to minister solely to Wordsworth's personal needs. The change from "joy it gives" (1805, I, 4) to "joy he brings" (1850, I, 3) also suggests that Nature does not simply bestow her blessings, but that the individual must play an active role in appreciating her gifts. In the 1850 text, Wordsworth no longer refers to the city as a "prison" or a "house/ Of bondage" (ll. 6-8) as he does in the A text, but as "the vast city" (l. 7), a phrase that, through its very ambiguity, opens up the possibility that the city has more to offer the artist than merely imprisonment and boredom. Here, too, Wordsworth tells us that he actively "escaped" (l. 6) from the city instead of insisting that he was passively "set free" (l. 7) as he does in the 1805

Preamble.^v This seems to be an acknowledgement that he and he alone had been responsible for spending time in the city in the first place, and also that the choice to stay or leave was also his. In this version, he gives the impression that he is more responsible for what happens to himself than he is in the A text, where he seems to rely on outside powers to determine much of his fate. And, also, Wordsworth no longer refers to himself, here, as "A captive" (l. 6), but, merely, as a "discontented sojourner" (l. 8). This, too, indicates that he realizes that part of the reason for his unhappiness in the city came from within himself, and not from the city at all.

In the 1850 Preamble, then, Wordsworth indicates that he is writing in a completely different frame of mind from that of the 1805 version. His tone is sincere and serious and his rhetoric is clear and convincing. His syntax is simplified and strong so that it allows for a more straightforward approach to the themes than does the syntax of the A text. The keynote of the entire 1850 Preamble is its masculinity and its moral responsibility. It does not depend on superficial prettiness, on bland artificialities of style that actually diffuse the argument and detract from the seriousness of the subjects. Nor does it depend on associationalist manipulation for its emotional content. It allows strong thematic assertions to dictate the structure instead of the other way around, so the emotional content agrees with the intellectual content, making the thematic statements rationally coherent, yet emotionally moving, wholes. Here, Wordsworth does not inadvertently give the impression that he is more excited about revelling in Nature and in his own emotions than he is in writing good poetry. Here, there is not the slightest hint of the naïve approach to Nature that permeates the discarded

first six lines of the 1805 passage.¹⁰ It is obvious, in the 1850 version, by the care that Wordsworth takes with the style of the Preamble, that he is much more interested in writing meaningful verse that expresses strong intellectual and moral content than he is in impressing the reader with his virtuosity in the manipulation of stylistic details and devices. All of the details of the 1850 Preamble, especially those of the passage that we are discussing, fit together into a clear declaration of intent on Wordsworth's part to become a sincere and dedicated poet, and the poetry of most of the 1850 Prelude is testimony that he carried out this intention.

Wordsworth's assertions, in the second revised excerpt, are sounder than they are in the 1805 passage. He no longer claims, as he did in 1805, that he was "a chosen son" (l. 82). He also greatly modifies his 1805 claims for his youthful "holy powers/ And faculties" (ll. 88-89). Here, he merely suggests that they allowed him "to work or feel" (l. 89). He does not dismiss rational thought or moral law here, as he does in the earlier version of the passage, but, instead, takes special care to balance these against his holy powers. Rational thought is extremely important to him here. In fact, he even goes so far as to claim that it is the "pure/ Reflective acts" of "Reason" that "fix the moral law/ Deep in the conscience" (ll. 83-85). "Reason," "Christian Hope" (l. 85) and "Faith" (l. 86) all work together to give him the unshaken, youthful conviction that he has a special mission in life, and they all work together to help him to avoid being "cast down" (III, 82) by his circumstances while he is a university student.

Those who would agree with de Selincourt's insinuation that emendations such as this one "sufficiently indicate a change in tone,

befitting one who had sons of undergraduate age, and whose brother was Master of Trinity" (p. lxxv), are perhaps being somewhat unfair to Wordsworth. There certainly is "a change in tone" in the revised passage, but it is one that befits a mature poet. What he is doing here is finally acknowledging that faith alone is not adequate but that both rational thought and intuitive knowledge are essential means of knowing. And, as we shall see throughout the final Prelude Wordsworth takes special care to illustrate that this more mature epistemological stance is of crucial importance to him. It is this stance that contributes to his depth and sincerity as a poet and to the intellectual integrity and power of the final Prelude.¹¹

In the 1850 version of the third passage, we are spared the odd associations and striking leaps that connect poetic creativity to waterspouts and bowels. Here, there is no "dithyrambic fervour" (1805, VII, 5) or "short-lived uproar" (1805, VII, 6). Essentially, it is Wordsworth's more mature emotional response to poetry and to the role of the poet that is reflected in the style of the revised passage. Here, directing our attention immediately, along with the Miltonic parentheses and the allusion to the "Muse" (l. 9), are the three phrases, "with fervour irresistible" (l. 5), "short-lived transport" (l. 6), and "less impetuous stream" (l. 9). These phrases suggest that Wordsworth is well aware of his more youthful tendency to create poetry spontaneously and that he now considers this tendency to have been a youthful weakness. Here, he no longer claims that he had or has any shaman-like gifts. He merely suggests that, for a brief time after he left the city, he happily, and with great warmth, created poetry spontaneously, in the oral tradition. This poetry, he suggests here, was not interrupted to continue later in

the same style, but was interrupted, only to continue in a "less impetuous stream" than that verse he had created as a younger man.

The 1805 version of this passage gives us the "felt experience." It is the "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings." The 1850 passage, on the other hand, gives us "the abstraction that follows experience." It "takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity" (see pp. 38-39 above). As I have already noted in my Introduction, most critics would agree with David Perkins's assertion "That poetry should be spontaneous is the most important single assumption to keep in mind if one seeks to account for Wordsworth's style" (Sincerity, p. 43). As an examination of both the 1805 and the 1850 versions of this passage may, however, have demonstrated, if we wish to account for Wordsworth's mature conception of the poet, the poet's responsibilities, and the growth of a poet's mind, we must take far more into consideration than the "spontaneity" of his verse.

But an examination of the final revised excerpt may, perhaps, show that David Perkins is right when he suggests that a man "who does his best work in a thousand slow, studied touches, cannot be a romantic poet" (Sincerity, p. 70). This examination might, however, also demonstrate that the more mature Wordsworth is a much finer poet than the younger, romantic Wordsworth of the 1805 Prelude. Before we examine the final version of the passage, let us look briefly at the variants between the 1805 and the 1850 passages in order to gain an idea of how Wordsworth worked to achieve his final result.

The revisions to the first variant (B²) are not remarkable. Wordsworth does, however, replace the unfortunate phrase "stadiest mood of reason" with the more rational "stadiest quiet which the soul/ Attains

by reason and exalted thought" (ll. 1-2). This revision, through its rationality and its fuller exposition of the speaker's stance, allows Wordsworth more scope in which to convince us of his seriousness, and therefore, it allows him to introduce his main assertion, which he now postpones to line three, with more poise, control, and conviction. With this revision, too, Wordsworth effects a much smoother enjambment between the first and second lines, while the alliterative result that he gains with the "t's" of "steadiest" and "quiet" add a pleasing smoothness to the line that is absent in the A text. All of this reinforces the more poised and maturely thoughtful tone that is now becoming more evident in the passage.

For the first time, in the second variant (A² & C) we see the 1850 form of the passage beginning to take shape. Wordsworth manages the caesura skillfully here. He holds it until the end of the fourth foot of the second line, so that the uninterrupted rhythm of the line suggests more convincingly the sense of depth being expressed by the diction. With the aid of a very effective trochaic inversion at the head of the third line, Wordsworth creates a wonderful spreading result from the second to the third line that suggests the denotation of the lines themselves. Also, in line three, the interruption of the first foot by the caesura, along with the long syllables of "Wide" and "like" approximate a spondee which continues to enact the spreading right into the broad "a" of "calm." This is by far the best revision that Wordsworth has shown us so far as he works through the revision of this passage.

This variant is not without its faults, however. While "Contemplation's tranquillizing power" is a definite improvement in the first line, the "Hath stricken deep" (l. 2), describing the action of the

power, is not. The poised and thoughtful phrase "night-calm" of line three, a phrase that will eventually find its way into the first line of the last version, loses its effectiveness in this variant because of the pedestrian phrase "over land and sea" that follows it. This last phrase imposes an oddly geographical imitation on the power that will come to have a properly universal effect in the final version. And, while Wordsworth does change the "I charm" of the A text to "Is charmed" (l. 7) here, the verb "to charm" is still inappropriate here because of the charlatan's tone that it still suggests in the passage.

The next variant (D) gives us our first opportunity to see Wordsworth revising the entire passage. Although there is some slight improvement here, taken as a whole, this is not a good revision. The improved first line of the A² and C variant just discussed is discarded here in favour of the initial line of the B² variant, which, though an improvement over the line as it appears in the original text, is not nearly as effective as the line discarded. In line three, the caesura, coming after "And striking deep," does not suggest the depth that the second line suggests with the caesura coming after "Hath stricken deep into the soul." By combining the "spread" and the "striking" of lines two and three, Wordsworth loses the effective spreading result that he had created in the A² and C variant.

The "oft doth" (l. 4) of the A² and C variant gives way here to a "doth oft" (l. 6) construction that is really no improvement. And the verb "sojourn" (l. 5) stays stubbornly in place as well. But there are some improvements. Wordsworth deletes from this variant all references to "charm" and "charmed," describes the "woes" that plague man as "heavy" (l. 6) instead of "huge," and substitutes the verb "to bear" (l. 6) for

the awkwardly contracted "endur'st" of the earlier variants. Finally Wordsworth deletes the "planet" from this version, replacing it with the warmer and more appropriate "earth" (l. 5). All of these changes, although they individually appear insignificant, when assessed cumulatively, begin to give more depth and thematic unity to the passage. The passage will, however, go through three more revisions before it satisfies its conscientious author.

Because the next two reworkings, the first and second revisions of the D MS. contain mainly changes of the kind I have already dealt with in my discussion of the earlier variants, I shall only allude to these variants when warranted in my discussion of the final version of the passage.

As we trace the variants to their final form in the 1850 text, we realize that Wordsworth is moving gradually, but surely, away from the "naïve immediate expression" of the "felt experience" and the "living fact" that he uses in the 1805 lines. Gradually, too, although not always in successive steps forward, he deletes much of the "wavering and untrammelled natural growth" of the A text. It is, however, only in the final, 1850 lines that he succeeds in giving us what Gerald Graff considers to be two essentials of good poetry: "the sense of an authentic and engaged personality behind the speech" and lines that "demand our belief as well as invite us to experience" (Poetic Statement, pp. 159, xii). In no version of this passage but the last, do we sense what Leavis refers to as "the rare integrity that can so put the truth beyond question" (Intro., p. 19).

Contemplation, the calm night, and the living landscape stilled in darkness suggest a harmony and a poised continuity between the thinking

speaker and Nature in the first three lines of the 1850 Book V Preamble. These softly alliterated lines, beginning in a simile and gradually opening out to a metaphor for organic and spiritual unity, set a mood and atmosphere of isolated and meditative tranquillity within a cyclical framework. They suggest a harmonious balance of inner and outer, invisible and visible, spiritual and naturalistic. The duality between mind and matter, heaven and earth, is reconciled.

For the first time, in this version, Wordsworth allows himself three full lines to set the formal and impersonal, vatic tone appropriate to the seriousness of the theme and to convince us of his reliability, moral credibility, and sincerity as a speaker who is at one with, and yet distinctly apart from, the world. At line four, he begins to make his transition into his theme, a transition that will introduce, for the first time, an element of discord and personal emotion into this harmonious setting. Throughout the first two sections of Book V, Wordsworth juxtaposes two very different attitudes toward man in a progression of thought that, itself, holds the key to their final resolution. The thematic tension that these attitudes create underlines and informs the entire first two sections of Book V; and here, at line four, Wordsworth introduces them immediately after giving us his vision of universal harmony:

Even then I sometimes grieve for thee, O Man,
Earth's paramount Creature!

In his mood of disinterested contemplation, Wordsworth sees the essential harmony and unity of all creation, but he sees, as well, the paradoxical sadness of the human condition. He retains the term "power," added to and deleted from several of the variants, to describe contemplation's

tranquillizing action on the soul. But this power is not sufficient to erase from Wordsworth's mind the paradoxical position of man in the universe, so that even at moments of great tranquillity, he grieves over the dichotomy of the human condition. He describes this dichotomy and his feelings toward it most effectively here by referring to man, for the first time, as "Earth's paramount Creature!" (l. 5).

By employing this phrase, Wordsworth is not, I think, implying the possible existence of extra-terrestrial forms of life superior to man. Rather, by sharpening the paradox from "Thou paramount Creature" in the 1805 text and earlier versions to "Earth's paramount Creature" here, he effects two important changes. First, he deletes any possible derogatory connotations from the passage. Second, he adds yet another dimension to the paradox itself. Whereas, in earlier versions, he implies, with what can easily be misinterpreted as a somewhat condescending tone, that, while man is the greatest "Creature," he is still, nevertheless, a "Creature." Here, with the addition of "Earth's," Wordsworth implies feelings of warmth toward, kinship with, and both pity and admiration for this being, while stressing the mortality of this being as well. By placing the "Creature" in almost the central position in this sentence, a position held by the "planet" of the earlier variants, and by calling attention to it by means of a strong trochaic inversion and an exclamation mark making a strong caesural pause, Wordsworth more emphatically stresses the paradox itself. He then expands this paradox in the remainder of the passage and throughout the rest of the Preamble by explaining what it means to be human. Wordsworth sympathizes with man, not for the woes that he must endure, but for the inevitable feeling of grief and restriction that overcomes every human being when, at moments of greatest

triumph, he remembers his mortal destiny. Realizing more clearly, by the time he composes the final version, that these "woes" are not all that easy for him or for anyone else to "charm away," Wordsworth revises out of this final version his breezy facility to dismiss the sorrows of man, and revises into it yet another enriching thematic dimension, the "light divine" (l. 7) that assists man in overcoming his woes and in dealing with the idea of death.

The addition to the 1850 passage of the "light divine" is perhaps yet another example of the "pietistic embroidery" (p. lxxi) that de Selincourt complains about in his Introduction. In light of Book V's humanistic concerns, one might say, however, that "lulling asleep the watchful eye of the heresy-hunter" (p. lxxi) is likely not one of Wordsworth's concerns as he revises this passage. The phrase seems to refer more to a universal power shared by all men than to a sectarian deity. It does not destroy the original tone of the passage; in fact, it adds reverence to it. One critic even emphasizes the fact that the "light divine" is simply man's imagination working at its highest capacity.¹² If the phrase is an allusion to a deity, and it almost certainly is, Wordsworth by no means appears to suggest that His "light" shines solely on members of the High Church of England, or, for that matter, solely on himself. What Wordsworth is expressing here takes nothing away from his humanistic concerns. He seems to be expressing a certain degree of spirituality that is recognized, at one time or another, in the lives of most men. The phrase contributes another note of sincerity to the passage and suggests a deeper moral response on Wordsworth's part to his subject.

By deleting from the penultimate line of the 1850 passage all

references to man's "high endowments" (A through D² texts) and allusions to his "sage and high endeavours" (D³ text), and by referring only to man's "patient exercise/ Of study and hard thought," Wordsworth eliminates the implications suggested in the earlier phrases that he was interested mainly in extraordinary men and their extraordinary deeds. Here, he implies that he is speaking of ordinary men and the ordinary life of trials and tribulations that most men lead. These revisions also eliminate all suggestion that what Wordsworth admires in man comes as a result of sagacity either divinely or genetically bestowed upon man. Wordsworth explains that man alone is responsible for any of the palms that he gathers in life, and that he gathers these only through his own diligent and painstaking efforts. In this version, Wordsworth states that he both pities and admires man for his determination to accomplish set goals in the face of all odds, and for the sake of the goals alone, even though he might not live to enjoy the full fruits of his victory.

The stylistic excellence of the 1850 passage, and the great amount of labour that Wordsworth undertook to achieve this excellence, attest both to his serious commitment to his subject and to his poetry in general. It is clear that he views artistic inspiration in a new light, since "Contemplation," "study," and "hard thought" seem integral not only to the thought of the passage, but to its composition as well. Wordsworth also seems to be implying a more mature concept of personal freedom, because, implicit in this passage and throughout the Preamble, is the idea that no man is ever totally happy or totally free. Man, Wordsworth tells us, is driven by his very nature to create "Things that aspire to unconquerable life" (l. 20), even though he "cannot choose but feel--/ That they must perish" (ll. 21-22). If he neglects to do this, Wordsworth

insists, man will "survive/ Abject, depressed, forlorn, disconsolate" (1805, V, 27; 1850, V, 28).

What Wordsworth seems to have worked toward and finally achieved in the 1850 passage is a sincere expression of his admiration for and empathy with his fellow human beings. Sincerity is extremely important to Wordsworth. As he points out in his "Essay upon Epitaphs,"

Literature is here so far identified with morals, the quality of the act so far determined by our notion of the aim and purpose of the agent, that nothing can please us, however well executed in its kind, if we are persuaded that the primary virtues of sincerity, earnestness and a moral interest in the main object are wanting.¹³

But while sincerity in poetry is of utmost importance to Wordsworth, so is spontaneity. Critics such as David Perkins and the ones examined in the Introduction to this study are not wrong to draw our attention to this fact. But to argue as Perkins does that we "ignore Wordsworth's own premises" if we deny his "linking of sincerity with a strong, spontaneous emotion" (Sincerity, pp. 112-13) is, indeed, to ignore Wordsworth's definition of spontaneity. And it seems somewhat ironic that M. H. Abrams, one of the co-editors of the 1979 authoritative text of The Prelude who complains of the lack of spontaneity in the 1850 version, should argue, in The Mirror and the Lamp:

Certainly Wordsworth did not conceive of the great poet as a thoughtless and instinctive child of nature. Just as he required the poet to keep his eye on the subject, and reminded him that he writes not for himself, but for men, so he affirmed that good poems are produced only by a man who has 'thought long and deeply. For our continued influxes of feeling are modified and directed by our thoughts, which are indeed the representatives of all our past feelings. . . .' In this way, he refined the key assumption of aesthetic primitivism into the conception of a spontaneity which is the reward of intelligent application and hard-won skills--a spontaneity, as F. R. Leavis has said, 'supervening upon complex development,' and a naturalness 'consummating a discipline, moral and other.'¹⁴

Abrams is correct here. Spontaneity, especially where the more mature Wordsworth is concerned, does not mean "extempore effusion," "naïve immediate expression," or simple "reliance upon the felt experience." It means recapturing an initial emotional reaction to an experience and suggesting, as precisely as possible, why that reaction was (and still is) so strong. It means describing a past experience and explaining why this experience was so important.

Yvor Winters correctly claims that "Wordsworth . . . became less consistently romantic as he matured" (Intro., p. 31). As Wordsworth moves away from the spontaneity that many critics admire in the A text to sincerity and spontaneity (as he, himself, describes it) in the 1850 Prelude, he also re-defines his conception of the poet. The Wordsworth of the 1850 text no longer presents himself as a shaman-like figure who wishes to "drink wild water" and sing in "dithyrambic fervour." He is a conscientious artist who, after much "study," "hard thought," and "contemplation," attempts to offer, in harmonious verse, rational explanations of emotionally-moving experiences that have helped to shape his creative sensibilities. It is this re-definition of himself as poet that suggests that the Wordsworth of 1850 will be much more of an authority on the subject of the growth of a poet's mind than the Wordsworth of 1805. This study only suggests that if we are prepared to be daring enough to lay aside popular critical consensus about the 1850 Prelude and study the major revisions that Wordsworth incorporates into it, we shall find that this possibility is, in fact, an actuality.

II

"Romantic Almost": The Purpose and Theme of "The Prelude"

Near the beginning of Book IV, in both the 1805 and the 1850 texts, Wordsworth, himself, asks:

Why should I speak of what a thousand hearts
Have felt, and every man alive can guess?

(1850, IV, 44-45)

Why should he indeed? Several critics have pointed out that, in many ways, Wordsworth was a very ordinary man who led a very ordinary life.¹⁵

Why, then, does he write the poem? We can see that Wordsworth was somewhat uneasy about The Prelude from the comments he makes to Sir George Beaumont in a letter dated May 1, 1805:

It will be not much less than 9,000 lines, not hundred but thousand lines, long; an alarming length! and a thing unprecedented in Literary history that a man should talk so much about himself.¹⁶

In the same letter, Wordsworth attempts to justify his creation; his reasons for writing the poem, as he gives them here, are not, however, very impressive:

It is not self-conceit, as you will know well, that has induced [me] to do this, but real humility; I began the work because I was unprepared to treat any more arduous subject and diffident of my own powers. Here at least I hoped that to a certain degree I should be sure of succeeding, as I had nothing to do but describe what I had felt and thought, therefore could not easily be bewildered. This might certainly have been done in narrower compass by a man of more address, but I have done my best. If when the work shall be finished it appears to the judicious to have redundancies they shall be lopped off, if possible. But this is very difficult to do when a man has written with thought, and this defect, whenever I have suspected it or found it to exist in any writings of mine, I have always found incurable. The fault lies too deep, and is in the first conception. (EY, pp. 586-87)

If we did not know The Prelude, neither a biography of Wordsworth nor this letter would greatly tempt us to read the poem, for the former would confirm the fact that, for the most part, Wordsworth's life was quite ordinary, while the latter suggests that he is a poet who lacks self-confidence and daring as an artist, one who has written a wholly subjective poem that he even doubts he has the ability to revise. Fortunately, we have further evidence from the work itself and from the letters and prose that attests both to Wordsworth's serious purposes for writing The Prelude and to his ability to refine and shape the poem so that it fulfills most of these purposes.

The clearest and most complete statement of Wordsworth's purpose for writing The Prelude comes in his "Preface" to The Excursion of 1814. Here, he explains that he did not write The Prelude merely as a safe and elementary exercise to test his artistic powers, but to justify himself as a poet capable of writing a great philosophical poem:

It may be proper to state whence the poem, of which The Excursion is a part, derives its Title of THE RECLUSE.--Several years ago, when the Author retired to his native mountains, with the hope of being enabled to construct a literary Work that might live, it was a reasonable thing that he should take a review of his own mind, and examine how far Nature and Education had qualified him for such employment. As subsidiary to this preparation, he undertook to record, in verse, the origin and progress of his own powers, as far as he was acquainted with them. That Work, addressed to a dear Friend, most distinguished for his knowledge and genius, and to whom the Author's Intellect is deeply indebted, has been long finished; and the result of the investigation which gave rise to it was a determination to compose a philosophical poem, containing views of Man, Nature, and Society; and to be entitled the Recluse; as having for its principal subject the sensations and opinions of a poet living in retirement.--The preparatory poem [The Prelude] is biographical, and conducts the history of the Author's mind to the point when he was emboldened to hope that his faculties were sufficiently mature for entering upon the arduous labour which he had proposed to himself; and the two Works have the same kind of relation to

... other, . . . as the ante-chapel has to the body of a
 Gothic church. (Prose Works, III, 5)

The artist's purpose of The Prelude, then, is "to record, in verse, the origin and progress" of Wordsworth's mind. By doing this, Wordsworth hoped to demonstrate that "his faculties were sufficiently mature" to write a great philosophical poem. As de Selincourt points out, "the idea of the great philosophical poem was already full-fledged in March 1798" (p. xxxiii).¹⁷ Thus, from the time he first began to compose the as yet un-named poem¹⁸ dedicated to Coleridge, Wordsworth conceived of it, not as a mere poetical exercise, nor as a poem in itself, but as an introduction to The Recluse. And two further pieces of evidence attest to the fact that Wordsworth's initial artistic purpose for the poem never wavered throughout his lifetime. The first is a letter written by Wordsworth's daughter Dora to Maria Kinniard, dated February 17, 1832, in which she writes:

Father is particularly well and busier than 1000 bees. Mother and he work like slaves from morning to night--an arduous work --correcting a long Poem written thirty years back and which is not to be published during his life--'The Growth of his own Mind'--The 'ante-chapel' as he calls it to the 'Recluse'.

(MS. University of California, Davis)

(Gill, p. 536)

The second piece of evidence comes from the unrevised lines of the final Prelude, in which Wordsworth, while searching for a way to begin the poem, acknowledges:

Then a wish,
 My best and favourite aspiration, mounts
 With yearning toward some philosophic song
 Of Truth that cherishes our daily life;
 With meditations passionate from deep
 Recesses in man's heart, immortal verse

Thoughtfully fitted to the Orphean lyre;
 But from this awful burthen I full soon
 Take refuge and beguile myself with trust
 That mellow years will bring a riper mind
 And clearer insight.

(1850, I, 227-37)

The artistic purpose of The Prelude remains constant from the inception of the poem to its final version. But Wordsworth had yet another reason for writing the poem, a reason, perhaps, more important than his artistic goal.

Near the conclusion to Part I of the 1799 Prelude, Wordsworth tells Coleridge:

Nor will it seem to thee, my friend, so prompt
 In sympathy, that I have lengthened out
 With fond and feeble tongue a tedious tale.
 Meanwhile my hope has been that I might fetch
 Reproaches from my former years, whose power
 May spur me on, in manhood now mature,
 To honourable toil.

(Gill, 1799, I, 447-53)

In this form, the passage seems to be yet another allusion to The Recluse. But notice what he adds to the 1805 counterpart to these lines:

Nor will it seem to thee, my friend, so prompt
 In sympathy, that I have lengthened out
 With fond and feeble tongue a tedious tale.
 Meanwhile my hope has been that I might fetch
 Invigorating thoughts from former years,
Might fix the wavering balance of my mind,
 And haply meet reproaches too, whose power
 May spur me on, in manhood now mature,
 To honourable toil.

(1805, I, 645-53; my italics)

John Beer pays special attention to the "more disturbing undertones" of Wordsworth's poetic.¹⁹ As Beer suggests, "We come to discover [Wordsworth] as one of the most carefully masked of poets, his 'public'

face, though certainly adapted to the conventions, indicating only one side of his personality" (Wordsworth in Time, p. 17). Wordsworth does not revise this passage in the 1850 text, but we should note, as we read the final version, that Wordsworth makes more of a concerted effort to explain precisely why his mind had been disturbed and how he comes, eventually, to deal with and overcome the disturbance. It is only in the final version, after "mellower years" have brought him a "clearer insight" into the strengths and weaknesses of his mental faculties, that Wordsworth is finally able to convince us that he has fulfilled his private reason for writing The Prelude.

But what of The Prelude itself? In order to understand how Wordsworth develops the main thematic concerns of the poem, we might briefly examine the scope, range, and structural modifications of The Prelude by reviewing its compositional history.

The Prelude begins in 1798-99 as a two-part work.²⁰ It is essentially the first two books of the 1805 Prelude, but without the lengthy introduction (ll. 1-271) of the first Book, and including the "spots of time" passages (1799, I, 288-374) that Wordsworth later places in Book XI (ll. 257-315; 342-85) of the 1805 text. It also includes the "drowned man" passages (I, 258-287) that find a place in Book V (ll. 450-81) of the 1805 version. This is a work of limited scope and range. It retraces Wordsworth's early development "up to an eminence" (1805, III, 169), that is, up to the middle of his seventeenth year, just prior to his departure for Cambridge and his realization that he is a "chosen son" (1805, III, 82).

David Perkins asserts that "It is perhaps time to say plainly that Wordsworth does not attempt to persuade either himself or anyone

else by argument. The reason is simple. Argument, in his opinion, should convince no one" (Sincerity, p. 113). Perhaps it is time to say plainly that Perkins is wrong. From the first version of The Prelude to the last, the poem is an argument. Here is Wordsworth, in 1799, explaining why he digresses from the story of his boyhood to speak, at length, about Nature:

but I perceive
That much is overlooked, and we should ill
Attain our object if, from delicate fears
Of breaking in upon the unity
Of this my argument, I should omit
To speak of such effects as cannot here
Be regularly classed, yet tend no less
To the same point, the growth of mental power
And love of Nature's works.

(Gill, 1799, I, 250-58; my italics)

As Wordsworth states it here, his theme and the core of his argument is "the growth of mental power/ And love of Nature's works." In Book II, however, he more specifically speaks of the imagination as his central concern:

Nor should this, perchance,
Pass unrecorded, that I still had loved
The exercise and produce of a toil
Than analytic industry to me
More pleasing, and whose character I deem
Is more poetic, as resembling more
Creative agency--I mean to speak
Of that interminable building reared
By observation of affinities
In objects where no brotherhood exists
To common minds.

(Gill, 1799, II, 425-35)

In the 1799 Prelude, then, Wordsworth concentrates upon explaining the origins of his own imagination and upon describing the influence of Nature upon that imagination. He leaves the second passage unchanged in

both the 1805 and the 1850 Preludes. In the later versions, however, he greatly expands and universalizes his primary thematic concern so that it includes not only a discussion of his own creative sensibilities, but also an explanation of the creative powers of all men.

In 1804, Wordsworth enlarges The Prelude to five books.

According to the Norton editors, "The five-Book Prelude cannot be printed, as can 1799 and 1805, because only parts of it survive as faircopy; but it can be reconstructed in considerable detail" (Gill, p. 516).²¹ If these editors are correct in their assumption that "Books I-III were identical to 1805" (Gill, p. 516), then Wordsworth adds the following statement of his theme to the 1799 ending of Book I in 1804:

One end hereby at least hath been attained--
 My mind hath been revived--and if this mood
 Desert me not, I will forthwith bring down
 Through later years the story of my life.
 The road lies plain before me. 'Tis a theme
 Single and of determined ends, and hence
 I chuse it rather at this than work
 Of ampler or more varied argument,
 Where I might be discomfited and lost,
 And certain hopes are with me that to thee
 This labour will be welcome, honoured friend.

(1805, I, 664-74)

And the 1804 text would also have contained the following statement of theme:

And here, O friend, have I retraced my life
 Up to an eminence, and told a tale
 Of matters which not falsely I may call
 The glory of my youth. Of genius, power,
 Creation, and divinity itself,
 I have been speaking, for my theme has been
 What passed within me. Not of outward things
 Done visibly for other minds--words, signs,
 Symbols or actions--but of my own heart
 Have I been speaking, and my youthful mind.
 O heavens, how awful is the might of souls,

And what they do within themselves while yet
 The yoke of earth is new to them, the world
 Nothing but a wild field where they were sown.
 This is in truth heroic argument,
 And genuine prowess--which I wished to touch,
 With hand however weak--but in the main
 It lies far hidden from the reach of words.

(1805, III, 168-85)

Wordsworth also leaves these passages unchanged in the final text. But what we shall notice as we progress through this work is not only its "ampler" and "more varied argument" (1805, I, 671), but also its greater emphasis on the fact that the poet often is lost with his theme. What the 1850 Prelude urges us to realize, more than do the earlier versions, is that the imagination is extremely complicated (and dangerous). Paradoxically, it also urges us to realize that the imagination is not everything, and that both man's imagination and his language have limitations. The 1850 Prelude, then, is almost a romantic poem. It is a romantic celebration of the powers of the imagination, but it is also a warning about the problems inherent in an excessive dependence on the imagination and a statement of the limitations of the imagination in human life.

The Norton editors tell us that "The five-Book Prelude was abandoned ca. March 10, 1804" so that Wordsworth could compose a still longer, thirteen-Book work:

The factors that seem chiefly to have influenced Wordsworth in deciding to work towards a longer poem were his unwillingness, in the absence of Coleridge, to make another attempt at the main section of The Recluse, the wish nevertheless to do something on his friend's behalf, and his dissatisfaction at having left out of The Prelude important biographical material, especially his visit to France and the Alps in 1790. (Gill, p. 517)

Wordsworth makes major attempts, in 1807, 1816/19, 1832, and 1839 to

revise the 1805 Prelude. While the Norton editors do not go into detail about the 1807 revisions, they do tell us that, in 1816/19, Wordsworth drafts the first version of his passages on the desecration of the Grande Chartreuse (1805, VI, 420-88), makes the preliminary draft of the "Burke" passage (1805, VII, 512-43), and deletes the "Matron's Tale" (1805, VIII, 222-311) from the text. They also point out that, in 1832, Wordsworth makes the two structural changes in the work by dividing Book X into two books, and by deleting the "Vaudracour and Julia" passages (1805, IX, 556-935) from the poem.²² The 1832 revision, they suggest, "is responsible for a large number of the minor revisions that give 1850 its characteristic tone" (p. 522), but they point out that "The manuscript has been [so] extensively corrected [that] it is often not possible to distinguish between the immediate revisions and the later ones of 1838/9" in the transcriptions of E, the final manuscript of the Prelude" (Gill, p. 522)..

But despite the extensive changes that Wordsworth makes in the 1805 text, he does not change the passage in which he claims, "juvenile errors are my theme" (1805, X, 637; 1850, XI, 54), nor does he change the final thematic statement of the poem:

Imagination having been our theme,
So also hath that intellectual Love,
For they are each in each, and cannot stand
Dividually.

(1850, XIV, 206-09)

While these themes, themselves, do not change in the 1850 text, Wordsworth's treatment of them does. Here, his deeper and more sensitive probings into the "terrors, pains, and early miseries, / Regrets, vexations, lassitudes interfused / Within [his] mind" (1850, I, 345-47)

enable him to explain, not only his own mental progress, but the workings and progress of the human mind, with more conviction. When Wordsworth addresses himself to the problem of the "mystery of man" (1805, XI, 328; 1850, XII, 272) in the final version, then, he does not merely assess man's powers, but his limitations as well. Nor does he confine himself to a discussion of the imagination or man's reasoning powers. When Thomas Vogler comments, in Preludes to Vision, that The Prelude "is perhaps more like a love poem than anything else,"²³ we must not take his comment lightly. In the 1850 text, Wordsworth examines the human imagination and the human reasoning faculties and demonstrates how they must work together in the healthy mind. He also carries his investigation one step further and demonstrates, more clearly than he does in the A text, how "intellectual Love" becomes an outgrowth of this harmonious blending of reason and imagination.

There is yet another segment of the 1805 text that Wordsworth leaves unchanged in the final Prelude, a segment that the Norton editors seem to have overlooked in their explanation of why Wordsworth decides to "work towards a longer poem" (see above, p. 79). This is the segment in which Wordsworth claims that not only is the longer poem an attempt to "fix the wavering balance of [his own] mind," but that it is also meant as an aid to Coleridge in his attempt to soothe or chase away "the airy wretchedness/ That battered on [his] youth" (1805, VI, 325-26; 1850, XI, 313-14). Wordsworth admits, that, had it not been for his hope that the poem would be an "influence benign" (1805, VI, 324; 1850, VI, 312) that would assist Coleridge to enjoy, once more, the "peace and self-command" that hallowed his more "innocent days" (1805, VI, 273-74; 1850, VI, 263-64), "this narrative/ Else sooner [would have] ended" (1805, VI,

269-70; 1850, VI, 259-60). Unfortunately, this is a purpose that The Prelude could not fulfill. But Ross Woodman is right when he mentions that "Nothing in The Prelude is more moving than Wordsworth's shift from 'I' to 'we'" at the end of the poem, even though he fails to mention that this shift is even more moving in the final version.²⁴

Despite the extensive revisions that Wordsworth makes to the 1805 Prelude, he adds only two major statements that have a direct bearing on his central themes. The first is an extended addition to Book I, in which Wordsworth tells us that he will not write

Of dire enchantments faced and overcome
By the strong mind, and tales of warlike feats,
Where spear encountered spear, and sword with sword
Fought, as if conscious of the blazonry
That the shield bore, so glorious was the strife;
Whence inspiration for a song that winds
Through ever changing scenes of votive quest
Wrongs to redress, harmonious tribute paid
To patient courage and unblemished truth,
To firm devotion, zeal unquenchable,
And Christian meekness hallowing faithful loves.

(1850, I, 175-85)²⁵

Nor, he suggests, will he "invent/ A tale from [his] own heart" (1850, I, 221-22). Rather, the "foolishness and madness" of life will employ him

to note, and keep
In memory, those individual sights
Of courage, or integrity, or truth,
Of tenderness, which there, set off by foil,
Appeared more touching.

(1850, VII, 594; 598-602)

Thus, while Wordsworth continues to speak, in the 1850 text, of the "Imagination" as "having been our theme" (1805, XIII, 185; 1850, XIV, 206), and while he still mentions, in that version, his wish to "leave/ Some monument behind [him] which pure hearts/ Should reverence" (1805, VI,

67-69); 1850, VI, 55-57), he also adds the significant idea to the argument of the 1850 Prelude that "the ambitious Power of choice" will not force him to mistake "Proud spring-tide swellings for a regular sea" (1850, I, 166-67). The monument that Wordsworth leaves behind him in the final version does not concern itself with the "More lofty themes" (1805, VII, 496; 1850, VII, 465) of Milton or ~~Shakespeare~~. Nor is it simply a record of experiences that one individual undergoes during the early stages of the growth of his own mind. Rather, it sings of an even more lofty theme. It sings of both the powers of imagination and reason and their limitations, while explaining how a unity of imagination and reason can attain, for man, an "intellectual love" that goes beyond both. It also draws our attention to the "courage," "integrity," "truth," and "tenderness" of ~~real~~ men, human beings who shared Wordsworth's world, and, in the sense that they are timeless, also share our own. More than any other version, the 1850 Prelude allows its poet to affirm "my theme/ No other than the very heart of man" (1805, XII, 240; 1850, XIII, 241), and to Wordsworth, this is the greatest theme of all:

it shall be my pride
That I have dared to tread this holy ground,
Speaking no dream, but things oracular;
Matter not lightly to be heard by those
Who to the letter of the outward promise
Do read the invisible soul.

(1805, XII, 250-255)

(1850, XIII, 251-56)

As we proceed now to examine the major revisions to The Prelude, we shall find that, in the 1850 text, by universalizing the central themes of the poem and by grounding the work in real experience through an explanation of the significance of the various happenings of his life, Wordsworth not

only convinces us that he has fulfilled one of his personal purposes for writing the poem, but he also fulfills much of his artistic purpose as well. As a "review of his own mind," the 1850 Prelude, as we shall see, gives us a clearer and more meaningful description and explanation of "the origin and progress of [Wordsworth's] powers, as far as he was acquainted with them." In writing it, and in allowing us to see in his progress a glimpse of our own potentialities, he creates, finally, "a literary work" that does live.

CHAPTER II

FROM "VULGAR JOY" TO "CALM DELIGHT": CHILDHOOD AND EARLY EDUCATION

In Poor Monkey: The Child in Literature, Peter Coveney rightly points out that

The initial facts at least are clear. For Wordsworth, childhood was the 'seed-time' of the 'soul.' He saw the development of the human mind as organic through infancy and youth to maturity. The relation of the Child to Nature was fundamental to his concept of the growth of the moral personality. The child was, in fact an essential part of the 'wisdom' he sought to convey.

Wordsworth's greatest contribution to childhood and to children comes not from writing poems for children, but from discussing childhood in such a way as to awaken the adult to a realization that he should exert more effort, not in making the child understand, but in understanding the child. The purpose of this chapter is to examine Wordsworth's 1805 and 1850 comments on childhood, early education, and the beginnings of imaginative growth, in order to demonstrate that his more mature emotional responses to these subjects give those sections of the final Prelude containing them a sensitivity and a universality that is not enjoyed by the 1805 passages. Let us begin our examination with the most significant revision that Wordsworth makes in his discussion of childhood, the "Blest the infant Babe" passage of Book II.

Before we consider the passage itself, I would like to draw the reader's attention to a small excerpt in the JJ MS., the earliest extant version of The Prelude. Here, Wordsworth asserts:

of the later versions.³ Thereafter he narrows his perspective and rightly concentrates his argument about the origins of the imagination on the relationship between the mother and the child.

Here is the 1805 passage in which Wordsworth explains the process by which the human mind, as a unified whole, becomes, first, receptive to the external world, and, then, becomes creative in its own right:

Blest the infant babe--
 For with my best conjectures I would trace
 The progress of our being--blest the babe
 Nursed 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 detached
 And loth to coalesce. Thus day by day
 Subjected to the discipline of love,
 His organs and recipient faculties
 Are quickened, 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 derived
 From this beloved presence--there exists
 A virtue which irradiates and exalts
 All objects through all intercourse of sense.
 No outcast he, bewildered and depressed;
 Along his infant veins are interfused
 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. Such, verily, is the first

Poetic spirit of our human life--
 By uniform controul of after years
 In most abated and suppressed, in some
 Through every change of growth or of decay
 Preeminent till death.

(1805, II, 237-80; his italics)

Here is the 1850 version of this passage:

Blest the infant Babe
 (For with my best conjecture I would trace
 Our Being's earthly progress), 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!
 For him, in one dear Presence, there exists
 A virtue which irradiates and exalts
 Objects through widest intercourse of sense.
 No outcast he, bewildered and depressed:
 Along his infant veins are interfused
 The gravitation and the filial bond
 Of nature that connect him with the world.
 Is there a flower, to which he points with hand
 To weak to gather it, already love
 Drawn from love's purest earthly fount for him
 Hath beautified that flower; already shades
 Of pity cast from inward tenderness
 Do fall around him upon aught that bears
 Unsightly marks of violence or harm.
 Emphatically such a Being lives,
 Frail creature as he is, helpless as frail,
 An inmate of this active universe.
 For feeling has to him imparted power
 That through the growing faculties of sense
 Doth like an agent of the one great Mind
 Create, creator and receiver both,
 Working but in alliance with the works
 Which it beholds. Such, verily, is the first
 Poetic spirit of our human life,
 By uniform control of after years,
 In most, abated or suppressed; in some,
 Through every change of growth and of decay,
 Pre-eminent till death.

(1850, II, 232-65)

In a discussion of Wordsworth's poetry, F. R. Leavis cites the 1850
 version of these lines as "a representative improvement" in the later
Prelude, and he goes on, in the same discussion, to claim that "No one is

likely to dispute that the later version is decidedly the more satisfactory" (Revaluation, p. 147, 148).

In Articulate Energy, however, Donald Davie does dispute Leavis's claim:

I prefer the earlier version in the first place because it does more to deserve that 'active' which in 1805 got italics denied to it in 1850. Not only are there more active verbs in the first version, but they are more energetic. In 1805 the child claims kindred and gathers passion, where in 1850 he 'drinks in' feeling. His mind spreads, is eager to combine, tenacious and apprehensive. (The Latin pun delivers the muscular grasp of the policeman apprehending the lag.) The later version is mawkish, emphasizing the frailty of the child, his weakness. In the first version the Mother's love is an energy, comparable with the force of gravitation and the chemical force that stirs the torpid life. ('Torpid', of course, was a technical term of eighteenth-century science.) In the later version, the Mother's love is presented as tenderness, and even then as combined or confused with pity. The 'gravitation', which survives into the later version, is out of place there, in a context of imagery that is predominantly and weakly visual ('shades of pity'), where at first it had been muscular and dynamic. The pseudo-syntax of the rhetorical question ('Is there a flower . . . ?') goes along with this pervasive slackening of tension, this retarded and unsteadied movement. (Articulate Energy, pp. 114-15)

I agree that the 1805 segment has more "active verbs" than the 1850 passage, but I suggest that upon close inspection, the earlier excerpt reveals itself to be one of the most passive segments in the entire Prelude.

Wordsworth's subject, in both excerpts, is the initial development of the human mind. In each segment, he attempts to "trace" precisely how the human mind, first, becomes receptive to the external world, and, then, becomes excursive, reaching out, creatively, on its own to external reality in an attempt to shape and transform it. In the A text, Wordsworth fails. In the final version, he succeeds. In the 1805 passage, Wordsworth tells us of the infant, "For feeling has to him

imparted strength" (l. 269). But "strength" to do what? "From Nature largely he receives, nor so/ Is satisfied," Wordsworth insists in the same passage, because the infant "largely gives again" (ll. 267-68). But the passage does not give us any indication whatsoever of what, precisely, this baby "gives." There is nothing in the 1805 lines to suggest that the infant is not "satisfied" by the simple act of receiving. In the A text, the baby does nothing. Everything is done to him. And some very peculiar things are done to him.

The infant is passively "Nursed," and he passively "sleeps" (l. 240), while "feelings pass into his torpid life" (l. 244). He is "Subjected to the discipline of love" (l. 251) by a "beloved presence," in whom there exists/ A virtue which irradiates and exalts/ All objects" (ll. 258-60) for him (all italics mine). There is nothing wrong with any of this, because it happens to most babies. But if we did not recognize that Wordsworth is using typical eighteenth-century collocations and terms borrowed from Hartleian psychology and Newtonian physics, we could have immense fun with "His organs and recipient faculties/ Are quickened" (ll. 252-53), with "his mind spreads" (l. 253), and with "Along his infant veins are interfused/ The gravitation and the filial bond/ Of Nature that connect him to the world" (ll. 262-64; all italics mine).

Contrary to what Davie would have us believe, the spreading of the infant's mind that Wordsworth is discussing in the A text is a purely mechanical action, a growth, if indeed there is any growth, by expansion and accretion. And, also contrary to what Davie suggests, when Wordsworth tells us that the child "Claims manifest kindred with an earthly soul" (l. 242), he is not describing vibrant activity. He is merely telling us, in rather inflated language, that the child wants the mother to respond

openly to him and to display overt affection towards him. Davie admires the activity inherent in "apprehensive" (l. 256), and might have made a slight case for it if he had only given it to the mother, to whom it rightfully belongs. But Davie points out that the child does "gather passion from his mother's eye" (l. 243), and that his mind is "Tenacious" (l. 254) and "eager to combine" (l. 247). All of this does denote activity. But we must consider the kind of activity Wordsworth is describing. The verb "gathers" is imprecise in this context, not only because it is associated here with "passion," something one does not gather as he would a handful of flowers, but also because of its connotations of randomness and indiscrimination on the part of the infant. Here, the infant shows no initial ability to discern, to select. This is a pure action-reaction situation. The mother responds strongly (too strongly, as a matter of fact) to the baby, and, in turn, he responds in a similar manner to her.

If one wished to support Davie's tenuous thesis and rather insensitive reading, one could make a better case than he does for the "active"-ness of the 1805 passage, but not by alluding to its verbs. Note the "prompt" and "watchful" that Wordsworth juxtaposes to "eager to combine" (l. 247), and, note too, the "vigorous" (l. 253) that he lodges between the two passive verbs in the same line. But these adjectives, when coupled with the verbs that Davie mentions, have the result of insinuating a grasping, self-seeking being, whose only aim is to take into himself all that the world can offer. We must, of course, concede that this is a valid description of a baby, but only of a baby who has not, as yet, made any progress in imaginative development. The whole problem with this passage is that, after telling us that he "would trace/

The progress of our being" (ll. 238-39), Wordsworth shows the baby making no progress whatsoever. The claiming and the gathering and the spreading of this version denote only half-actions that never develop into a true sequence of creative mental activities.

"If I ask myself what grounds Dr. Leavis can have for preferring the later version," Davie continues,

I can only suppose he is attracted by the relative concreteness (heaven knows it is phantasmal enough) of the flower and even the 'Unsightly marks of violence or harm'. I would sum up the difference between these two versions by saying that, in the earlier draft, Wordsworth is rendering the experience of being a child at the mother's breast. He is doing this in the only way possible, from inside the child's mind, by rendering in his verse the movements of the child's consciousness, stirring here, checked or sluggish there, drawn this way by powerful currents, dammed back somewhere else. In the later version the poet is sometimes inside the child's mind, sometimes inside the mother's, sometimes inside the spectator's; and by thus shifting his point of view, he denies himself the chance of rendering with fidelity the movements in the child's mind or the mother's or the spectator's. Undoubtedly the language of the earlier version appears more abstract, but it is not therefore ratiocinative. It seems to me that its strength is all in its energetic verbs, and the nouns that attend them ('powers', 'elements', 'parts', 'forms', 'sensations', 'objects') are correspondingly thin and general. And of course this energy in representing movements of the mind fits in with the fact that Hartley, Wordsworth's master here, was the last of the mechanic psychologists such as influenced Pope, who explained the movements of the mind in terms drawn ultimately from mechanics. (Articulate Energy, p. 115)

Davie finally sums up his argument as follows:

In passages such as the one just considered, of 1805, he conveys the power as well as the particularity, the different kinds of pulse in the natural machine, by the precisely discriminated energies of his verbs, which concretely act out the powers he is speaking of. In him perhaps one may applaud what Fenollosa applauded in Shakespeare, his 'persistent, natural, and magnificent use of hundreds of transitive verbs'. (Articulate Energy, p. 116)

If we turn now to the 1850 passage, we shall find that Davie is quite

wrong in much of what he asserts, especially when he tells us that the poet must work only from inside the child's mind in order to describe that mind's development. The creative mind of the child is only one facet that Wordsworth is taking into consideration in the 1850 lines) and, it is only when he can execute the delicate manoeuvre of moving inside and out of that mind that Wordsworth can show us precisely how that mind begins to become creative in its own right and how he can add sensitivity and realism to a revised passage.

In the 1850 passage, the infant is passively "Nursed" (l. 235) and he is passively "Rocked" (l. 236). But there is just a hint of infant resistance in the "sinks to sleep" (l. 235). And there is more than a hint of his dynamic participation in the "Drinks in" (l. 237), a powerfully suggestive, physical verb that answers to the "Nursed" and the "Rocked" of the previous two lines. For the baby in this passage, there is also a dear "Presence" in whom "there exists/ A virtue which irradiates and exalts/ Objects" (ll. 238-40) for him. But he does not have to "Claim" (1805, II, 242) anything from her. There is no urgency, "no passion" (1805, II, 243) in this relationship. Her "feelings" (l. 237) are already his. Nor does the virtue of the mother irradiate and exalt "All objects" (1805, II, 260) for this infant (italics mine).

No doubt, as Davie suggests, Leavis was "attracted by the relative concreteness . . . of the flower," because what Wordsworth is doing with that "flower," besides delicately shifting his perspective from the inside to the outside of the child's mind, is something fairly advanced for his time. He is shifting his perspective from a world in which order is superimposed ("the gravitation and the filial bond"), a world of Newtonian precision and mathematical certainty, to a world in

which the only certainty is uncertainty. With the "pseudo-syntax," as Davie calls it, of line 245, Wordsworth is not just giving us his version of the favourite romantic subject of mind meeting object and impinging itself upon that object in order to shape and transform it. He is separating the world of objective reality, the "flower," from man, "hand/ Too weak to gather it" (l. 246), and half asking the questions: is there a world that is independent of the thrust of the human consciousness? Is there a world that, no matter how hard he may try or how much he may wish, man cannot change or transform?

But the young child (and he is young, "hand too weak to gather it") is happily oblivious to such a possibility. The flower is there and he likes it. He "points" (l. 245) to it, drawing the mother's attention away from himself to the flower. He admires that flower. And he admires it (and this is the important point), not because the mother has previously admired that flower, or, for that matter, any flower, but because she has admired him. To the reader, it might seem far too sophisticated and complex an idea to suggest of a young infant that, because the mother has shown him admiration, he is now attempting, purely for the mother's pleasure, to show her something that he, himself, admires. I say it might seem too sophisticated an idea were it not for the doubly significant word "already" (l. 246; 248).

There is no "pervasive slackening of tension" in these lines, as Davie suggests, and there is no "retarded and unsteadied movement." There is a progressive, steady, ongoing movement here, and a pervasive heightening of tension--the tension inherent in the creative act itself--as the baby begins to sort, reformulate, and transform received emotion from the mother ("feeling") into appropriate and directed outgoings of

the self. Love has been "Drawn" (l. 247) for this infant, and because it has, "already" he can show love and admiration to objects outside of himself. And "already," he can reformulate ("cast from") the "inward tenderness" (l. 249) first bestowed upon him by the mother into "shades/ Of pity . . ." for "aught that bears/ Unsightly marks of violence or harm" (ll. 250-51). The "shades/ Of pity" here is not a "weakly visual" image, as Davie asserts. It is not an image at all. It is a sensitive, but strong, cognitive concept, and with it, Wordsworth is implying first, that the "pity" that this baby is beginning to feel for objects in the external world is not "pity" as the adult mind comprehends the term; it is only a forerunner, a shadow that precedes the reality. Second, he is implying a further refinement of the infant's sensibilities. Not only is the infant beginning to shape specific and appropriate emotions out of the generalized "inward tenderness" that he first received from the mother, but he is also learning to modify his emotional responses to suit the occasion or situation that confronts him. He is beginning to comprehend that certain degrees of emotional response are appropriate to some occasions, whereas stronger or weaker emotional responses are necessary to others. Davie is quite wrong to insist that the mother's love is "combined or confused with pity" in the 1850 passage. The only confusion we have encountered thus far in this discussion originates from Davie's analysis of the 1850 passage.

But Davie does have a point when he accuses Wordsworth of not "rendering with fidelity" the movements of the mother's mind. Wordsworth does not tell us precisely what the mother does when the infant points to the flower. This really does not matter, however, because the dominant tone of the passage suggests that she will not merely sit staring blankly

into space. In some way, she will respond to the infant's conscious gesture. And when she does, he will have shaped a part of external reality to respond to a demand of his awakening, creative mind. We realize from the "cast from" (l. 249), and from the "Do fall" and "upon" of line 250, that the "gravitation, which survives into the later version" is not out of place there, as Davie asserts. Not only does it serve as the vital force that connects the baby to the world (and the world of eighteenth-century thought to the world of twentieth-century thought), but the two lines (ll. 243-44) also serve as a pivotal point at which Wordsworth can begin to shift our attention to the mind of the spectator ("Is there a flower") so that we can, "with fidelity," follow the movements of the spectator's mind as he follows the mental turns of this ~~time~~ god as he performs his first creative and beneficent acts. There ~~is~~ much of poignancy here, as we realize that the spectator is gradually becoming aware that, while the infant can successfully manipulate a limited part of the world to respond to his conscious desires, the part of the world that responds to his demands and that he can manipulate will always be limited. The spectator gradually comes to understand what the child will only learn through maturity, that "pity" will never erase from the world all of its "Unsightly marks of violence or harm" (l. 251). Unlike the mind of the child, the mind of the spectator moves from half question to full answer. The world is a shapeable place, but only within definable limitations. And, no matter how creative the child is or becomes, he will eventually arrive at the same answer. Unfortunately, there will come a time for him, as for all children, when he is "Depressed" and "bewildered" (1850, XI, 321).⁴

Because I would like to move on now to discuss some of the

revisions that Wordsworth makes in his discussions of his own childhood, I shall leave this passage. I should only like to say in conclusion that, while Davie prefers the 1805 passage, I prefer its 1850 revision, not because of its "active" verbs, but because in it Wordsworth fulfills two promises. First, he directs our attention to one of "those individual sights" of "tenderness" (1850, VII, 599-601) that he promises, in the final version, "to note, and keep/ In memory" (1850, VII, 598-99). Second, within the passage itself, he truly does "trace/ Our Being's earthly progress" (ll. 233-34; my italics). Here, an interfusion really does occur, as the infant, "creator and receiver both" (l. 258) assimilates his mother's feelings, and gradually learns to discriminate between and to reformulate those feelings into appropriately graded degrees of directed emotional and intellectual response, so that he is a vital part of that which he attempts to create. Here, feeling has not "imparted strength" (1805, II, 269), but "power" (l. 255), "power" to shape, modify, and, at times, beautify, a limited part of his universe. And where he cannot shape, modify, or beautify his universe, those feelings give him an initial "power" to accept with compassion and equanimity both his own limitations and the limitations of his world. I would sum up the difference between these two versions by saying that, in the earlier draft, Wordsworth is rendering the experience of being an emotionally immature poet who, in wanting desperately to impress us with his knowledge of Hartleian associationalism (albeit, as de Selincourt rightly puts it, "Hartley transcendentalized by Coleridge" [p. lxix]) and Newtonian physics, loses complete control of his subject. But perhaps that is too strong, for, in reality, Wordsworth never, from the beginning of the 1805 passage, has sufficient control over his subject, because he

is hopelessly encased in that subject's medullary substance and "recipient faculties" (l. 252). Or, to put it a finer way, as Bennett Weaver does, Wordsworth's

'best conjectures' cannot appease his plain intelligence; and after an ineffectual struggle with 'organs and recipient faculties' he succeeds more in leaving his reader 'bewildered and depressed' than in writing good poetry. The 'torpid life' of the little associationist spreads through the verses themselves.⁵

In the final version, Wordsworth shifts his perspective from the inside to the outside of the child's mind. From inside, he describes a growing urge to shape and beautify; from the outside, he describes a growing awareness that at least some of these creative urges will be thwarted, and, ultimately, destroyed. This ability to see the creative act, and, in fact, all of life, not only from the "golden side" (1805, X, 663; 1850, XI, 80), but from both sides, and to accept it is the essential difference between these two passages, and is one of the most significant differences between the 1805 and the 1850 Preludes.

"Was it for this/ That one, the fairest of all rivers, loved/
To blend his murmurs with my nurse's song" (1805, I, 271-73; 1850, I, 269-71) Wordsworth asks as he begins the story of his own early years. He continues his description of the Derwent as follows:

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, composed my thoughts
To more than infant softness, giving me
Among the fretful dwellings of mankind,
A knowledge, a dim earnest, of the calm
Which Nature breathes among the hills and groves?

(1805, I, 276-85)

According to Wordsworth's description of it in these lines, the Derwent is a rather peculiar river. Certainly the reader is in no doubt as to the river's beauty, since Wordsworth refers to it three times in the course of fifteen lines as "the fairest of all rivers" (l. 272), "beauteous stream" (l. 278), "beauteous river" (l. 287), but when he proceeds to inform us that this magnificent river travels "over the green plains" (l. 277), we begin to wonder if Wordsworth would not have been more accurate in describing it as a beauteous flood. Here; besides repeating the slightly awkward and archaic "didst thou," Wordsworth shows his excessive emotional involvement with the river by making claims for it that no river could truly fulfill. He attributes to it powers that rivers simply do not have. While the sounds of a river can affect us, can calm us, in reality, no river can give anyone, especially a babe-in-arms, "A knowledge" (l. 284) of the overall effect of Nature's calming influence.

Wordsworth gives us a much sharper and more distinct impression of the Derwent in the revised passage by taking a less emotional approach to his subject. He deletes phrases such as "'sweet birthplace'" (l. 278), "beauteous stream" (l. 278) and "beauteous river" (l. 287) from this version because they are empty of any real descriptive content, and he tells us that the Derwent winds "among the grassy holms" (l. 275), and not that it travels "over the green plains" (l. 277) as he does in the A text. He also acknowledges, finally, that the river gave him only a "foretaste" (l. 280) and not a "knowledge" (l. 284) of Nature's calming influence.

In both versions, Wordsworth proceeds to tell us, "Fair seed-time had my soul, and I grew up/ Fostered alike by beauty and by fear" (1805, I, 305-06; 1850, I, 301-02). He then begins to describe one of

'twas my joy
 With store of springes o'er my shoulder hung
 To range the open heights where woodcocks ran
 Along the smooth green turf. Through half the night,
 Scudding away 'from snare to snare, I piled
 That anxious visitation;--moon and stars
 Were shining o'er my head. I was alone,
 And seemed to be a trouble to the peace
 That dwelt among them.

(1850, I, 309-17)

The 1805 version of these lines is a decided improvement over the erratic, associational rambling of the earliest version. Wordsworth deletes some of the broken syntax, and, hence, some of the discontinuity of thought from the 1805 version when he omits the last three lines of MS. JJ and the reference to the nebulous "Gentle power" of that version, a power that seems to arrive from nowhere, and, whether singular or plural, serves no real purpose in the passage.

The 1805 version is, however, only an intermediate step in the revision of this passage, and, as such, it retains some of the problems of the 1798-99 version. Wordsworth keeps the somewhat disjointed syntax of "In thought and wish/ That time, my shoulder all with springes hung/ I was a fell destroyer" (ll. 316-18) of the JJ text, and although he corrects the spelling of "anxious" (l. 320) and "hurrying" (l. 321), he still retains the obviously padded diction of "hurrying on,/ Still hurrying, hurrying onward" (ll. 320-21) of the earlier version as well, so that in his effort to enact the movement he is describing, he almost loses control of the line.

It is only in the 1850 version of these lines that we get a concise and clear description of this childhood activity and of Wordsworth's understanding of the consequences of this activity. Here,

he makes the clear statement that, as a child, he loved to snare woodcocks, but while he was engaging in this sport, he seemed to be an unwelcome intruder who disturbed the peace and serenity of Nature itself. He tells us that he loved "To range the open heights where woodcocks ran" (l. 311). He does not confuse us, as he does in the 1805 text, by telling us that he busied himself wandering "among the cliffs/ And smooth hollows" (ll. 314-15), while the woodcocks seemingly "ran/ Along the open turf" (1805, I, 315-16) somewhere below. He does not dramatize the situation by telling us that he "was a fell destroyer" (1805, I, 318), nor does he deem it necessary to pad his description with an enactment of an activity that is of secondary importance to the central idea of the passage, but which, in the earlier versions, draws our attention away from, rather than toward, this central idea.⁶ It is important to call attention as well to one other minor, yet very significant, revision that Wordsworth makes in the 1850 version of these lines, a revision that gives the statement of this passage more universal application. He changes "My anxious visitation" (1805, I, 320) to "That anxious visitation" (1850, I, 314), implying that the guilt and anxiety that he felt while engaging in this nefarious sport is the same guilt and anxiety that is felt by all persons who, at any time, engage in cruel and destructive activities.

Wordsworth then proceeds to tell us, in an essentially unrevised passage, that not only did he trap woodcocks on his own, but that he sometimes stole the woodcocks trapped by other boys:

Sometimes it befel
 In these night wanderings, that a strong desire
 O'erpowered my better reason, and the bird
 Which was the captive of another's toil
 Became my prey; and when the deed was done
 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.

(1850, I, 317-25)

Here, we have the first example in the poem of Nature's ministry of fear working to develop the conscience of the young boy. The assertion that Wordsworth is making is that Nature is interested in preserving her essential harmony and the sanctity of all life. When someone disrupts this harmony, Nature acts to create within the mind of that person an internal disharmony corresponding to the external disharmony he has himself created. It is through this reciprocal relationship with Nature that the child learns, gradually, to love and revere all life.⁷

Another of Wordsworth's childhood pastimes was stealing birds' eggs from the mother birds' nests. He tells us, in the 1805 version:

Nor less in springtime, when on southern banks
The shining sun had from her knot of leaves
Decoyed the primrose flower, and when the vales
And woods were warm, was I a plunderer then
In the high places, on the lonesome peaks,
Where'er among the mountains and the winds
The mother-bird had built her lodge. Though mean
My object and inglorious, yet the end
Was not ignoble.

(1805, I, 333-41)

He condenses this account considerably in the 1850 version:

Nor less when spring had warmed the cultured Vale,
Roved we as plunderers where the mother-bird
Had in high places built her lodge; though mean
Our object and inglorious, yet the end
Was not ignoble.

(1850, I, 326-30)

In the lines immediately prior to these, Wordsworth depicts Nature as a

responsible guardian of life and harmony and as a stern agency of fear. Here, in the 1805 version of these lines, he makes an abrupt and irrational transition both in tone and thought by depicting Nature in overly sweet, sentimental terms as somewhat of a coy temptress that "Decoy[s] the primrose flower" (l. 335). Hence the original conception of Nature is completely shattered. In the 1850 version, however, by deleting his cloying description of spring at the beginning of the passage, and by replacing it with the more mature and concentrated phrase "the cultured Vale" (l. 326), Wordsworth both eliminates the falsely sweet tone of the passage and also maintains the continuity of thought of the verse paragraph. This phrase draws a striking contrast between the devious behavior of the boy and the refined and peaceful setting of the Vale in which this behavior serves only as a disruption. Here, Nature is powerful, not as an agency of fear, but as a source of unity and peaceful refinement.

Almost immediately following this passage, Wordsworth digresses from the story of his life by reflecting on all the happenings in that life and on their influence upon him:

The mind of man is framed 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. Ah me, that all
 The terrors, all the early miseries,
 Regrets, vexations, lassitudes, that all
 The thoughts and feelings which have been infused
 Into my mind, should ever have made up
 The calm existence that is mine when I
 Am worthy of myself. Praise to the end,
 Thanks likewise for the means! But I believe
 That Nature, oftentimes, when she would frame
 A favored being, from his earliest dawn
 Of infancy doth open out the clouds,
 As at the touch of lightning, seeking him

With gentlest visitation; not the less,
 Though haply aiming at the self-same end,
 Does it delight her sometimes to employ
 Severer interventions, ministry
 More palpable--and so she dealt with me.

(1850, I, 351-71)

The 1850 version reads as follows:

Dust as we are, the immortal spirit grows
 Like harmony in music; there is a dark
 Inscrutable workmanship that reconciles
 Discordant elements, makes them cling together
 In one society. How strange that all
 The terrors, pains, and early miseries,
 Regrets, vexations, lassitudes interfused
 Within my mind, should e'er have borne a part,
 And that a needful part, in making up
 The calm existence that is mine when I
 Am worthy of myself! Praise to the end!
 Thanks to the means which Nature deigned to employ;
 Whether her fearless visitings, or those
 That came with soft alarm, like hurtless light
 Opening the peaceful clouds; or she may use
 Severer interventions, ministry
 More palpable, as best might suit her aim.

(1850, I, 340-56; my italics)

In Principles of Wordsworth's Poetry, Robert Marchant compares the two versions, and comes to the following conclusions:

Between the 1805 and the final drafts of the poem there is little distinction in those passages characterized above as concretely embodying events but some significant alteration in the reflective verse. 'Dust', 'immortal spirit', and 'inscrutable', from the above passage, are peculiar to the final revision. The apparent orthodox piety of the later terminology imparts a borrowed dignity to the expression of natural tendencies whose end being great they are as though ordained. But self-sufficient as the poetry is its style of exaltation is accomplished at the expense of a more vital wonder. The 1805 version, though looser, is thereby more and not less expressive of real awe than the final one: [Marchant here quotes ll. 351-55 of the 1805 version]. The distinction between this and the revision is one of disposition as well as of one element of that, the vocabulary. The later 'Dust as we are' for example presumes a humility which is not yet apparent in the more objective 'The mind of man is . . .', whose subject is an

exterior phenomenon. The speculative form of the earlier version expresses a disposition to look and wonder. And 'framed' too suggests a reference to what is discerned through the poetry of the shape of inner experience, the set of the psychic tendencies manifest as needs: the word centres on the intuition of the immediately descriptive verse. 'Invisible' describes an apprehended exterior phenomenon where 'inscrutable' characterizes a feeling had by the observer: 'makes them move' is lovelier because more evocative of harmony (as in dance) than 'makes them cling together', which is already a shade desperate in its insistence. More true to immediate experience, the imagery of the 1805 version of this passage of reflection has an essential quality of complex 'thought in experience' sacrificed in the later to exclusive dignity of expression. The early style's tentative reaching-out towards something known only as other and 'not me' is the real accomplishment, the later conclusive tendency the relative illusion. If the later version of The Prelude is by and large a more impressive expression of the poem's theme, more coherent and assured, that is only a testimony to the irresistible charm for Wordsworth of what is loosely termed his philosophy and a demonstration that the very undertaking The Prelude represents was a dangerous one for him as an artist. (Principles, pp. 54-55)

Marchant further states that "the altered passage is a speculative and not a descriptive one" (Principles, p. 55). He then quotes ll. 362-67 of the 1805 version, and concludes by saying:

and again it is the earlier version that is the more immediate and tangible and the later the more vaguely portentous. 'The touch of lightning' startles with the challenge of a presented concrete realization of the idea--the idea is struck off in the reader's contact with the image and so conceived in specific relation with the image; therefore, that the 'seeking' which was a force allied with the power of lightning should nevertheless be a 'gentlest visitation' is wonderful. The turn of speech makes the reader think the notion of a mighty power which nurtures--whereas 'like hurtless light' gives it him, ready made. The poem of 1805 comes at the marvellous in the language of tangible experience whereas the final revision already has the marvellous for its theme. So far as that theme exists for independent treatment the later is perhaps its more complete expression. In the above passage it is the less specific later imagery that is the more complexly suggestive. But the progress away from the tangible to the ideal perceptible here has corollaries which the examination of two of Wordsworth's narrative poems made below . . . will show to be deadening rather than deepening. (Principles, pp. 56-57)

If we proceed now to examine these passages point by point, we shall see

that Marchant's assessment of the 1850 version is both limited and quite misleading.

Marchant complains that the line "the immortal spirit grows/
Like harmony in music" (1850, I, 340-341) "is a proposition more apparent than actual" (Principles, p. 53). But what of the 1805 opening proposition? "The mind of man is framed even like the breath/ And harmony of music" (ll. 351-52) is a proposition that is not even apparent, let alone actual. Unless we have read "The mind of man is fashioned & built up/ Even as a strain of music" (Parrish, MS. V. 3^r, p. 233), or until we come to "But I believe/ That Nature, oftentimes, when she would frame/ A favored being" (ll. 362-64) in the 1805 text, we do not fully realize that the "is framed" of this passage expresses not a limiting, but an expansive quality of the human mind. As it stands in isolation, however, we might readily assume that Wordsworth means that the mind of man is governed and even restricted in its development by laws and principles similar to the ones we use in musical composition. But even when we acknowledge the meaning of "is framed" to be "is built up" or "is fashioned," we still cannot argue that this is an actual proposition. Is the "mind of man" built up, so to speak, one note at a time? Does it follow certain man-made laws of development? Does its growth occur over a specific and limited time span? Does its rate of growth occur at a specific, predictable pace that does not change? And what, precisely, is "the breath/ . . . of music"? Is music a living, breathing entity capable of independent existence even though it is "framed" by man? Finally, given both possible meanings of "is framed," how, precisely, is "the harmony of music" "framed" so that its construction compares with the growth of the human mind? The comparison of the human mind with music

gives us no aid whatsoever in determining either the properties of the human mind or the properties of music, however harmonious that music may be.

In the 1850 version Wordsworth begins with the proposition:

"Dust as we are the immortal spirit grows/ Like harmony in music"

(ll. 340-41). "'Dust as we are,'" does not presume "a humility"; rather, it proclaims a truth. This line really introduces a double paradox, for even though we are dust and are destined to return to dust, there is a spirit within us that is immortal, and not only is this spirit immortal, it paradoxically "grows." We should note that in this final version Wordsworth carefully avoids the term "soul," the term he used in the JJ version of this passage (Parrish, R^r, p. 83), so there are fewer "Religious connotations" actually involved here than Marchant would have us think. As John Danby suggests, "Growth is a central preoccupation for Wordsworth."⁸ He goes on to say, of this passage:

The immortal spirit grows--Wordsworth's whole poem, and especially the first Book, is an attempt to explore, expound, and exemplify this paradox. The universe we are born into is already there. It is not (as it impinges on us) monolithic. Its unity is a concert of articulated and articulate powers. Each power is; each exerts its shaping influence; each is a voice. Nature, as it works on us from birth, is a plurality. Yet its action is unified and unifying. The Babe that confronts it is a power similarly independent. He is capable of the encounter he is called to by that in which he is set--and which has produced him--provided he sufficiently responds. (p. 53)

But respond he must, as we saw in the first passage that we examined, and when he does, "there is a dark/ Inscrutable workmanship that reconciles/ Discordant elements, makes them cling together/ In one society" (1850, I, 341-44).

In the A text, Wordsworth explains that there is a "dark/

Invisible workmanship that reconciles/ Discordant elements, and makes them move/ In one society" (ll. 352-55). Surely this is not a bad thing for any "workmanship" to accomplish; but why then does Wordsworth refer to it as "dark"? Is it "dark" because it is "Invisible," and, as such, is terrifying? Or is it "dark" because Wordsworth feels that what it is doing is wrong--that "Discordant elements" should not be made to "move together"? In the 1850 text, Wordsworth's meaning is much clearer. Here, he tells us that there is a "workmanship," "dark" because it is "Inscrutable," even to him, a "workmanship" that causes "Discordant elements" not merely to "move together," but to "cling together," to form a cohesive and complementary unity of thought and feeling.

We question Wordsworth's emotional stance in the A text when we come to the "Ah me" (l. 355), because it suggests that he is either bored with the whole procedure of explaining the workings of the "mind of man," that he is above the entire situation, or that he is perplexed by it. This phrase does not, as Marchant suggests, "express a disposition to look and wonder." But we question even more strongly the list of experiences that Wordsworth claims have gone into making up "The calm existence that is [his]" (l. 360) when he feels worthy of himself. Surely there must have been some joys, some happinesses, some triumphs, and some delights that also played a part, however minute, in this process. In the final version, Wordsworth is much less melodramatic in his assertion, for, although he still alludes to the same list of tribulations, he points out, more realistically, that they only bore "a part, / And that a needful part" (ll. 347-48; my italics) in this procedure.

If there is any "borrowed dignity" in this passage, it does not come, as Marchant insists, in the 1850 version. It comes in the A text,

and the manner by which Wordsworth "borrows" it is slightly devious. In the final section of the 1805 passage, he tells us that he believes Nature chooses certain individuals, almost from birth, to be the recipients of her training. He tells us that she deals with these individuals in certain ways. He then insists that Nature "dealt" (l. 371) with him in these ways, and he obviously hopes that we will be astute enough to gather from this that he is, therefore, one of the "favoured being[s]" (l. 364) of Nature. In the final version, Wordsworth does not mention "favoured being[s]" at all. He merely mentions that Nature employs certain means when dealing with men in order to shape and refine their sensibilities. The "favoured being" of the A text is more than "a shade desperate in its insistence," and it is more "desperate in its insistence" than anything we find in the final version.

As for the "means" that Nature does employ, I certainly do not, for a minute, dispute the fact that the imagery of the earlier version "is the more immediate and tangible," or that it describes a more "tangible experience," as Marchant suggests. Try as I might, however, I cannot, like Marchant, "think the notion of a mighty power which nurtures" or the notion of a "gentlest visitation" when the "concrete realization of the idea," "touch of lightning" (l. 366) is "struck off" my consciousness. And, although I might well be admitting a failure of imaginative power, I must say that, to me, "open out the clouds" (l. 365) and "seeking" (l. 366) are not "wonderful." In this context, they are quite disturbing.

But the whole point is that Marchant, in concentrating almost solely on the tangible imagery of the A text, is missing the vital new concept of Nature that Wordsworth is beginning now (and in the previous

passage) to present to us in the final version. Here, Wordsworth still presents Nature as a power, and we gain the impression that it is a "higher power" and a more refined power since she "deign[s]" (l. 351) to employ her ministrations. But these come with "soft alarm," "like hurtless light" (l. 353) when she opens "the peaceful clouds" (l. 354; my italics). Now here is something "wonderful," in the true sense of the word. The "soft alarm" and "hurtless light" suggest both the quiet power of Nature to awaken and the tenderness with which she awakens, and, in doing so, they certainly are "more complexly suggestive" than the "touch of lightning" of the A text. And, I would add, that they have a deepening rather than a deadening effect in the 1850 passage.

Wordsworth does not attempt to impress upon us the fact that he is, in any way, chosen in the final version of this passage. As a matter of fact, he sensitively leaves the "aim" of Nature unspecified in the last line with the phrase "as best might suit her aim" (l. 356). Thus, the aim of the entire passage in the 1850 version is not self-congratulation at being one of the chosen favorites of Nature, as it is in the 1805 text. The 1850 version is aimed rather at showing us not only how Wordsworth's mind develops, but how each individual's mind develops and how each phase of development is necessary, even mandatory, if we are to attain mental and emotional maturity. Its aim, too, is to show how Nature can assist in this development and how it works in conjunction with other experiences, "Regrets," "vexations," and "lassitudes" (l. 346), to further develop the mind to maturity, in not just certain men, but in all men.

An example of Nature's "Severer interventions" (1850, I, 355) follows immediately after this digression when Wordsworth describes the "stolen boat" episode of his childhood. He tells us in the 1805 version:

One evening--surely I was led by her--
 I went alone into a shepherd's boat,
 A skiff that to a willow-tree was tied
 Within a rocky cave, its usual home.
 'Twas by the shores of Patterdale, a vale
 Wherein I was a stranger, thither come
 A schoolboy traveller, at the holidays.
 Forth rambled from the village inn alone
 No sooner had I sight of this small skiff,
 Discovered thus by unexpected chance,
 Than I unloosed her tether and embarked.
 The moon was up, the lake was shining clear
 Among the hoary mountains; from the shore
 I pushed, and struck the oars, and struck again
 In cadence, and my little boat moved on
 Even like a man who moves with stately step
 Though bent on speed. It was an act of stealth
 And troubled pleasure.

(1805, I, 372-89)

Wordsworth removes all extraneous description that does not further the narration when he explains, in the final text,

One summer evening (led by her) I found
 A little boat tied to a willow tree
 Within a rocky cave, its usual home.
 Straight I unloosed her chain, and stepping in
 Pushed from the shore. It was an act of stealth
 And troubled pleasure.

(1850, I, 357-62)

In the 1850 version not only does the sparse, formal narration add to the solemnity of the event that Wordsworth is describing, but his reordering of the material so that the "It was an act of stealth/ And troubled pleasure" (ll. 361-62) following immediately after the description of the actual stealing of the boat by the young boy also leaves no doubt in our minds as to what the "act of stealth" was, whereas in the earlier version, because he waits to tell us of the "act of stealth" until after he has described his rowing on the lake, there is some ambiguity as to his possible meaning.

For so it seemed, with purpose of its own
 And measured motion like a living thing,
 Strode after me.

(1850, I, 373-85)

Wordsworth makes several significant minor revisions to the conclusion of his description of this adventure. It is "With trembling oars" (l. 385), not just with "trembling hands" (1805, I, 412) that he makes his way back to shore. When he arrives, he leaves the boat not in a "cavern" (l. 414), but in the more secretive "covert" (l. 387). In the 1850 version, too, Wordsworth explains not that there "was a darkness" (l. 421) in his thoughts after the episode, but that there "hung a darkness" (l. 394) over his thoughts, and not that the rather vague "no familiar shapes/ Of hourly objects, images of trees" (1805, I, 422-23) came to his mind, but that "No familiar shapes/ Remained, no pleasant images of trees" (ll. 395-96). The final revision, a seemingly minor one, is the change once more from an "and" (1805, I, 417) to a "but" (1850, I, 390), since, as McConnell again points out, this "strengthens the disjunction between experience and aftereffect" (Confessional Imagination, p. 98). Whether or not we agree with McConnell when he suggests that this change establishes "the unity and maturity of the narrator himself not in the grammar of causality but precisely in the grammar of confession" (Confessional Imagination, p. 98), Wordsworth's narrative control is, once again, strengthened by this revision.

After an unrevised digression in which Wordsworth addresses the "Wisdom and Spirit of the universe," he reverts to the story of his childhood once again, only this time to tell us not of his summer pastimes, but of his winter activities. Here is a portion of the 1805 account:

All shod with steel
 We hissed along the polished ice in games
 Confederate, imitative of the chase
 And woodland pleasures, the resounding horn,
 The pack loud bellowing, and the hunted hare.
 So through the darkness and the cold we flew,
 And not a voice was idle. With the din,
 Meanwhile, the precipices rang aloud;
 The leafless trees and every icy crag
 Tinkled like iron.

(1805, T, 460-69)

And this is the 1850 revision:

All shod with steel,
 We hissed along the polished ice in games
 Confederate, imitative of the chase
 And woodland pleasures,--the resounding horn,
 The pack loud chiming, and the hunted hare.
 So through the darkness and the cold we flew,
 And not a voice was idle; with the din
 Smitten, the precipices rang aloud;
 The leafless trees and every icy crag
 Tinkled like iron.

(1850, I, 433-42)

Wordsworth makes only two significant changes in this passage. The "bellowing" (l. 464) of the 1805 text becomes "chiming" (l. 437) in the later version, and the "Meanwhile" (l. 467) of the earlier version becomes "Smitten" (l. 440) in the 1850 text. Geoffrey Hartman, in The Unmediated Vision, points out that the sound effects and the rhythm of this passage, in its revised form, add greatly to our understanding of Wordsworth's conception of the "sustaining spirit, an innate power that works on us, and in our most common perceptions."⁹ As Hartman suggests:

Even the rhythm, which in Wordsworth has become a major effect of style, helps to realize the continuous ebb and flow of the sustaining power. Unaccented syllables are picked up and gradually brought forward to the reader's attention until accentuated, as if a wave (of sound or sea) were bringing closer a far-away sound and redispersing it in its echo. In the account of the skating, for example, echo (which has

metaphysical significance) is rendered by 'with the din/ Smitten, the precipices rang aloud;' where the sharp high i of 'din' is progressively accentuated, while the vowel plus n or ng is first (in 'smitten') deaccentuated, but picked up again in 'rang.' The nature of overflow lines (that break in the first or second or even third foot of the following verse) could also be noted as contributing toward the ebb and flow effect; '... / Smitten' is one example. (Unmediated Vision, p. 24)

The second revision in the passage, "chiming," also adds to the ebb and flow rhythm that Hartman describes above. The onomatopoeia of the word itself, effected by the strongly accentuated full "i" in the first syllable and the deaccentuated "i" in the last, works in conjunction with the onomatopoeia of "We hissed along the polished ice" (l. 434) not only producing a more vital unification of thought and feeling in the passage, but also resulting in a rhythmic ebb and flow, because it accentuates and deaccentuates the high, thin "i" of line 434, while echoing the "ch" of "chase" in the next line. The more sensitive 1850 passage, then, with its vivid tide-like rhythm and its more vital and expressive diction, helps us realize the scene with more acuity and sense more fully the underlying power of Nature to echo and even partake in the joyful activities that make up such an integral part of human existence.

A few lines later, while still describing the skating scenes of his boyhood, Wordsworth mentions that he often left the company of the other children and skated off by himself, in order

To cut across the image of a star
That gleamed upon the ice.

(1805, I, 477-78)

The improvement that he makes when he revises this segment is obvious:

To cut across the reflex of a star
 That fled, and flying still before me, gleamed
 Upon the glassy plain.

(1850, I, 450-52)

The thought is more precise and complex in the later version. The most fascinating thing Wordsworth says here is that the star "fled," and Philip Marchant explains precisely why this is so:

. . . the image of the star, 'gleaming' with the essential singleness of its original, moves in response to his motion and the apparent intimacy makes the star--one component of the animated landscape--more than normally single and individual. For in the illusion of its responsive motion it is apprehended vitally, as a body not merely distinguished (in its gleaming) but separate and discrete. In the elation of motion the boy forgets, and apprehends with a new clarity of vision itself a state of being. So, as he dizzily comes to rest, the value of the experience comes to him in a sense of enhancement of being associated with the illusion of the world's motion about him: immediately [he has] an elated impression of 'seeing into the life of things' in perception of the earth's turning.
 (Principles, p. 63)

Marchant further suggests of the child:

And that it is an optical illusion he delights in he acknowledges: 'as if the earth had rolled . . .' Yet the peculiar pleasure the above description [Marchant is also commenting on ll. 453-60] conveys is not an illusion, but contact with the real. Because his abandonment to swift motion had taken him out of himself and permitted him, in seeing things (for example the star) as distinct and other, to become aware of himself as distinct and other, his relaxation from intense participation in the heightened being of the scene is a tranquillity implicitly a wholeness and a renewal. (Principles, p. 64)

With this revision, then, Wordsworth demonstrates not only a complex manipulation of Nature imagery, but also a complex new intellectual and aesthetic development in the child. The "calm delight" (1805, I, 580; 1850, I, 553) that he experiences here is a much different sensation from the "vulgar joy" (1805, I, 609; 1850, I, 581) that he felt while stealing bird's eggs and boats or while snaring woodcocks. Nature, here, is

administering a finer and more complex discipline, a discipline that enables the child to comprehend that he is both a part of and apart from the unity that is Nature. And it is this double vision that will later enable this particular child to write convincingly of "The bond of union between life and joy" (1850, I, 558).

Although Wordsworth does not change the third philosophical digression of Book I or make any major changes in his description of his childhood home, except to leave out of the final text his overly sentimentalized description of it as "A sanctity, a safeguard, and a love" (l. 527), he makes an extremely important change in his description of the natural scene outside the cottage while childhood games are going on within. The lines from the A text read:

Meanwhile abroad

The heavy rain was falling, or the frost
Raged bitterly with keen and silent tooth;
And, interrupting the impassioned game,
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.

(1805, I, 562-70)

In 1850, Wordsworth revises this to:

Meanwhile abroad

Incessant rain was falling, or the frost
Raged bitterly, with keen and silent tooth;
And, interrupting oft that eager game,
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.

(1850, I, 535-43)

The more forceful images of the "Incessant rain, . . . falling" and "The

pent-up air, struggling," air that "Gave out . . . a loud/ Protracted yelling," along with the more precise simile "like the noise of wolves/ Howling in troops," all suggest more vividly in the 1850 account that the calm, lovely, nurturing aspects of Nature that Wordsworth has, up to this point, stressed in the final version, are but one side of Nature. Here, for the first time, contrasting it vividly with the warmth and coziness of cottage life and the happy companionship it afforded him, Wordsworth strongly emphasizes, in the final text, Nature's raw, indifferent, savage side as well.

As Wordsworth closes Book I, he makes one final revision that illustrates, without a doubt, that the little boy whom he first introduced as a babe-in-arms and as a "naked savage, in the thunder shower" (1805, I, 304; 1850, I, 300) is gradually becoming aware that the "vulgar joys" and the "calm delights" of his early childhood are slowly coming to an end. In the 1805 text, he describes this poignant moment as follows:

Yes, I remember when the changeful earth
 And twice five seasons on my mind had stamped
 The faces of the moving year, even then,
 A child, I held unconscious intercourse
 With the eternal beauty, drinking in
 A pure organic pleasure from the lines,
 Of curling mist, or from the level plain
 Of waters coloured by the steady clouds.

(1805, I, 586-93)

In 1850, however, the moment is even more poignant:

Yes, I remember when the changeful earth,
 And twice five summers on my mind had stamped
 The faces of the moving year, even then
 I held unconscious intercourse with beauty
 Old as creation, drinking in a pure
 Organic pleasure from the silver wreaths
 Of curling mist, or from the level plain
 Of waters coloured by impending clouds.

(1850, I, 559-66)

Christopher Ricks, in "Wordsworth: 'A Pure Organic Pleasure from the Lines,'" finds a "disconcerting mixture of gains and losses"¹⁰ in the revised lines:

1850 has the richly proleptic suggestion of 'impending', and it retains the crucial inaugurations of the last two lines, both Of. But it weakens the force of the other prepositions, removing With from the head of the line and in from the end of the line, thereby abolishing the engrossing energy of the enjambment: 'drinking in/ A pure organic pleasure'. (The 1850 line break at 'drinking in a pure/ Organic pleasure' is altogether ineffectual.) But the superiority of 1805 is clearest in the change from 'the lines/ Of curling mist' to 'the silver wreaths/ Of curling mist'. On the one hand, the austerity of lines has been sacrificed to prettiness; on the other, a suggestiveness too has been sacrificed. For the word lines unobtrusively related Wordsworth's delight in 'the eternal Beauty' to his own beautiful lines which are here speaking; we are given a sense of what that 'pure organic pleasure' was, by experiencing its literary counterpart, a 'pure organic pleasure' of a literary kind, drinking it in from these very lines. It is a bad bargain which trades away both austerity and suggestiveness. Just for a handful of silver wreaths. (p. 8).

As Ricks suggests, the 1850 version does have the "richly proleptic suggestion of 'impending,'" a suggestion that Wordsworth carries forward to narrative advantage at several strategic points in the revised version. For example, the "impending clouds" that he speaks of here become actualized at the beginning of the revised Book III, where Wordsworth carefully includes in his description the fact that it was on a morning "o'er hung with clouds" (l. 2) that he left the happy days of his childhood forever and began his first year of residence at Cambridge University, a year that was for the most part, depressing, dreary, and, at least in his eyes at the time, quite unproductive. The cloud imagery at the opening of Book III, then, suggests, supports, and corresponds both to the mood and the essential meaning of the Book as a whole, just as the "impending clouds" at the closure of Book I signal the beginning

of the change of experience and mood that the child will shortly undergo as he moves into early adolescence.

And Ricks is also right to direct our attention to Wordsworth's retention of "the crucial inaugurations of the last two lines, both Of," and to his abolition of "the engrossing energy of the enjambment: 'drinking in/ A pure organic pleasure,'" in favour of inserting the "altogether ineffectual" revision "'drinking in a pure/ Organic pleasure.'" But we can certainly understand what Wordsworth is trying to do here. He wants to stress "pure" and "Organic," and so places "pure" in the emphatically stressed final position of one line and "Organic" in the primary position of the next. But the revision does decrease line definition despite the added stress on "pure," because the necessary pause (however short) after this word decreases the "engrossing energy" that is apparent in the 1805 lines. In the 1805 passage, as well, "pure" gets some added stress by virtue of the fact that it is in the first foot, and so, the gain, in this sense, is less than the loss in sound effect and line integrity.

I do think, however, that Ricks is being over-ingenious when he insists that Wordsworth is ~~pushing~~ on the word "lines" in the revised passage. The pleasure that Wordsworth is describing here, as he himself says, is an "Organic pleasure," and he would be one of the last poets to insist that his poetic "lines" would afford that kind of pleasure to a reader. He would hope that a reader would hold more than "unconscious intercourse" with his poetry, and he would hope that that poetry would give mental stimulation, spiritual enlightenment and emotional fulfilment to a reader, but not "Organic pleasure."

Finally, I disagree with Ricks' point about the "silver wreaths/

Of curling mist." This image might seem a bit static, and possibly, even slightly clichéd, were it not for the fact that this is Wordsworth speaking, and we must remember that he is speaking of a ten-year-old child. These "silver wreaths/ Of curling mist" have a special "austerity and suggestiveness" of their own in this passage because they are described as "wreaths" and not as "lines." These mists are the products of earth, and, as such, they are beautiful, but short-lived. For a few fleeting moments they serve as mediators between earth, in the form of "the level plain/ Of waters" and the sky, obscuring, for a brief time, the forthcoming unhappiness of change that the "impending clouds" suggest will soon take place in the young boy's life. The present participle "curling" negates any connotations of imagistic stasis here, but, more importantly, these "wreaths" have almost an oxymoronic result in that they simultaneously suggest, albeit very sensitively, a simultaneous interweaving of lightness, gaiety, and vital activity with artificiality, sterility, and even death. I believe that what Wordsworth is doing with this image is implying that the young child, with the aid of Nature, is gradually becoming aware not only of his impending movement out of childhood, but also of his mortal destiny.

Aside from the "Blest the infant Babe" passage that we have already discussed, Wordsworth makes no major revisions in Book II, the Book that describes his early adolescence and that takes us up to his seventeenth year and his departure for Cambridge. Book II contains some of the most effective and moving poetry in the entire Prelude, and, for the most part, Wordsworth has the critical acumen to leave it untouched. He does, however, make one change near the conclusion of the Book, which, although it describes Wordsworth the adolescent, rather than Wordsworth

the child, I would like to discuss it here. This is not a good revision. As a matter of fact, I consider it to be the worst revision that he makes in the entire Prelude. Here are the lines from the A text:

From Nature and her overflowing soul
 I had received so much that all my thoughts
 Were steeped in feeling. I was only then
 Contented when with bliss ineffable
 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. Wonder not
 If such my transports were, for in all things
 I saw one life, and felt that it was joy;
 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 undisturbed.

(1805, II, 416-34)

Lines 416 to 428 are Wordsworth's concluding summation of what Nature meant to him in his early years. They are a moving celebration of the coming together of all, created and uncreated, into a joyful and harmonious union, and they remain, virtually untouched in the final version.

The problem arises when Wordsworth revises the conclusion of this passage:

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.
 One song they sang, and it was audible,
 Most audible, then, when the fleshly ear,

O'ercome by humblest prelude of that strain,
 Forgot her functions, and slept undisturbed.

(1850, II, 409-18)

The 1805 passage, as a whole, conveys a unity of feeling, a unity that Wordsworth summarizes with precision, simplicity and deep emotional conviction in the lines, "for in all things/ I saw one life, and felt that it was joy" (ll. 429-30). These lines most effectively and naturally resolve into a fine coalescence the dichotomy Wordsworth expresses between the mortal and immortal when he juxtaposes the meaningfully ambiguous "all that, lost beyond the reach of thought/ And human knowledge" (ll. 422-23) to "all that moves, and all that seemeth still" (l. 421). The language here is simple, monosyllabic for the most part, yet distinguished, and its tone, though convincing and moving in its joyfulness, is fully controlled. Rhythm, tone, diction, and syntax all reinforce each other and the result is that the passage concludes quietly, sincerely, and harmoniously on an emotionally and mentally mature level.

The result is lost, however, in the revised lines. Wordsworth's nicely calculated and finely executed shaping of the argument and his almost perfect fusion of mortal and immortal is destroyed by his sharp and unwarranted juxtapositioning of "every form of creature" (l. 412) to "the Uncreated" (l. 413) and by the strained pseudo-spirituality with which he invests the "creatures." These lines are not firmly fixed in the context either of the passage itself or of the Book as a whole, and, therefore, they demand of the reader a conceptual leap that the argument has in no way prepared him to make. Or, as Gerald Graff more fully explains in his discussion of Longfellow's poetry,

An 'imposed' or 'forced' interpretation is merely one which is irrelevant to the context of experience that is established as the focus of the poem, one which does not follow from what is said in the rest of the poem or which our experience tells us is a false or arbitrary conclusion concerning the kind of subject matter dealt with by the poem. The didactic conclusions of some of Longfellow's lyrics are illegitimately 'imposed'--not because the conclusions are explicitly asserted but because they are not logically implied by what has gone before and violate our sense of what conclusions properly apply to the kind of experience Longfellow is writing about. (Poetic Statement, p. 132)

This applies in a double sense to these 1850 lines, in that, not only are the conclusions "not logically implied by what has gone before," but also because the conclusions "are explicitly asserted" and we cannot mistake their orthodox sentiment.

While I do not intend to attempt to defend this revision, I would like to explain what I think Wordsworth is trying to do with it. He is attempting, I think, to show a further refinement of the young adolescent's sensibilities by moving him away from what Graff terms "The vanity of seeing the world as radiant with the delight of the perceiver, the characteristic illusion of the child" (Poetic Statement, p. 122), to a more discerning vision. Despite what he will later say to the contrary, Wordsworth has a very precise, mathematical mind, and here, he is trying to show the development of that mind. Up until this point in the poem, he has shown the child and the young adolescent integrating the various parts of his universe into a coherent whole. Now, with this revision, he is attempting to show the youth as he begins to differentiate the component parts of that universe into what are to him, at that stage of his life, comprehensible and viable concepts. Because Wordsworth is also an extremely religious man and poet, he also wishes to show the development of his youthful mind in that direction as well, in the

initial stages of religious development. And because he wants to be known as a teacher above all else, he wants to show that development as involving more than animism or pantheism or panpsychism or panentheism. While one cannot defend this revision, one can at least appreciate the fact that it might well have as its basis an honourable and honest intention.

To this point in the poem, Wordsworth has stressed the influence of Nature on his development and he has stressed the importance of freedom in his early days, a freedom that allowed him the means to commune with Nature. In the revised Book V, however, Wordsworth discusses the other important influences on his early development, while giving us, as well, his personal views on childhood education. One of these early influences was, of course, his "honoured Mother" (1805 & 1850, V, 257), and, while discussing her trusting ways of bringing up children, he comments, in the 1850 text, that she

had virtual faith that He
 Who fills the mother's breast with innocent milk,
 Doth also for our nobler part provide,
 Under His great correction and control,
 As innocent instincts, and as innocent food;
 Or draws for minds that are left free to trust
In the simplicities of opening life
Sweet honey out of spurned or dreaded weeds.
 This was her creed, and therefore she was pure
 From anxious fear of error or mishap,
 And evil, overweeningly so called.

(1850, V, 271-81; my italics)

In this section, Wordsworth adds the three italicized lines in order to re-assert the key idea that he presented to us in the first two Books; that is, that children (in fact, all people, as Wordsworth will go on to show in later Books) who are allowed freedom to explore Nature, and,

perhaps, even rather dangerous situations, can derive great joy and fulfilment from what others would consider "spurned or dreaded" situations, places, and even people. The Discharged Soldier and the Blind Beggar of Books IV and VII respectively immediately come to mind as one reads this revised passage.

In the most heavily revised section of Book V, Wordsworth gives us, in two lengthy verse paragraphs (one in the 1850 text) a vivid description of a child brought up under the influence of the educational systems in vogue during his time. In the 1805 text, the violence and bitterness with which he describes this child greatly distracts from his assertions regarding the sheer stupidity of such educational methods. In this passage he does not distinguish between the methods and the innocent product of those methods. He condemns both vigorously:

Let few words paint it: 'tis a child, no child,
 But a dwarf man; in knowledge, virtue, skill,
 In what he is not, and in what he is,
 The noontide shadow of a man complete;
 A worshipper of worldly seemliness--
 Not quarrelsome, for that were far beneath
 His dignity; with gifts he bubbles o'er
 As generous as a fountain; selfishness
 May not come near him, gluttony or pride;
 The wandering beggars propagate his name,
 Dumb creatures find him tender as a nun.
 Yet deem him not for this a naked dish
 Of goodness merely--he is garnished out.

(1805, V, 294-306)

The 1850 revision of these lines sounds a quieter and more considered note while, at the same time, removing the unfortunate metaphor of the last two lines. Here, Wordsworth gives us

A specimen pourtrayed with faithful hand.
 Full early trained to worship seemliness,
 This model of a child is never known
 To mix in quarrels; that were far beneath

~~His dignity, with gifts he bubbles o'er~~
~~As a fountain; selfishness~~
 May not come near him, nor the little throng
 Of flitting pleasures tempt him from his path;
 The wandering hoggars propagate his name,
 Dumb creatures find him tender, as a nun,
 And natural or supernatural fear,
 Unless it leap upon him in a dream,
 Touches him not.

(1850, V, 297-309)

Although Wordsworth makes much the same comment on fear in the A text, it comes much later in the passage (ll. 315-18) and is not nearly as effective as it is coming directly after the comment on the child's tenderness in the 1850 text. The remark about the "little throng/ Of flitting pleasures" (ll. 303-04) is an important one, and seems to be a direct answer to Wedgwood's dictum that "idleness of mind was to be resisted; no time was to be allowed for solitary musing,"¹¹ and a reassertion of Wordsworth's strong belief in the value of freedom in the education of the child.

Wordsworth deletes four other sections in the 1850 version of this discussion, all of which display a violence of emotion that is unsuitable for the subject at hand. In the 1850 text, he no longer claims that such a child is "fenced round, nay armed, for aught we know, / In panoply complete" (ll. 314-15), and he replaces this lengthy and bitter description,

Briefly, the moral part
 Is perfect, and in learning and in books
 He is a prodigy. His discourse moves slow,
 Massy and ponderous as a prison door,
 Tremendously embossed with terms of art.
 Rank growth of propositions overruns
 The stripling's brain; the path in which he treads
 Is choked with grammars. Cushion of divine
 Was never such a type of thought profound
 As is the pillow where he rests his head.

The ensigns of the empire which he holds--
 The globe and sceptre of his royalties--
 Are telescopes, and crucibles, and maps,

(1805, V, 318-30)¹²

with a succinct description of the child as "A miracle of scientific lore" (1850, V, 315). He next deletes from the final version his greatly exaggerated claim that this child

Takes nothing upon trust. His teachers stare,
 The country people pray for God's good grace,
 And tremble at his deep experiments.

(1805, V, 338-40)

In the 1805 text, Wordsworth interrupts his discussion to claim:

Meanwhile old Grandame Earth is grieved to find
 The playthings which her love designed for him
 Unthought of--in their woodland beds the flowers
 Weep, and the river-sides are all forlorn.

(1805, V, 346-49)

He retains these lines in the 1850 text, but he places them at the end of his discussion of education so that we feel their impact much more forcefully and effectively.

Wordsworth ends the first verse paragraph at this point in the A text, and he continues in the second, with another excessively bitter attack that he deletes from the final version:

Now this is hollow, 'tis a life of lies
 From the beginning, and in lies must end.
 Forth bring him to the air of common sense
 And, fresh and shewy as it is, the corps
 Slips from us into powder. Vanity,
 That is his soul: there lives he, and there moves--
 It is the soul of every thing he seeks--
 That gone, nothing is left which he can love.
 Nay, if a thought of purer birth should rise,
 To carry him towards a better clime,
 Some busy helper still is on the watch

To drive him back, and pound him like a stray
 With the pinfold of his own conceit,
 Which is his home, his natural dwelling place.

(1805, V, 350-63)

Wordsworth does not begin a new paragraph at this point in the 1850 text, and so he avoids the loss of continuity that is evident in the A text. In the passage that replaces the one above, Wordsworth makes his most important revision, an assertion that it is not the child who is to blame for these results, but the parents and teachers who subject him to such artificial methods of education:

For this unnatural growth the trainer blame,
 Pity the tree.--Poor human vanity,
 Wert thou extinguished, little would be left
 Which he could truly love; but how escape?

(1850, V, 328-31)

In these passages, in his account of the baby beginning to be creative, in his description of his own childhood in Nature, and in his moving account of the Boy of Winander, the boy who serves as a perfect foil to the child prodigy,¹³ Wordsworth still has a good deal to say to us today. He would not approve of parents who program their child's every move, or of teachers who are interested only in the "academic health" of their students. This is not to say that Wordsworth was against formal education. He was opposed to rote learning that fulfilled only the vanity of the child and the need of reflected glory on the part of parents and teachers.¹⁴ In The Prelude, especially in the more moderate and emotionally controlled final version, Wordsworth makes an eloquent and universal plea to all parents and teachers to set aside this "overweening trust . . . we give/ the name of Education" (1850, XIII, 170-71), and produce, instead,

A race of real children; not too wise,
Too learned, or too good; but wanton, fresh,
And bandied up and down by love and hate;
Not unresentful where self-justified;
Fierce, moody, patient, venturous, modest, shy;
Mad at their sports like withered leaves in winds;
Though doing wrong and suffering, and full oft
Bending beneath our life's mysterious weight
Of pain, and doubt, and fear, yet yielding not
In happiness to the happiest upon earth.
Simplicity in habit, truth in speech,
Be these the daily strengtheners of their minds;
May books and Nature be their early joy!
And knowledge, rightly honoured with that name--
Knowledge not purchased by the loss of power!

(1850, V, 411-25)¹⁵

CHAPTER III

SHAKING "THE MIND'S SIMPLICITY": CAMBRIDGE, SUMMER VACATION, AND BOOKS

Philip Hobsbaum insists that when we differentiate between the two Preludes, we should do so "initially in terms of language," because "Wordsworth was essentially a narrative poet" (Intro., p. 24). When, however, we examine the verbal changes that Wordsworth makes in Books III, IV, and V, we find that it is in the 1850 Prelude, and not in the 1805 text, that he displays his greatest gifts as a narrative poet. Although none of these Books is heavily revised, the changes that Wordsworth does make in them serve precision, economy, clarity of expression, and, in several instances, they help to form stronger and more vital imagistic and narrative links between Books. Individually, these revisions remind us often of Coleridge's assertion that "Wordsworth's words always mean the whole of their possible Meaning."¹ Cumulatively, these changes result in a more rational, temperate, and maturely responsible assessment of Wordsworth's early adolescent years, and therefore they contribute to a more realistic and psychologically plausible account of the growth of the poet's mind during this turbulent period.

I

Most of the significant revisions in Book III fall into one of four main, but often overlapping, categories: those evidencing moderation

and restraint in the assertions that Wordsworth is making about his university days; those enhancing and varying narrative pace by clearly demonstrating both Wordsworth's growing social awareness during this period and his ongoing mature, social concerns; those supporting and sustaining continuity of thought both within the Book and throughout the poem; and those enhancing metaphorical clarity and complexity, therefore adding richer and more complex ideas to the Book as a whole.

By far, the greatest number of revisions in Book III fall into the first category. In these revisions, Wordsworth's calmer, more rationally-appraising intellect allows him to respond more adequately emotionally, and, therefore, stylistically, to his earlier assertions about Cambridge. It allows him to give us a fairer and more balanced view of his early university days. For example, in the first verse paragraph of the 1805 version, Wordsworth tells us that

It was a dreary morning when the chaise
 Rolled over the flat plains of Huntingdon
 And through the open windows first I saw
 The long-backed chapel of King's College rear
 His pinnacles above the dusky groves.

(1805, III, 1-5)

This, however, is the 1850 account of Wordsworth's arrival at Cambridge:

It was a dreary morning when the wheels
 Rolled over a wide plain o'erhung with clouds,
 And nothing cheered our way till first we saw
 The long-roofed chapel of King's College lift
 Turrets and pinnacles in answering files,
 Extended high above a dusky grove.

(1850, III, 1-6)

Because he has not achieved a proper distance from his experience in 1805, Wordsworth neither asserts nor implies any judgment of it in the earlier

version. He merely tells us that it was a dreary morning when he caught his first glimpse of Cambridge University. The only image that saves the passage from being somewhat pedestrian and that might prompt an amused reaction from the reader is the rather strange "long-backed chapel . . . rear[ing]/ His pinnacles."² His more balanced and honest assessment in the 1850 version catches more finely and precisely the sense of foreboding coupled with the sense of deep reverence and respect that he felt as he arrived to begin his university career.

In the 1850 passage, several subtle changes imply that all will not be well for Wordsworth during "the second act/ In this new life" (1850, III, 259-60). The synecdoche "wheels" replacing "chaise" in the first line, the slow movement and slightly ominous sound effects created by Wordsworth's more precise collocation of long vowels in the first three lines, the now unnamed, and thus more universalized and somewhat more impersonal "plain" in the second line, and the addition of the "clouds" that "o'erhung" that "plain" ("clouds," we will recall, that were merely "impending" [l. 566] in the revised Book I description of the poet's childhood), all suggest more forcefully than does the 1805 passage the idea that Wordsworth is being passively driven, as though by Fate itself, to a less-than-happy destination.

The revised lines also suggest that, despite the disillusionment and unhappiness that he is to suffer as an undergraduate, Wordsworth will also find, at Cambridge, representations of order, poise, refinement, and mathematical precision that give evidence of man's highest intellectual capacities and creative potential. For Wordsworth, the university will come to represent, in part, on-going culture and the indestructibility of man's thought, and, in many ways, he will sense while he is there, a kind

of ahistorical timelessness that is independent of the ordinary world.³ With the image of the "answering files" of the "Turrets and pinnacles" of King's College that are "Extended high above a dusky grove," Wordsworth implies that the works of timeless beauty, precision, and order that the human mind is capable of producing greatly outweigh in inspirational effect and sublimity even those natural settings in which they find themselves.

We have already examined a key passage from Book III in which Wordsworth greatly modifies his 1805 claims to "chosen" status while he was a university student (see pp. 45-46). Two other revisions of a similar nature also make the narrative more psychologically plausible by removing extreme assertions. Here is Wordsworth, in 1805, describing the suffering he underwent as a student:

Rotted as by a charm, my life became
A floating island, an amphibious thing,
Unsound, of spongy texture, yet withal
Not wanting a fair face of water-weeds
And pleasant flowers.

(1805, III, 339-43)

Wordsworth is dramatizing himself here in a situation that he has not presented to us in the poem itself. Since the statement is not grounded in actual experience, it impresses us as being somewhat self-indulgent and insincere. In the 1850 text, however, Wordsworth changes the first two lines of the passage to "Such life might not inaptly be compared/ To a floating island, an amphibious spot" (ll. 335-36), and with this quieter, more moderate presentation of the simile, he eliminates much of the earlier self-dramatization of himself in the tragic role. The 1850 lines simply suggest that, while he was there, Wordsworth wasted a great deal of time at Cambridge.

Wordsworth also deletes from the 1850 text a rather lengthy passage that is, supposedly, discussing his reading while at Cambridge, but which is, actually, nothing more than an extended, adolescent lament about how little Cambridge benefitted him:

To books, our daily fare prescribed, I turned
 With sickly appetite; and when I went,
 At other times, in quest of my own food,
 I chaced not steadily the manly deer,
 But laid me down to any casual feast
 Of wild wood-honey; or, with truant eyes
 Unruly, peeped about for vagrant fruit.
 And as for what pertains to human life,
 The deeper passions working round me here--
 Whether of envy, jealousy, pride, shame,
 Ambition, emulation, fear, or hope,
 Or those of dissolute pleasure--were by me
 Unshared, and only now and then observed,
 So little was their hold upon my being,
 As outward things that might administer
 To knowledge or instruction. Hushed meanwhile
 Was the under-soul, locked-up in such a calm,
 That not a leaf of the great nature stirred.

(1805, III, 524-41)

One cannot imagine that any tutor, either at Cambridge or anywhere else, would be overjoyed to acquire such an unresponsive student. The questions that one is tempted to ask after reading this passage are: was there anything that Wordsworth liked about Cambridge, or, more to the point, was there any aspect of university life that benefitted him during his stay there? Reminiscent of the opening lines to the Preamble to the 1805 version of Book I, this passage, in its effusiveness and irresponsible, undisciplined rambling does nothing to further Wordsworth's account of the growth of his mind or to enhance his youthful self-portrait, and he rightly eliminates it completely from the 1850 text.⁴

Although Wordsworth tells us, in the final Prelude, that he was "attired/ In splendid garb, with hose of silk, and hair/ Powdered like

rimy trees" (ll. 37-39) while at Cambridge, thus introducing stronger connotations of man-made artificiality and costume to the description than do the "clothes" (l. 36) and "Glittering" (l. 37) of the A text, and although he tells us, in the final version, that he received the more ominous "Questions, directions, warnings and advice" (l. 23) instead of the 1805 version's friendlier "Questions, directions, counsel and advice" (l. 21), he adds to the 1850 version the line "Let others that know more speak as they know" (l. 73) when he is actually discussing the university curriculum, examinations, and his fellow students.

While all of these revisions give evidence of Wordsworth's more mature and balanced view of his university days, a second group of revisions demonstrates that, by the time he revised The Prelude for the last time, he was more aware that it was during his days at Cambridge that he first began to develop a social consciousness. And, in the 1850 text, he takes pains to demonstrate this gradual awakening of a social sense. In the 1805 text, Wordsworth tells us that during his time at Cambridge he "At least . . . more directly recognised/ [His] powers and habits" and felt "The strength and consolation" that were his (ll. 105-08). In the 1850 text, however, he truly does employ the "higher language" that he merely alludes to in the A text to inform us:

At least I more distinctly recognized
 Her native instincts: 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.

(1850, III, 98-107; his italics)

While we cannot be sure that Wordsworth felt precisely this way during his undergraduate days, we do know that by the time he revises the work, he recognizes and remembers that it was at Cambridge that he first began to feel the stirrings of social responsibility, and, in these revised lines, he more clearly delineates both the growth of this new-found awareness and its scope and range. It was at Cambridge, he tells us here, that he began to realize that he had both an inner strength to console himself during periods of personal alienation and change, and also "independent solaces" with which he could assist others in coming to terms with alienation, change, and even death. These lines greatly enhance the narrative flow of Book III, since they demonstrate a major step toward maturity on the young Wordsworth's part. They suggest what, up until this point in the poem, Wordsworth has not suggested, that the "holy powers" with which he had been endowed carried with them obligatory moral and social responsibilities toward his fellow men.

But these social views extend beyond the duties and responsibilities of the poet in the 1850 text. In lines 381-401 of the final version, Wordsworth describes the ideal university that would have "bent [him and other students] down/ To instantaneous service" (1850, III, 376-77). In these lines, Wordsworth's aim seems to be to bring the reader to a clearer understanding of a complicated series of educational problems that were in evidence in his own day, and that are, perhaps, even more in evidence today. He assures us, as he does not in the A text, that his ideal, imagined university is not just "a flattering dream" (l. 375), or merely a "recess, which I have bodied forth" (l. 388), but is, rather, "a recess, by thoughtful Fancy built" (l. 382; my italics).⁵ And it is clearer, from the presentation of the educational problems of

his day, that Wordsworth thought very carefully, in the revised version, not only about the problems themselves, but about their possible solutions.

In the A text, Wordsworth claims that the "congregating temper which pervades/ Our unripe years, not wasted, should be made/ To minister to works of high attempt" (ll. 392-94; my italics). By changing the "be made" to "be taught" (l. 387) in the final text, Wordsworth directs our attention to the strong necessity of supplying vital and effective guidance by example for youth, instead of instilling in them a mere reliance on force. The change from "what holy joy there is/ In knowledge" (ll. 397-98) to "the power that waits/ On knowledge" (1850, III, 391-92) suggests that, in his later years, Wordsworth thought "power" much more important than "joy" as a product of learning. This revision is also indicative of both his earlier and his more mature social awareness, since it suggests that what Wordsworth learned at Cambridge and retained throughout maturity was an awareness that what the individual does with knowledge is of much greater significance than the mere joy he derives from attaining it.

But describing the beginnings of his youthful, social awareness is not Wordsworth's only aim in Book III. In a long digression from the central narrative (1805, 407-59; 1850, 401-49) he gives us his mature views on contemporary chapel attendance, and these views are much more forceful and direct in the 1850 text. By referring not just to "this recreant age" (l. 409), but also to "the recreant age we live in" (l. 403) in the final version, and by italicizing the "we," in that version, Wordsworth adds "a tone of voice which lends to the poem's statements a sense of personal authenticity, a sense of issuing from a real human being immersed in the perplexities of circumstance."⁶ And, by involving

and including the reader (of any era) in this statement, Wordsworth also, paradoxically, gives both a strong personal statement of his mature social concerns and imbues his assertion with a more public and universal appeal, because we realize, upon reading it, that we are all, together with the poet himself, responsible for the state of affairs in "the recreant age."

Perhaps the most forceful and striking example of Wordsworth's feelings about compulsory chapel attendance comes in his addition of the following lines to the 1805 text; here, he advises the "Presidents and Deans" to "Be wise,"

and, till the spirit
Of ancient times revive, and youth be trained
At home in pious service; to your bells
Give seasonable rest.

(1850, III, 412-16)

This powerful social indictment places much of the blame for the absurdity of the situation--not on the "Presidents and Deans"--but on the parents who have not given the youth of the country any strong moral or religious upbringing.

Both Wordsworth's youthful social consciousness and his more mature understanding of educational problems are evident in his attack on the curriculum in Book III. This attack is, however, much more direct and powerful in the 1850 version, in which he eliminates the weakly ineffectual tricks of speech of the earlier text, such as "As hath been noticed heretofore" (l. 507), "but this I tax not" (l. 510), "did to me/ Seem" (ll. 513-14), and "from ignorance of mine" (l. 514). In the final Prelude he does not allude meekly to "the guise/ Of our scholastic studies" (ll. 507-08) but more directly ridicules "the timid course/ Of

our scholastic studies" (ll. 497-98). And, most important, he deletes his reference to his fellow students as "the band/ Of those who in the field of contest stood/ As combatants" (ll. 511-13) and replaces it, not with a further condemnation of the students, but with an indictment of the unfortunate effect on the students who must suffer in such a competitive educational atmosphere:

but more, far more, I grieved
To see displayed among an eager few,
Who in the field of contest persevered,
Passions unworthy of youth's generous heart
And mounting spirit, pitiably repaid,
When so disturbed, whatever palms are won.

(1850, III, 500-05)

Here, as Burton suggests, Wordsworth "sets the stamp of his approval upon his early judgment of the curriculum. Whatever he may feel about his own conduct at college, he is still convinced that he was right in believing the course of study uninspiring. As he grows older, he is more certain than ever that such set programs offer poor preparation for life" (One Wordsworth, p. 85).

Wordsworth tells us, rather melodramatically, in the A text, that just prior to his Cambridge interlude he "had stood/ In [his] own mind remote from human life" (ll. 543-44) and that it was while he was at Cambridge that he first began to make "an approach/ Towards mortal business" (ll. 552-53). But after reading Books I and II, we know that it was not "human life" that he had stood apart from as a child and young adolescent, but "social life" (1850, III, 514), and that it was not chiefly "mortal business" that he began to concern himself with while at Cambridge, but "human business" (1850, III, 523), the concerns for the dignity and welfare of his fellow man. It is primarily in the 1850 text,

then, by making revisions such as the ones that I have just discussed, that Wordsworth is able to delineate convincingly both the growth of his own mind during this period and his mature understanding of the changes that he underwent while he was a university student. In this version, Wordsworth convinces us of his deep personal concern for humanity and of the truth of his statement: "Yet was this deep vacation not given up/ To utter waste" (1805, III, 542-43; 1850, III, 512-13).

Wordsworth also makes several additions and revisions in Book III that, although minor, strengthen the narrative thread by sustaining and supporting continuity of thought between Book III and other books in the later Prelude and in and between passages within Book III itself. Examples of the former type are the addition of the "clouds" (l. 2), "favouring stars" (l. 59) and "palms" (l. 505) to the final text, Wordsworth's added allusion to his mind as a displaced plant that "Drooped not" (l. 96), and his revision of "an eye" (1805, III, 156) to the 1850 text's more meaningful "bodily eye" (l. 158). Hobsbaum assures us that when we compare the language of the 1805 and the 1850 Preludes, we will notice "the efficacy" of the earlier text (Tradition and Experiment, p. 187). When we do make such a comparison, however, we notice nothing of the sort.

The cloudy morning that opens the revised Book III not only draws our attention back to the guiding cloud and the "impending clouds" (l. 566) of the revised Book I, but it also serves as a powerful imagistic and structural link between Book III and the revised opening of Book IV, since it contrasts much more vividly with the "BRIGHT . . . summer's noon" (l. 1) opening that section of the narrative. This opening of Book IV, in turn, more strongly suggests the irony of the "beautiful and silent

day" (l. 1) at the beginning of Book X. And this, finally, anticipates both the "close, warm, breezeless summer night" (l. 11) and Wordsworth's moment of greatest insight when the "Moon hung naked in a firmament/ Of azure without cloud" (ll. 40-41) in the revised final Book of the poem.⁷

Similarly, the "favouring stars" (l. 59) suggest Wordsworth's stronger and more precise narrative control in the final text because they remind us of the excellent revision at the beginning of Book II, in which Wordsworth demands that the stars that he remembers from boyhood more precisely enact their natural position in his poetry:

at last,
When all the ground was dark, and twinkling stars
Edged the black clouds, home and to bed we went,
Feverish with weary joints and beating minds.

(1850, II, 15-18)

But the "favouring stars" of the revised Book III also serve as a link to Wordsworth's description in 1850 of London at night and to his revised account of Snowdon. Finally, they allow us to appreciate more fully his description of Dorothy, and not him, as "a favourite of the stars" in the final Book (1805, XIII, 232; 1850, IV, 252).

When Wordsworth voices his concern for those students who must compete vigorously for academic "palms" (l. 505) in the 1850 version of Book III, he is anticipating his revised opening statement of Book V in which he more vigorously proclaims his concern, on a more universal level, for all men who strive for the "palms" of life (see pp. 65-70), and he is also anticipating his fuller condemnation of the current methods of primary education that he voices in Book V, and that we have already examined (see pp. 127-31). When he uses the metaphor of the displaced plant in the revised Book III, he is anticipating his description of his

larger and more disruptive displacement in France, in which he confesses:

This was the crisis of that strong disease,
This the soul's last and lowest ebb; I drooped,
Deeming our blessed reason of least use
Where wanted most.

(1850, XI, 306-09)

Finally, as we proceed through the final Prelude, we shall notice how careful Wordsworth is in that version to distinguish between the "bodily eyes" (1805, II, 369; 1850, II, 349) and "fleshly ear" (1805, II, 432; 1850, II, 416) with which he saw and heard as a child and young adolescent and the "inner eye" and "inner ear" with which he saw and heard as a mature poet. The revision of "an eye" (l. 156) to "bodily eye" (l. 158) in Book III is just one such example of this distinction. All in all, then, these minor revisions and ones similar to them in the 1850 Prelude cumulatively suggest the "efficacy" not of the 1805 text, but of the last version. They help to demonstrate that Wordsworth's greatness as a narrative poet was not fully achieved until his more mature years.

Wordsworth also takes pains in the final version to strengthen the continuity of thought within the Book itself. For example, after a lengthy discussion of "the Upholder, of the tranquil soul" in both versions (1805, III, 114-20; 1850, III, 118-26), Wordsworth begins a discussion of how

From strict analogies by thought supplied
Or consciousnesses not to be subdued,
To every natural form, rock, fruit or flower,
Even the loose stones that cover the high-way,
I gave a moral life: I saw them feel,
Or linked them to some feeling.

(1850, III, 128-33)

Ten lines into this new verse paragraph in the A text, however, Wordsworth

makes the confusing statement, "Thus much for the one presence, and the life/ Of the great whole" (ll. 130-31), while, a few lines later, he also adds "So was it with me in my solitude:/ So often among multitudes of men" (ll. 139-40). Because the first statement refers, obviously, to "the upholder," and not to Wordsworth's growing imaginative powers, and is somewhat confusing as it stands in the 1805 context, he eliminates it from the final version, just as he eliminates the second statement that serves no purpose within the new discussion.

Some of the most interesting revisions to Book III and some of the most representative improvements in the final Prelude come in the fourth and final group of revisions in which Wordsworth adds metaphorical clarity and complexity to certain passages, thus enriching the thought and strengthening the continuity of ideas both within the Book itself and throughout the entire poem.⁸ The finest example of this kind comes near the beginning of Book III, where Wordsworth is describing his initial impression of Cambridge:

And from my bedroom I in moonlight nights
 Could see right opposite, a few yards off,
 The antechapel, where the statue stood
 Of Newton with his prism and silent face.

(1805, III, 56-59)

This is the 1850 revision:

And from my pillow, looking forth by light
 Of moon or favouring stars, I could behold
 The antechapel where the statue stood
 Of Newton with his prism and silent face,
 The marble index of a mind for ever
 Voyaging through strange seas of Thought, alone.

(1850, III, 58-63)

Here, Wordsworth eliminates the ineffectual and prosaic "Could see right

opposite, a few yards off"⁹ from the final text, but, more importantly, he pays a deeper tribute to a former Cambridge scholar whose studies were, in Wordsworth's day, the very basis of the entire undergraduate curriculum.¹⁰

Many of the critics whom I discussed in my Introduction have acknowledged the brilliance of the two-line addition at the end of this passage. Only one critic, however, Christine Avery, discusses at some length the import of the ideas that inform these lines. Avery explains that an understanding of the word "index" is crucial to an understanding of the significance of the entire addition. She explains that

A word only used twice but very strikingly in both cases is index. The first meaning of the word was 'forefinger', which was soon extended to the pointer on any instrument, especially a clock or a sundial. 'Sign', 'token' and 'indication' in the abstract senses became common meanings. The word was first used of the contents table of a book around 1580. Marlowe thought this meaning good enough for a metaphor,

As an index to a book, so to his mind
Was young Leander's look.¹⁶

There was an old saying, 'The face is index of the heart.' After the mid-seventeenth century the word was commonly used for any kind of reference list, including the commercial and the literary. This word is obviously the flattest prose in ordinary use. I think the effectiveness of Wordsworth's use is directly dependent on this fact. Newton's face is

The marble index of a mind forever
Voyaging through strange seas of Thought, alone.¹⁷

The whole passage in which the lines occur concerns a University, with books and libraries as the most important thing about it, so the metaphor is in perfect 'decorum'. But the reader's complex of associations with the most dull and prosaic tasks connected with using books, is suddenly transformed by this identification of all that index normally means with something as inexhaustibly living and unpredictable as the human face, and here, in addition, the face of a genius, and one conceived as expressing his thought. Thought expressed in the physical form of a face is in itself a vivid analogue of artistic incarnation. But the genuine fusion of index and 'face' is a

further layer of meaning, and a rather Metaphysical raising of the mechanical to organic and spiritual vitality. Also in the Prelude comes another use,

hence the human form
To me became an index of delight,
Of grace and honour, power and worthiness,¹⁰

which uses the same thought-complex though less intensely.¹¹

Although Wordsworth does not revise his 1805 admission that he was no mathematician, and that he looked upon geometric science "with Indian awe and wonder" (1805, VI, 142; 1850, VI, 121), this addition praising the scientist's adventuresome spirit and unique, pioneering mind, and the revision of his discussion of geometric sciences themselves, in which Wordsworth praises them for their abilities to serve man and to demonstrate to him the unity of life, demonstrate a growing awareness on Wordsworth's part of the role of science in his day. This addition, incidentally, is also another example of Wordsworth's more moderate and mature assessment of the university, because here he is more precisely directing our attention to the brilliant achievements of a man who had never been associated with Cambridge. It will also help us to delineate more clearly the progress of Wordsworth's mind, because, when we compare it to the second example of a similar type that Avery quotes (1805, VIII, 414-16; 1850, VIII, 279-81), it will demonstrate how much the poet has grown in awareness and social consciousness during the periods being described in these sections of The Prelude.

Wordsworth also achieves greater metaphorical clarity and precision of thought when, near the conclusion to Book III, he revises his rather elaborate and exaggerated 1805 comparison of life at Cambridge to life in the Lake District. Here is the 1805 version:

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 revealed,
 I had not learned 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.
 Hence, for these rarities elaborate
 Having no relish yet, I was content
 With the more homely produce rudely piled
 In this our coarser warehouse. At this day
 I smile in many a mountain solitude
 At passages and fragments that remain
 Of that inferior exhibition played
 By wooden images, a theatre
 For wake or fair.

(1805, III, 590-608)

Here is the 1850 version of these lines:

The surfaces of artificial life
 And manners finely wrought, 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 or unwillingly revealed,
 I neither knew nor cared for; and as such
 Were wanting here, I took what might be found
 Of less elaborate fabric. At this day
 I smile, in many a mountain solitude
 Conjuring up scenes as obsolete in freaks
 Of character, in points of wit as broad,
 As aught by wooden images performed
 For entertainment of the gaping crowd
 At wake or fair.

(1850, III, 562-76)

In both passages, Wordsworth asserts that a simple, uncomplicated country life is more rewarding than a life spent within the confines of a university. But the difference in style in the two passages indicates the superiority of the final version. Wordsworth's somewhat crude and adolescent attitude in the 1805 passage is evident in the melodramatic

and pseudo-Miltonic inversion "rarities elaborate" (l. 600) which comes in the middle of a pompous eight-line diatribe (ll. 596-603) negating all knowledge of and personal contact with Cambridge life. The whole eight-line segment suggests a pompous, adolescent attitude that strongly undercuts the rationality of his assertion. And his careless attempt to unite the unworkable image of the "manners finely spun" (l. 591) with the image of "that state arras woven with silk and gold" (l. 593) so as to present them as a plausible metaphor for life at Cambridge also weakens his assertion. His further attempt to divorce this ineffectual metaphor from the crude metaphor for country life that he employs later in the passage vulgarizes the emotional attitude and subsumes the rationality of his main assertion under a haze of nonsense.

The metaphorical constructions in the 1850 passage help to make it more moderate, subdued and realistic. Here, the double metaphor of "manners finely wrought" (l. 563) and "that state arras woven with silk and gold" (l. 565) works harmoniously to illustrate a more thoughtful attitude, since the two images unite to show that Wordsworth recognized two distinct facets of Cambridge life: its over-mannered formality and its colourful, but gaudy, superficiality. Burton recognizes the improvement of "wrought" over "spun" in this revision; yet she also comments, "One wonders why he did not say woven instead of either, but the problems of the poet are not so simple as that. Here, he is using tapestry as a figure of speech only and must find a word to fit both manners and tapestry" (One Wordsworth, p. 133). Whenever possible in the final narrative, Wordsworth tries to avoid repetition of words, and since he uses "woven" to describe "that state arras" (l. 565), he chooses to avoid its use a second time when he refers to the "manners" in line 563.

Wordsworth retains the metaphor of life as a tapestry throughout the entire passage. He thus avoids the jarring result that occurs in the 1805 passage when he sharply and completely divorces the metaphor of the too-delicate tapestry (life at Cambridge) from the vulgar metaphor within a metaphor of the "rudely piled" (l. 602) "coarser warehouse" (l. 603) of "more homely produce" (l. 602) (life in the country). In the 1850 version, the moderate phrase "Of less elaborate fabric" (l. 570) suggests a difference in degree only between the two types of existence, and therefore it conveys Wordsworth's more intellectually subtle and emotionally refined approach to his subject as well as his more mature understanding of human life itself.

The 1850 passage achieves what Graff terms "a blunt, subdued solemnity through the use of plain diction and syntax, [and] terse monosyllables" (Poetic Statement, p. 159). This is most noticeable in the three line abbreviation of lines 595 to 603 of the A text and in the much clearer and more concise comparison of life at Cambridge to a puppet show at the conclusion of the passage. The quieter tone of intelligent acceptance that is conveyed by the 1850 passage as a whole gives a firm authority to the lines that the somewhat melodramatic tone permeating the 1805 lines cannot convey.

This firm authority and Wordsworth's stronger narrative control are also evident in the concluding lines of the 1850 version in which he compares life at Cambridge to a day's visit to a museum. In 1805, he tells us:

Carelessly
I gazed, roving as through a cabinet
Or wide museum, thronged with fishes, gems,
Birds, crocodiles, shells, where little can be seen,

Well understood, or naturally endeared,
 Yet still does every step bring something forth
 That quickens, pleases, stings--and here and there
 A casual rarity is singled out
 And has its brief perusal, then gives way
 To others, all supplanted in their turn.
 Meanwhile, amid this gaudy congress framed
 Of things by nature most unneighbourly,
 The head turns round, and cannot right itself;
 And, though an aching and a barren sense
 Of gay confusion still be uppermost,
 With few wise longings and but little love,
 Yet something to the memory sticks at last
 Whence profit may be drawn in times to come.

(1805, III, 651-68)

Here are the 1850 concluding lines:

Carelessly I roamed
 As through a wide museum from whose stores
 A casual rarity is singled out
 And has its brief perusal, then gives way
 To others, all supplanted in their turn;
 Till 'mid this crowded neighbourhood of things
 That are by nature most unneighbourly,
 The head turns round and cannot right itself;
 And though an aching and a barren sense
 Of gay confusion still be uppermost,
 With few wise longings and but little love,
 Yet to the memory something cleaves at last,
 Whence profit may be drawn in times to come.

(1850, III, 619-31)

If we again take Hobsbaum's advice and compare the language of these two segments, we find that, as a final summation of Wordsworth's first term at Cambridge, the 1805 passage will not do. Cambridge has both good and bad aspects to offer the young undergraduate. Wordsworth's closing assertion is the same in both versions. What "sticks," however, to the memory of the reader of the 1805 passage is Wordsworth's adolescent concern for dramatic effect displayed in his associational rambling and cataloguing of a totally unrelated assortment of images which together

make up a muddled, double, "cabinet-museum" metaphor for life at Cambridge that simply does not work. In the 1850 passage, metaphorical clarity strengthens Wordsworth's closing assertion, giving it a sincere, adult, abstract quality and much greater psychological plausibility. What "cleaves" to the memory of the reader of the 1850 passage is Wordsworth's expository method, his emotionally subdued rhetoric, and his sense of balance, propriety and decorum. It is only when the "gaudy congress" "thronged" with "fishes," "gems," "Birds," "crocodiles," "shells," things that "quicken," "please," "sting," and "stick" give way, in the final version, to clear, calm, and ordered statement that we are convinced of Wordsworth's sincerity and that we appreciate the perceptivity, insight, and honesty of his final assertion. It is in this passage, and throughout the 1850 version of Book III that Wordsworth convinces us of his great gifts as a narrative poet.

II

The five major revisions to Book IV also demonstrate that Wordsworth's greatest gifts as a narrative poet become evident only in his later years. These revisions are: the opening section, a deletion of 16 lines beginning at line 282 of the 1805 text, several changes in the dedication scene beginning at line 327 of the A text (l. 319 of the 1850 text), an added apostrophe to solitude beginning at line 353 of the final version, and several changes in the Discharged Soldier segment that makes up the last hundred lines of the Book. The remainder of the revisions to Book IV are similar to those minor, yet significant changes

that Wordsworth makes throughout Books I to III.

As John Nabholtz points out in "The Journeys Homeward: Drama and Rhetoric in Book IV of The Prelude," the four journeys that take place in Book IV and their "repetition and re-enactment constitute one of the organizing principles of the complex materials of Book IV."¹² He explains:

The first two journeys dominate the initial 190 lines; they are balanced by the two journeys which occupy the final 160 lines. The first journey is the physical recovery of the Hawkshead landscape after the year at Cambridge (ll. 1-92). The second journey (ll. 137-190), a circular walk of Esthwaite Water, is complementary to the first journey by testifying to an internal and spiritual recovery. The third journey, after a night of revelry, produces the moment of poetic dedication revealed in the grand physical image of the joint renewal of landscape and man at dawn. The final journey, again following a night of revelry, occasions the meeting with the discharged soldier and stands complementary to the third journey just as the second stood to the first, by revealing the internal strengths of the human spirit which make probable, and point the difficult way toward, that union of landscape and man revealed in the physical image. (p. 82; his italics)

Although Nabholtz's interest, in this study, is primarily with the drama and rhetoric of Book IV, he does point out, in a footnote, that, "In general, the changes and additions found in the 1850 text seem to be the clarification and enrichment of the dramatic and rhetorical tactics employed in the earlier text" (footnote 14, p. 84).

The first major revision of Book IV comes in the opening lines of the first verse paragraph. With this greatly revised opening, Wordsworth begins a practice that he will carry through most of the other Books of the revised Prelude: taking special care revising the openings to the Books, then tapering off with the revisions, making fewer changes as he progresses through the bodies of the Books themselves. Here are the opening lines to the 1805 version of Book IV:

A pleasant sight it was when, having clomb
 The Heights of Kendal, and that dreary moor
 Was crossed, at length as from a rampart's edge
 I overlooked the bed of Windermere.
 I bounded down the hill, shouting amain
 A lusty summons to the farther shore
 For the old ferryman; and when he came
 I did not step into the well-known boat
 Without a cordial welcome. Thence right forth
 I took my way, now drawing towards home,
 To that sweet valley where I had been reared;
 'Twas but a short hour's walk ere, veering round,
 I saw the snow-white church upon its hill
 Sit like a throned lady, sending out
 A gracious look all over its domain.

(1805, IV, 1-15)

It is evident from the MS. variants to these lines that Wordsworth was greatly dissatisfied with them, because he reworked them extensively in several versions before arriving at the final, 1850 opening lines. For example, the A², B², and C MSS. all replace the bland "A pleasant sight" (l. 1) of the A text with "A moment of joy," and add lines 6 to 11 of the final text between lines 4 and 5 of the original version. The A² and B² variants also add "And bordering groves and cottages and woods,/ Saw from that height, beneath the ethereal Vault" after "bays" (l. 8) of the 1850 text, while the C variant, in this case, picks up only the last line of this addition. Both the A² and C variants attempt to recast the lines dealing with the "old ferryman" as follows:

For the old Ferryman, the rocks replied,
 The waveless lake was friendly to the shout
 And soon as measuring with well-tim'd oars
 And leisurely despatch his beaten course
 The Ferryman had reached the jutting pier
 I did not step . . .

The D MS. recasts these lines one step closer to the 1850 D² final version by adding

And when the Charon of the flood with oars
 Deliberate had reached the jutting pier
 I did not step . . .¹³

Contrary to his usual practice of contracting revised passages in the final text, Wordsworth greatly expands the 1850 version of these lines. In doing so, however, he includes many details that are missing from the earlier versions. These details serve more effectively to link this Book with the other Books of The Prelude, and to enliven Wordsworth's description of his first return to the beloved Lake District of his youth.

Here are the 1850 lines:

BRIGHT was the summer's noon when quickening steps
 Followed each other till a dreary moor
 Was crossed, and a bare, ridge clomb, upon whose top
 Standing alone, as from a rampart's edge,
 I overlooked the bed of Windermere,
 Like a vast river, stretching in the sun.
 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.
 I bounded down the hill shouting again
 For the old Ferryman; to the shout the rocks
 Replied, and when the Charon of the flood
 Had staid his oars, and touched the jutting pier,
 I did not step into the well-known boat
 Without a cordial greeting. Thence with speed
 Up the familiar hill I took my way
 Towards that sweet Valley where I had been reared;
 'Twas but a short hour's walk, ere veering round
 I saw the snow-white church upon her hill
 Sit like a thronèd Lady, sending out
 A gracious look all over her domain.
 Yon azure smoke betrays the lurking town;
 With eager footsteps I advance and reach
 The cottage threshold where my journey closed.

(1850, IV, 1-26)

The 1805 version of these lines is dull poetry. It has little descriptive or emotional force. The bland and stereotyped "A pleasant sight" (l. 1),

"that dreary moor" (l. 2), "the bed of Windermere" (l. 4), and "the old ferryman" (l. 7), standing in isolation as they do, with no supporting detail to define them further, never allow us to perceive with any degree of clarity either the beauty of the English Lake District or the emotion that Wordsworth feels upon returning to it.

While Wordsworth employs some of the same images in the final version, the supporting detail that he adds to the 1850 text affords us more of an opportunity to realize both the scene and Wordsworth's initial reaction to it with greater clarity. His revision of the first line sets the general tone of the Book as a whole, and offers a striking contrast to the revised opening of Book III, in which, on a "dreary morning" (l. 1) in the autumn of 1787, Wordsworth is passively driven, as though by Fate itself to Cambridge University. Here, however, it is clearly holiday time. And we realize this much more acutely from the first line of the final version than we do while reading the opening line of the A text, since there, the banal phrase "A pleasant sight it was" is less capable of setting any definite tone or atmosphere. In the 1850 text, however, precise diction and effective metrical variation enhance Wordsworth's depiction of both the progression of imagery from the opening of Book III and his altered mood upon escaping from Cambridge. Vigorous trochaic stress on "BRIGHT!" and the primary position of the word in the line allow its vivid concentration to flood ahead to "sun" at the end of line 6. This and the vivid "summer's noon" metaphor and the light, rapid, anapestic movement of the fifth foot of the first line draw our attention, first, to the brightness of the July day itself, and, second, to the eagerness with which Wordsworth now actively approaches his destination.

Wordsworth employs an adverbial clause to fill out the first

line of both versions. However, by withholding the "clomb" to line 3 of the 1850 text, he can begin the second line with the strongly stressed "Followed," a trochaic inversion that, in conjunction with the anapestic fifth foot of the first line, works both to stress the persistent movement that he is describing and to effect a smooth enjambment between the lines themselves. Also, by pairing "was crossed" and "clomb" in the third line, Wordsworth adds still more of a sense of ongoing movement to the passage through the caesural and alliterative emphasis that he now allows these words to share. Through their proximity, they are also more effective in stressing the physical detail of the "dreary moor" (l. 2) and the "bare ridge" (l. 3) so that these reinforce each other, and create, for the reader, a sense of the unity of the barren, isolated landscape that Wordsworth is describing, a sense that he fails to derive from the sparse details and the place-name "The Heights of Kendal" (l. 2) of the 1805 text. As Mary Lynn Wooley, in "Wordsworth's Symbolic Vale as it Functions in The Prelude," suggests, the "dreary moor" and the "bare ridge" serve as a sharp line of demarcation between the outside world and the pastoral paradise of the Vale that Wordsworth will go on to describe:

A sharp line--a 'dreary moor,' a 'bare ridge'--divides this spot, this 'universe of Nature's fairest forms,' from the lesser universality of the external World (IV, 2-11). Any exit across the boundary line is marked with ill omen (See Prelude III, 1-3, for instance), while a re-entry into the Vale is likely to occur during a 'Bright . . . summer's noon' (IV, 1). The boundary is so well defined that the ferryman who conveys the hero to his Elysium is a Charon (IV, 4).¹⁴

What Wooley suggests here is true, but it is only true of the final version in which Wordsworth's more skillful delineation of the line dividing the two worlds allows us to realize both with greater acuity.

Wordsworth sharpens the contrast between the desolation of this

scene and the lushness and vitality of the scene he is about to describe by giving us a sharper picture of himself as he stood, when a youth, both apart from, and as a part of the scenes he describes. As Geoffrey Hartman suggests in The Unmediated Vision, Wordsworth's "prospect is almost always, as in 'Tintern Abbey,' from a height looking into a valley," and "for Wordsworth Paradise lies before man, not behind him" (pp. 27-28). In the revised version of these lines, Wordsworth strengthens not only the contrast between the two scenes, but the idea that he, himself, is the poet who is familiar with both worlds. With the trochaic inversion at the head of line 4, and the strategic placement of "edge" at the end of that line, Wordsworth directs our attention upward to the solitary figure of the youth himself in the symbolic pose of the mythic bard on the edge of the ridge, a bard quite distant from and yet a distinct part of both landscapes that he envisions.

Although Wordsworth withholds the entire main clause of the first sentence until line 4 of the 1805 text, his added postponement of this clause to line 5 of the 1850 version both heightens the suspense of the opening lines and allows a much more vivid contrast once more between the starkness and isolation of the scene above with the lushness and vitality of the unified, peaceful setting below. As Wooley points out, "qualities of microcosm, paradise, and shelter are associated with vales wherever they appear in The Prelude, so that we may skip from one description to another without encountering anything to set any specific vale apart; all express one ideal. Apparently the center of the universe, the Vale contains all beauty" (pp. 177-78). But it is only in the 1850 version that Wordsworth gives us a truly panoramic view of this particular vale. He pulls our attention sharply downward with strong trochaic stress

on "Like" at the head of line 6, thereby emphasizing the comparison "Like a vast river, stretching in the sun." This simile tells us immediately something that the 1805 version of these lines does not: that here, as in the preceding Books of The Prelude, it is the spirit of unity, harmony, and continuity in the landscape that is Wordsworth's "ideal," and not the landscape at all.

Before he can open out this simile into a metaphor for the harmony, peace, and unity of all that he sees before him, Wordsworth must first make the simile itself work convincingly. He does this by forming a series of rhythmic bridges between similar sound patterns within the line itself. These bridges both mute the normal iambic meter and all but obliterate the foot divisions in the line so that the rhythm supports the proposition that the line is asserting by allowing the line itself to flow as a continuous unit over both the line divisions and the weak medial caesural pause. Wordsworth forms his strongest link by having the "st" of "stretching" in the third foot pick up and carry forward the "st" in "vast" over the caesural break. By doing this, he is able both to emphasize two of the key words in the line and to stress the affinity each has for the other. The "s" in both of these words is then brought forward, once again, by the "s" in "sun" at the end of the line. Similarly, the broad "a" in "vast" in the second foot forms a bridge with the similar sound in the first foot, while the "n's" in the fourth foot are carried forward, as is the "s" sound, to culminate in "sun" at the end of the line. Wordsworth further accents the smoothness, unity, and continuity that he wishes the simile to display by breaking the line only once, at exactly the mid-point, thus stressing with equal force both the vastness and the stretching of the "river." And, by dividing the "river"

itself between the second and third foot and the "stretching" between the third and fourth foot, he enacts with precision the unity and continuity that the simile denotes.

Although Wordsworth's emotional reaction to this scene is strong, he never allows sentimentality to dominate the description of the scene itself. His youthful emotional reaction is more clearly defined in the 1850 text with the "With exultation" of line 7 heightening the anticipation that Wordsworth first hints at with the "quickenings" of the first line. But, by suspending the subject and verb until the end of line 7, Wordsworth adds rhetorical emphasis to the "I saw," thus strengthening the ending of the line itself and delicately counterpointing the emotion he expresses at the beginning of the line with the description of the scene itself. In other words, this withholding of subject and verb modifies and controls the "With exultation" so that the tone of the opening section matches the serene description of the scene in mellowness and conviction.

Wordsworth carefully juxtaposes the natural details of the scene so that each reinforces the other while remaining distinct. He does this, first, by giving each detail in turn caesural emphasis, and, second, by using distinctly different long vowel sounds to call our attention to each facet of Nature that he mentions. Thus, we first envision the "Lake," the "islands," the "promontories," and the "bays" as separate and distinct entities. Although the revised eighth line is perfectly iambic, Wordsworth allows varying degrees of pressure to be applied against the iambic norm by each individual word in the line, with the result that he can stress the particularity of each natural entity while also stressing each facet of Nature flowing into the next to form a

harmonious and continuous landscape.

The heavily stressed full "a" in "Lake" and "bays" links the beginning and ending of the line together through similar sounds and emphasizes, emphatically, and, in the case of "Lake" almost spondaically, the first and last words of the line. Thus "Lake," situated as it is in the place of the usually unstressed syllable of the first iambic foot, receives more stress than do any of the stressed syllables in "promontories" in the middle of the line. "Promontories," however, draws our attention not by its metrical emphasis but by its length and centrality. Taking up the second half of the second foot, all of the third, and the first half of the fourth foot, it suggests, by its spreading and key position, as well as by its two stressed syllables, the actual prominence it denotes. Finally, the full vowels of "universe," and "Nature's" coupled with the alliterated "fairest forms" of line 9 work in conjunction with the heavily accentuated trochee "Proudly," the swift anapestic movement of the last foot of line ten, and the strategic placement of the expressive word "burst" to open the simile of line 6 out into a metaphor for universal harmony and continuity, so as to render the scene much more memorable than it is in the 1805 version.

With the sentence, "I bounded down the hill, shouting amain," Wordsworth begins to establish at line 5 of the 1805 text, the tone that will largely predominate throughout this Book. By postponing this sentence until line 12 of the final text, however, Wordsworth allows it to perform a triple function. It reinforces the tone of joyful expectancy that he has already established in the preceding lines, and it contrasts vividly with the quieter tone of triumph that he expresses as he describes himself contemplating the scene as a youth. Most important, it contrasts

even more vividly with the paradoxical "Charon on the flood" (l. 14) metaphor in the 1850 text.

Certainly one could argue that Wordsworth only introduces the "Charon of the flood" facetiously, in an attempt to interject some lighthearted humour into his narrative in keeping with the happy holiday tone and mood of the opening lines. Or, conversely, one could argue that Wordsworth uses this metaphor as just another structural device to further mythologize the story of his own life, by linking his name with the mythical Greek hero on his trip to the underworld, and to link the innocent youth of Book III with the experienced poet-priest of Book V of his own story. And, clearly, both of these arguments would be, in part, valid. The strength of this metaphor lies, however, in the fact that it goes beyond both the humorous and the mythic dimensions. While, at this point in the narrative, the "Charon of the flood" metaphor does interject an element of humour into the story, it also, paradoxically, introduces the more serious undertone and secondary theme that underlie and, at times, counterpoint the happy tone and carefree theme that inform most of Book IV. The "Charon of the flood" does not carry Wordsworth to Hades, but to a kind of pastoral Eden. Unlike the grumpy Charon of mythology, this Charon bestows "a cordial greeting" (l. 17) before transporting Wordsworth on the last leg of the journey that will open up a whole new world to him and allow him to reach a new phase of development both as a man and as a poet. For it is during this phase of his life, when his "soul/ Put off her veil, and, self-transmuted, stood/ Naked, as in the presence of her God" (1805, IV, 140-42; 1850, IV, 150-52) that Wordsworth began to realize, finally, the inadequacy of his almost total absorption with self and Nature, and so, "Distinctly manifested at this time/ A human

heartedness about [his] love" (1850, IV, 232-33).

As he continues to describe his youthful homecoming, Wordsworth retains, in the 1850 text, the "sweet Valley" (l. 19) of the earlier version. As he does with the other bland, stereotyped images of the "dreary moor" and the "bed of Windermere," however, he surrounds the "sweet Valley" with interesting descriptive detail that prevents it from becoming the stereotyped cliché that it is in the earlier text. In the 1850 version, Wordsworth renders the "Valley" unforgettable for the reader with his inclusion of the responsive "rocks" that "Replied" (ll. 13-14), and by his addition of "the familiar hill" (l. 18), the "cottage threshold" (l. 26), and the "azure smoke" that "betrays the lurking town" (l. 24). This final image is especially significant in that it looks backward to the "vast city" (l. 7) and to the "city smoke, by distance ruralised" (l. 89) of the revised first Book, and ahead to London, the city that "Baffled [Wordsworth's] understanding" (1805, 118; 1850, 116) in Book VII. Thus, it serves here both to enhance Wordsworth's description of the "Valley" itself, and as a structural link between Books, to reiterate, once again, Wordsworth's distrust, and even hatred, of anything remotely suggestive of city life.

All in all, then, the 1850 opening of Book IV is a decided improvement over the opening lines of the A text. Rhetoric, diction, and effective rhythmic variation all reinforce each other to allow a precision of description and both a unity of tone and subtle variation in tone that are absent from the 1805 text. Wordsworth tells us in the 1850 opening, as he does not in the 1805 lines, that he approached his childhood home "with speed" (l. 17) and "With eager footsteps" (l. 25), but, even more importantly, he tells us that he did this, not in the past tense, but in

the present tense. "I advance and reach/ The cottage threshold" (ll. 25-26) is Wordsworth's subtle way of demonstrating the continuity between past and present and of telling us that the past event of his youthful homecoming is as fresh in his memory as if it were just occurring.

Wordsworth makes only minor revisions in those sections of the Book dealing with his reunion with his former friends and neighbours. And his descriptions of his walks with his dog, even the most important walk around Esthwaite Water (the second journey in Book IV), remain virtually unchanged as well. The second major revision comes in a self-portrait that Wordsworth gives us of himself as he went through the painful throes of adolescence during this vacation period. Most teenagers go through periods of self-examination and self-recrimination, and Wordsworth was no exception. In a lengthy passage in the 1805 text he tells us:

Yet in spite
 Of all these new employments of the mind
 There was an inner falling off. I loved,
 Loved deeply, all that I had loved before,
 More deeply even than ever; but a swarm
 Of heady thoughts jostling each other, gawds,
 And feast and dance and public revelry
 And sports and games--less pleasing in themselves
 Than as they were a badge, glossy and fresh,
 Of manliness and freedom--these did now
 Seduce me from the firm habitual quest
 Of feeding pleasures, from that eager zeal,
 Those yearnings which had every day been mine,
 A wild, unworldly-minded youth, given up
 To Nature and to books, or, at the most,
 From time to time by inclination shipped
 One among many, in societies
 That were, or seemed, as simple as myself.
 But now was come a change--it would demand
 Some skill, and longer time than may be spared,
 To paint even to myself these vanities,
 And how they wrought--but sure it is that now
 Contagious air did oft environ me,
 Unknown among these haunts in former days.
 The very garments that I wore appeared

To prey upon my strength, and stopped the course
 And quiet stream of self-forgetfulness.
 Something there was about me that perplexed
 Th' authentic sight of reason, pressed too closely
 On that religious dignity of mind
 That is the very faculty of truth,
 Which wanting--either, from a very first
 A function never lighted up, or else
 Extinguished--man, a creature great and good,
 Seems but a pageant plaything with vile claws,
 And this great frame of breathing elements
 A senseless idol.

(1805, IV, 268-304)

Coming as this does just prior to the most important third journey of the Book, and the beautiful dedication scene at the very heart of Book IV, this passage should communicate a clear and adult account of the mature poet's understanding of and insights into the tumultuous intellectual and emotional experiences that were a significant part of his development just prior to the dawning of his realization of what his true role in life was to be. The 1805 passage does not do this. It gives us what amounts to no more than an adolescent, verbose and repetitious replay of juvenile self-recrimination that Wordsworth underwent during this period. And, because it extends this self-recrimination to all of mankind through an excessively emotional digression on reason that bears little relation to the central assertion of the passage, it communicates no clear emotional reaction or rational understanding on Wordsworth's part with regard to the primary subject--the growth and development of the poet's mind.

The 1850 version of this passage demonstrates a more careful and considered approach to the subject. Wordsworth first revises the opening proposition from "Yet in spite/ Of all these new employments of the mind/ There was an inner falling off" (ll. 268-70) to "Yet in spite/

Of pleasure won, and knowledge not withheld,/ There was an inner falling off" (ll. 276-78). The exactness of this revision enables it better to express the tension that the youth felt in his mind between a certain degree of new intellectual and emotional growth and a waning of the older, totally joyful fulfillment of childhood. Wordsworth expresses this same tension with greater clarity and precision a few lines later in his revision of his description of his adolescent pastimes. In the A text, he merely tells us that these were "less pleasing in themselves/ Than as they were a badge, glossy and fresh,/ Of manliness and freedom" (ll. 275-77). The revision "(too grateful in themselves,/ Yet in themselves less grateful, I believe,/ Than as they were a badge glossy and fresh/ Of manliness and freedom)" (1850, IV, 283-86) more convincingly expresses the tension in the young man's mind between the joy and pleasure his new-found entertainments were bringing him and the sorrow they brought him at the same time because of his knowledge of their underlying shallowness.

As in numerous instances in the revised Prelude, Wordsworth's shift into the passive voice in this passage detracts momentarily from the clarity and directness of his argument.¹⁵ The change from "Loved deeply, all that I had loved before" (l. 271) to "Loved deeply all that had been loved before" (1850, IV, 279) is, however, more than compensated for by Wordsworth's directness and clarity in the rest of the passage. He does not deem it necessary, for example, to include the excessively prolonged and redundant description of himself as an adolescent that takes up five full lines of the 1805 text. Not only does he shorten his description to one and a half lines in the later version, but the revision to "A wild, unworldly-minded youth, given up/ To his own eager

thoughts" (ll. 290-91) also brings the thought of the passage back sharply to focus, not on the physical activities of the youth, but on the condition of his mind at that time. Similarly, Wordsworth deletes the cumbersome and confusing digression on reason from the text and revises "these did now/ Seduce me from the firm habitual quest/ Of feeding pleasures" (ll. 277-79) to "all conspired/ To lure my mind from firm habitual quest/ Of feeding pleasures" (1850, IV, 286-88) in order to keep the focus of the passage more directly on the central topic of the growth of his mind. Wordsworth's decision to omit the digression on reason in the final text and to end the passage with the powerful metaphor of the garment is a tribute to his more mature critical acumen and a verification of de Selincourt's appraisal that "some of his best corrections, in The Prelude as in other poems, are among the last" (p. lix).

Although Wordsworth makes several significant minor revisions in the section immediately following this passage,¹⁶ his third major revision comes in his recounting of "The memory of one particular hour" (1805, IV, 315; 1850, IV, 308) during which he becomes "A dedicated spirit" (1805, IV, 344; 1850, IV, 337). This hour occurs early in the morning as the youthful Wordsworth walks home from a night of revelry at a local celebration. Here is the 1805 version:

Ere we retired
 The cock had crowed, the sky was bright with day;
 Two miles I had to walk along the fields
 Before I reached my home. Magnificent
 The morning was, a memorable pomp,
 More glorious than I ever had beheld.
 The sea was laughing at a distance; all
 The solid mountains were as bright as clouds,
 Grain-tinctured, drenched in empyrean light;
 And in the meadows and the lower grounds
 Was all the sweetness of a common dawn--
 Dews, vapours, and the melody of birds,
 And labourers going forth into the fields.

Ah, need I say, dear friend, that to the brim
 My heart was full? I made no vows, but vows
 Were then made for me: bond unknown to me
 Was given, that I should be--else sinning greatly--
 A dedicated spirit. On I walked
 In blessedness, which even yet remains.

(1805, IV, 327-45)

Here is the 1850 account of that important morning:

Ere we retired,
 The cock had crowed, and now the eastern sky
 Was kindling, not unseen, from humble copse
 And open field, through which the pathway wound,
 And homeward led my steps. Magnificent
 The morning rose, in memorable pomp,
 Glorious as e'er I had beheld--in front,
 The sea lay laughing at a distance; near
 The solid mountains shone, bright as the clouds,
 Grain-tinctured, drenched in empyrean light;
 And in the meadows and the lower grounds
 Was all the sweetness of a common dawn--
 Dews, vapours, and the melody of birds,
 And labourers going forth to till the fields.

(1850, IV, 319-32)

Although Wordsworth makes only one revision in the actual dedication sequence itself, he separates it from the preceding lines in the final version, making it a separate unit in itself:

Ah! need I say, dear Friend! that to the brim
 My heart was full; I made no vows, but vows
 Were then made for me; bond unknown to me
 Was given, that I should be, else sinning greatly,
 A dedicated Spirit. On I walked
 In thankful blessedness, which yet survives.

(1850, IV, 333-38)

If we examine both versions of these lines, we shall see that while the 1805 version merely describes a morning scene in flat, almost prosaic detail, the 1850 version exalts the joyful and totally harmonious re-awakening of all life, the re-birth of Nature, and, in this and through

it, the re-birth and awakening of the youthful poet.

Wordsworth first replaces the banal and commonplace "the sky was bright with day" (l. 328) with the more precise and richly suggestive "and now the eastern sky/ Was kindling" (1850, IV, 320-21). This change enriches the main narrative in two ways. First, it adds texture and resonance by drawing our attention back to the dawn scene in the Introduction to Book I, in which, in the revised version, Wordsworth speaks of the "welcome light" that

Dawns from the east, but dawns to disappear
And mock me with a sky that ripens not
Into a steady morning.

(1850, I, 125-27)¹⁷

Second, since the verb "to kindle" means "to inflame, excite, rouse, inspire" or "to make ardent or eager,"¹⁸ it subtly amplifies what will be one of the main assertions of this passage, and what is one of the main assertions of the final Prelude as a whole, that is, that there is a reciprocal action-reaction relationship between man and Nature that is made possible by a life force that is common to both and that permeates each. With this revision, Wordsworth is suggesting both an active and a passive "kindling," a "kindling" of Nature and a "kindling" of man by Nature. For it is as a result of viewing this great re-awakening of Nature that the poet, as a young man, is also roused, awakened, and enflamed with a new purpose in life.

Wordsworth next deletes the banal "Two miles I had to walk along the fields/ Before I reached my home" (ll. 329-30) from the final text, thus removing from this version yet one more prolix explanation that does nothing to further the narrative. He replaces this with an

explanation that the morning sky was ~~seen~~ from humble copse, / And open field, through which the pathway wound, / And homeward led my steps" (1850, IV, 321-23). This revision, although in the passive voice, has the result of universalizing the scene and drawing a contrast between the "humble" aspects of the landscape and the magnificence of the morning that even they take part in.

Critics such as the Norton editors, William Empson, and Barbara Everett, complain that Wordsworth's revision of the next five lines of the A text (ll. 330-34) results in a less vital description of the morning scene. Empson, for example, asserts that

The chief changes are in the morning rose for the morning was; the sea lay laughing for the sea was laughing; the mountains shone for the mountains were, and the new words in front and near. Now certainly this seems tighter verse. There are more facts in it. One writer says that this makes it clearer. For example, it is now clear that the sea was in the middle of the view, in front, and that the mountains were nearer to Wordsworth than the sea was. But here it is time to make a protest against something I was saying before. I said that it was important for poetry to get ideas crushed together. But what ideas? Why, after all, is it important for us to get the right picture here? Maybe some readers of the old lines had got the right feeling, though they took the sea to be nearer than the mountains. But now Wordsworth says to them 'You are making a foolish error. In fact, at the time when I had this important feeling, the sea was not nearer than the mountains.' That is, in the new lines Wordsworth is painting a picture. This is as good a morning as even he, William Wordsworth, has ever seen, and he is giving a clear account of it. You see how cold this makes him; he is an expert on views of mountains. But in the old lines it was his feelings about the sea and the mountains and the morning that were important, and the forces working in his heart. And that is what is interesting in the lines, if anything is interesting. The idea that pushing in more facts about the view makes the lines more interesting is simply an error.¹⁹

Empson's chief complaint, however, rests with the new verbs:

The other changes are all changes in verbs; he takes out the simple Basic ones and puts in complex verbs. Then it will be better because more ideas will have been pushed in--that is his feeling. The morning rose, he says, came up, as if the sun

sometimes went down in the morning. This detail seems very little indeed. But it makes clear that the time was very early in the morning, and maybe this touch has an effect. What came was the sun, and the change puts your attention onto the sun. Possibly it was only the sun, not the morning in general, who was a ruler and magnificent. At any rate the sea lay laughing; it was flat on its back. It had no authority against the sun; it was in a feeble position. Taken by itself, the change to lay might be a beautiful one, but it has a connection with the others. And then the mountains shone; they gave out light. So it is clear that they gave back light from the first rays of the sun, which was then coming up in the morning. They were not bright in themselves. They were only giving light back from the sun. So the old shock of surprise in solid and bright has quite gone. There is no secret about the morning. It was the sun that was making things bright. This is quite clear now that Wordsworth has given us all the details. (p. 456)

Although Barbara Everett takes a more scholarly approach to the passage, she, nevertheless, agrees with Empson's points about the first version, in which she claims,

. . . the world is, and all its parts have a peculiar and intense life: the man who watches, and the mountains and sky and sea that live, are related in a spaceless and timeless continuity of being, that has a sublimity beyond all earlier appearances, and yet is not static, but alive and full of joy. The second is an exquisite and radiant landscape, static as an emblem is static, and suggesting another reality within or behind the rich 'pomp' it wears. The first is an experience, with the slight roughness and nakedness of all living experience; the second is a most beautiful description. (p. 349)

Finally, the Norton editors have this to say about the revision:

Three times in the space of four lines Wordsworth has altered his original text to remove the verb to be. To de Selincourt in 1926 these changes seemed clearly an improvement; now surely the matter is open to question. There is an elemental strength, unvivid perhaps, but very sure, about 'Magnificent/ The morning was.' When he changed it, Wordsworth had forgotten the former self who wrote of the Leech Gatherer in June 1802: "'A lonely place, a Pond' 'by which an old man was, far from all house or home'--not stood, not sat, but 'was'--the figure presented in the most naked simplicity possible" (EY, p. 366; Wordsworth's italics). (Gill, p. 523)

Let us now turn to the lines themselves to determine if these critical

assertions are valid.

Herbert Lindenberger rightly calls our attention to the rhetorical and stylistic development in the passages describing the dedication scene itself and those that just precede them. He claims that "Wordsworth has shifted context from casual reminiscence to religious vision" by moving from "the language of prose ('the memory of one particular hour') through a landscape appropriate to the short lyric ('and shuffling feet, / And glancing forms, and tapers glittering') to the Miltonic grandeur of the later lines ('Magnificent / The morning was, a memorable pomp')" (On Wordsworth's Prelude, pp. 145-46). What Lindenberger fails to point out, however, since he quotes exclusively from the A text, is that when Wordsworth revises this passage, he elevates the style even more, so that it contrasts more markedly with the casual style of the preceding passages. Thus, the reader's sense of anticipation is further heightened in the final version, and he gains a much clearer realization of the significance of the forthcoming event in the young poet's life.

If, as Empson and Everett suggest, Wordsworth is merely "painting a picture" or giving us "a most beautiful description" in the 1850 passage, surely they must concede that it is both a three dimensional picture and a much more vital description than he gives us in the A text. Contrary to what Empson asserts, it is important that the reader gain a proper perspective on the scene, because what Wordsworth is doing in the 1850 passage is depicting the totality of the event and describing the various forms of power that make up that totality. It is not the sun that rises in the final description, it is the whole morning. Contrasted to this, but in perfect harmony with it, is the subdued power of the sea

that "lay laughing at a distance." The solid mountains have a power of their own by virtue of their solidity, but here, they also reflect a light from the other elements. And the vital simile likening the shining solidity of these mountains to the brightness of the distant clouds becomes all the more evident in the revised passage. As Roger Murray points out:

. . . here the brightness of the mountains answers to the light-drenched clouds, and the sweet, melodious foreground of the 'common' dawn answers to the distant laughing sea. The scene as a whole is aesthetically knit by the light and joy that become, inwardly, the 'vows,' the 'bond' that nature gives to Wordsworth.²⁰

In the 1850 passage, Wordsworth depicts a scene in which he contrasts the horizontal and the vertical, a scene in which all of the elements--fire, water, earth, and air--are unified in joyful harmony and equilibrium as they all partake in the great daily universal re-awakening of Nature. In the revised passage, Wordsworth takes care to stress the fact that there is no tension between heaven and earth, between permanence and flux, or between infinite or finite. Each has its own vital role in the scene and each, in turn, reflects unconsciously, the power of the other. There is a unity of feeling and motive as Wordsworth describes a moment in which all the universe is one. As Geoffrey Hartman points out:

The prospect may intimate (if anything conceptual) a marriage of heaven and earth. Yet its charm, its moving quality, is not entirely encompassed by that notion. What affects us more directly is the effortlessness of this rebirth, the joy and lightness on the face of creation. . . . In Wordsworth's picture the sea laughs, and the solid mountains are no heavier than light. Dews, vapours, the melodies of birds, the going out to labor, are put together as if of the same weight, which is no weight, but spontaneous volatile motion. It is a contrast that moves us: of great power exercised gently, of transcendent power exercised daily. There is no reason, however, why contrast should move qua contrast. If there is any shock or delight it comes from an excess of

energy suddenly in the mind; from a freeing, an expansion of the mind that had fixed part of its strength unnecessarily. Why does the image before us do this? Perhaps we are accustomed to think of power--of naked, transcendent Power--as catastrophic and deadly. Yet here it kindles the natural world without any destruction. All things are renewed in their accustomed place, and go about their tasks as if immortal. (Wordsworth's Poetry, pp. 223-24)

The Norton editors seem to have missed Wordsworth's essential point in this scene when they equate this passage with the lines in "The Leech Gatherer." In the earlier poem, Wordsworth is celebrating the elemental dignity of one man, an elderly man whose dignity is inherent in his very existence and in his independent means of achieving that existence. Here, Wordsworth is celebrating a different kind of dignity, the dignity of a transcendent power whose quietness and naturalness move us to realize the unity of all life.

But the contrast between our usual conception of transcendental power and the quietness and naturalness of the transcendental power that Wordsworth depicts here is not the only contrast that moves us in this scene. We are also moved by the quiet and naturalness of man's power as well. If we go back for a moment and compare the dawn scenes of Book I and Book IV, we realize that there is one fundamental detail missing from the Book I scene that Wordsworth takes special care to add to the 1850 Book IV passage. That detail is man, not just man alone, but man working in harmony and co-operation with Nature. The poet of Book I looks to Nature as his sole source of creative inspiration, inspiration that he hopes will help him to compose spontaneously with little or no effort on his own part.²¹ The youth of Book IV is, however, not looking for inspiration from any source. It comes unsought. But it does not come only from Nature. In the 1850 passage, Wordsworth ends the verse

paragraph describing the morning of his dedication by telling us that the last thing that he remembers about that morning was not merely "labourers going forth into the fields" (1805, IV, 339), but labourers going forth to till the fields" (l. 333; my italics). By placing this sentence in the emphatically stressed ending of the paragraph just preceding the paragraph in which he describes his actual dedication to poetry, Wordsworth is doubly stressing the importance to the scene of the ordinary, working man. John Nabholtz uses the 1850 passage to make the important point that

In one sense, this journey homeward seems merely a recovery of that much desired self-renewing contact with the harmony of nature, with the exception of one fact--for the first time in The Prelude, the natural scene in all its magnificent simplicity reaches its climax with the image of men in their normative activities, with 'labourers going forth to till the fields.' The two sides, landscape and mankind, have come together for 'one particular hour.' If indeed this is a moment relevant for the future course of Wordsworth as poet, that moment would suggest that his poetry was to be the poetry of a universal bond between nature and men, not the poetry of nature alone, or of nature and Wordsworth alone. The youthful Wordsworth's 'human-heartedness' has proved to be the provocation for a potentially richer union with nature. (pp. 89-90)

What Nabholtz fails to point out, however, is that the precise revision, "the eastern sky" at the beginning of this passage, draws our attention back to the false dawn of Book I, and that the revision "And labourers going forth to till the fields," supplies the missing element from the scene. For Wordsworth is here subtly asserting again in Book IV one of the most important ideas of the Introduction to Book I, that the primary reason Nature failed to inspire him as he began to write the poem was that he had temporarily forgotten, at that point, what he had learned as a youth on the morning of his dedication to poetry, that, in order to compose "Matins and vespers of harmonious verse" (1850, I, 45), he

himself had not only to work, but to work in harmony with the universe and for the good of his fellow men. The dawn failed to ripen "Into a steady morning" (1850, I, 127) because he was thinking of nothing but himself and about the glory that would be his upon the completion of his epic. As a youth, however, he was able to walk on "In thankful blessedness, which yet survives" (1850, IV, 338; my italics) because the essential part of his dedication to poetry involved, also, a dedication to his fellow human beings. That this "blessedness" truly does survive, and that Wordsworth's dedication to his fellow human beings was a valid one, is attested to by the poem itself.

Although the morning of his dedication to poetry is extremely important to the young man, it is not really the event that finally "shook the mind's simplicity" (1805 & 1850, I, 216) as much as his meeting with the Discharged Soldier. As Hobsbaum points out, "One of the finest narratives Wordsworth ever accomplished is the encounter, in Book IV . . . with the Discharged Soldier" (Tradition and Experiment, p. 189). Because it was such a crucial event in his development, Wordsworth takes special pains to revise the account in the final Prelude, in which he prepares us much more carefully for this important encounter by removing from the final version the awkward and clumsy three line transitional paragraph of the A text, and adding the moving soliloquy to solitude:

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;
 Or as the soul of that great Power is met
 Sometimes embodied on a public road,
 When, for the night deserted, it assumes
 A character of quiet more profound
 Than pathless wastes.

(1850, IV, 353-69)

De Selincourt complains that "Wordsworth added this passage, doubtless, to explain the strange effect produced upon him by his meeting with the soldier. But it was unnecessary, and the rather elaborate style in which it is written contrasts awkwardly with the bare, telling simplicity of the narration that follows" (p. 536). Edward Bostetter, in The Romantic Ventriloquists, offers an even stronger condemnation of this passage. He feels that it is part of Wordsworth's attempt to anesthetize the reader "against the disturbing elements in the experience."²² He explains:

The process at work here is a dangerous one. It is hard in this context to accept the 'poor heart' as anything but the complacency growing out of a personal sense of well-being. And in the Wordsworth of 1804, it becomes a sign of moral and artistic rationalization by which any evil can be justified and contemplated with equanimity. The revisions that Wordsworth made after 1805 bear out this charge. The language of the introduction becomes extremely elaborate and literary in the worst manner of the older Wordsworth. . . .

The last step has been taken in the transformation of the soldier from individual into abstraction. Wordsworth has achieved the 'esthetic' distance that enables him to contemplate his soldier undisturbed, without pain, as the embodiment of the gracious and benign soul of solitude. The whole strange process of anesthetization is summed up in a change made at the end of the episode where the 'poor unhappy' man whose blessings he returned in 1798 becomes at last simply the 'patient man.' (Romantic Ventriloquists, p. 60)

De Selincourt and Bostetter are certainly right to comment upon the elaborate style of this passage, but they do not point out, as Lindenberger does, that "Most frequently Miltonic language serves

Wordsworth as a ready means of achieving a poetic and formal tone to counterbalance the matter-of-factness which Coleridge found so distressing in his verse" (On Wordsworth's Prelude, p. 302). The formality of this passage counterbalances, as did the formality of the dedication scene, the less formal and less serious segments of the description, and sets them apart so that the reader becomes aware of the great importance of the event that is forthcoming.

The words "gracious" and "benign" counter the hackneyed "sick" and "tired" in the opening lines. They prevent the opening assertion from being a mere platitude, since "benign," following "gracious," takes on the meaning of "neutral" or "non-threatening." Wordsworth attributes to solitude, not the usual qualities of freedom or quietness, but the qualities of pleasantness and neutrality. As he goes on to develop his argument, we realize that Wordsworth's first assertion is not the most important, that solitude per se is not the real subject of the passage. The phrase "an appropriate human centre" (l. 359) is the key, for, as John Nabholtz rightly points out, "what is acknowledged here for the first time is that a 'gracious' and 'benign' Solitude is not destroyed rather than destroyed by a 'human centre'" (p. 91). But I shall take Nabholtz's point one step further and argue that Wordsworth's primary assertion in this passage is that man not only "nourishes" the solitary situations in which he finds himself, but is the power, the graciousness and the "benign" "sway" of that solitude.

With the line "Most potent when impressed upon the mind" (l. 358), Wordsworth focuses, not on the solitude itself, or even on a solitary figure, but on the observer or observers whose sensibilities will be deepened and enlarged by an experience with another human being in a

solitary situation. Wordsworth then uses a subtle progression of imagery to describe four instances of solitude by which the observer's mind may be "impressed," not by the scene itself, but by the power and graciousness of the solitary individual who is the "appropriate human centre" of the scene.

Wordsworth's examples of solitude move in a rational order beginning with an example of isolation that represents the least social significance and moving progressively to an example representing the greatest social significance. His first image is the "hermit, / Deep in the bosom of the wilderness" (ll. 59-60). The "hermit" is the most passive example of solitude, because his isolation is completely self-imposed, and because it does not, overtly at least, assist humanity in any way. Here, however, with the appropriate juxtaposition of "bosom" and "wilderness," Wordsworth implies that the hermit is at home in the wilderness, is protected by it, and is in harmony with it. It is the hermit's presence that has the power to make it appear to an observer that the wilderness is a gracious, peaceful and non-threatening place. It is the hermit who lends warmth and neutrality to what, without his presence, would normally be an unfriendly and somewhat frightening scene.

Wordsworth's style becomes more elevated as he moves to his second example. Miltonic parentheses, the omission of an article before "vast," and trochaic emphasis on the Latinate and somewhat archaic "Votary" and on "kneeling," result in a tone of reverence and awe that is tempered by the simple placement of the lone man "Kneeling at prayers" (l. 363). Here, again, it is the human figure that adds warmth and neutrality to what might otherwise be a somewhat cold and awesome scene of religious formality.

The "watchman on the top/ Of lighthouse" (ll. 363-64) is in isolation for the good of humanity. It is his presence that enables the lighthouse to be a guide and a friendly, welcome sight to lost seamen. And, finally, the soldier, whose isolation has been imposed upon him by society, for the good and for the protection of that society, is the last and most important example of ~~the~~. Here, once more, Wordsworth juxtaposes seemingly contrary qualities: in this case, an initial and understandable fear on the part of the observer that gives way, finally, to an admiration for the dignity, "great Power," and "character of quiet" that the soldier lends to the scene. This "character of quiet" will, indeed, become to the young poet "more profound/ Than pathless wastes" (ll. 368-69):

If there is any "process of anesthetization" in the passages concerning the Discharged Soldier, it does not occur in the digression on solitude, but in the 1805 lines that introduce the meeting:

At such an hour
 Once, ere these summer months were passed away,
 I slowly mounted up a steep ascent
 Where the road's wat'ry surface, to the ridge
 Of that sharp rising, glittered in the moon
 And seemed before my eyes another stream
 Creeping with silent lapse to join the brook
 That murmured in the valley. On I went
 Tranquil, receiving in my own despite
 Amusement, as I slowly passed along,
 From such near objects as from time to time
 Perforce intruded on the listless sense,
 Quiescent and disposed to sympathy,
 With an exhausted mind worn out by toil
 And all unworthy of the deeper joy
 Which waits on distant prospect--cliff or sea,
 The dark blue vault and universe of stars.
 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. Above, before, behind,
 Around me, all was peace and solitude;
 I looked not round, nor did the solitude

Speak to my eye, but it was heard and felt,
 O happy state! what beauteous pictures now
 Rose in harmonious imagery; they rose
 As from some distant region of my soul
 And came along like dreams--yet such as left
 Obscurely mingled with their passing forms
 A consciousness of animal delight,
 A self-possession felt in every pause
 And every gentle movement of my frame.

(1805, IV, 368-99)

Even though Mary Moorman complains that, in omitting lines 375 to 399, Wordsworth deletes "a most interesting description of his own mental and physical state as he walked homewards in the moonlight, and inserted instead a somewhat commonplace disquisition on the power of Solitude" (Moorman, II, 503), this description is a poor preparation for the episode to come. In fact, Bostetter, who complains about the "anesthetizing" effects of the passage on solitude, complains, as well, about these 1805 lines:

The language of this frame passage is almost obtrusively language of contentment and affirmation, reminiscent of the language of Tintern Abbey: 'calm of sleep,' 'peace and solitude,' 'happy state,' 'harmonious imagery,' 'animal delight.' Both poet and reader have been psychologically prepared to view the meeting with the soldier in a special way, anesthetized against the disturbing elements in the experience. Pain and suffering become unreal, difficult to imagine or feel, remote and transient, when set within this perspective.
 (Romantic Ventriloquists, p. 59)

Bostetter is correct in his assessment of these lines. The total "self-possession" (l. 398) that they describe is out of keeping with the scene that is to follow. But because he does not differentiate between the 1805 and the 1850 lines that introduce the actual meeting, Bostetter fails to notice how the deletion of much of the above passage and the re-ordering of several lines from the 1805 text after the passage on solitude is a much more psychologically plausible and effective

preparation for the scene. And as John Nabholtz suggests, "in the 1850 text Wordsworth makes more specific the parallel between the two concluding journeys by indicating that the final journey also followed a night of revelry and that it was a homeward journey" (footnote 14, p. 84). Nabholtz argues that by doing this, Wordsworth clarifies and enriches the dramatic and rhetorical tactics of Book IV:

Once, when those summer months
 Were flown, and autumn brought its annual show
 Of oars with oars contending, sails with sails,
 Upon Winander's spacious breast, it chanced
 That--after I had left a flower-decked room
 (Whose in-door pastime, lighted up, survived
 To a late hour), and spirits overwrought
 Were making night do penance for a day
 Spent in a round of strenuous idleness--
 My homeward course led up a long ascent,
 Where the road's watery surface, to the top
 Of that sharp rising, glittered to the moon
 And bore the semblance of another stream
 Stealing with silent lapse to join the brook
 That murmured in the vale.

(1850, IV, 369-83)

Wordsworth does something very interesting with the narrative at this point, that further specifies the parallel between the two journeys in Book IV. As Lindenberger has suggested, and as we have already seen, Wordsworth's style becomes more and more Miltonic as he moves into the dedication scene. Here, however, he inverts this ordering. He begins with the Miltonic discourse on solitude and then gradually moves into the plain style as he begins his description of the actual meeting. Contrasting more meaningfully with the lines just preceding the dedication scene, which, in their new position, they now strongly parallel, and following directly after the soliloquy to solitude, these lines, with their powerful matter-of-factness, quietly prepare the reader for the

scene that is to have great impact on the young poet. But, more importantly, these lines describing the fourth and most important journey in Book IV demonstrate, with their lack of selfish preoccupation and pomposity, the fact that the youth has matured to the point at which he will benefit from such an encounter.

Wordsworth describes the actual meeting with the Soldier as follows in the A text:

While thus I wandered, step by step led on,
It chanced a sudden turning of the road
Presented to my view an uncouth shape,
So near that, slipping back into the shade
Of a thick hawthorn, I could mark him well,
Myself unseen.

(1805, IV, 400-05)

The 1850 account of this first sighting of the Soldier contrasts much more dramatically with the sights that the youth encountered on the first three journeys:

All else was still;
No living thing appeared in earth or air,
And, save the flowing water's peaceful voice,
Sound there was none--but, lo! an uncouth shape,
Shown by a sudden turning of the road,
So near that, slipping back into the shade
Of a thick hawthorn, I could mark him well,
Myself unseen.

(1850, IV, 383-90)

Here, there is no "Charon of the flood" (l. 14) to guide the youthful wanderer as there is in the first journey, and what he finds in the darkness of this final journey is not "A universe of Nature's fairest forms" (l. 9), but an absence of life. Here, Wordsworth does not feel "inward hopes/ And swellings of the spirit" (ll. 162-63) as he does on the second journey, nor is he able to dismiss the intrusion, in this case,

as he is able to on the second journey, when he remembers "Then into solemn thought I passed once more" (l. 190). Here, the darkness does not give way to a magnificent morning that "rose, in memorable pomp" (l. 324) as it does on the third journey: nothing is "drenched in empyrean light" (l. 328); there is no "sweetness of a common dawn" (l. 330). All is stark and still. There is no cheerful "cock" (l. 320), no "melody of birds" (l. 331), and no sound of laughter from the sea. On this final journey, "No living thing appeared in earth or air, / And save the flowing water's peaceful voice, / Sound there was none" (ll. 384-86). The "humid copse" from which the morning was "not unseen" (l. 321) on the third journey becomes, here, a "thick hawthorn" (l. 389) into whose shade Wordsworth can, himself, retreat, "Myself unseen" (l. 390). What the youthful traveller encounters on this fourth journey is not shining mountains reflecting the power and beauty of the morning or "labourers going forth to till the fields" (l. 332). What the darkness reveals is the ominous presence of one man, an "uncouth shape" (l. 386), and Wordsworth's initial reaction, on this occasion, is not one of "thankful blessedness, which yet survives" (l. 338), but one of intense fear.

The 1850 passage more convincingly helps to demonstrate that the young man is about to take a further crucial step forward in his personal development, a step that Wordsworth carefully sets the stage for in his added lines (98-107) of the revised Book III. Especially in the final version of Book IV, Wordsworth depicts himself, on the first three journeys, as very much the young, romantic idealist. In this and other 1850 passages following it, however, Nature does not partake to such a strong degree in the emotional experience that the youth undergoes. Here, Nature is not supportive: it does not give, nor does the youth expect it

to give, indications or assurances that his reaching out to the stranger will benefit him in any way. In fact, what the youth must do on this occasion is overcome the deathlike stillness and darkness of Nature, and daringly move, on his own, beyond this, in order to reach out to another human being. And it is through such a move that the youth comes finally to a much deeper understanding of his ability to sympathize with a single human being, and thus to a greater understanding and appreciation of the dignity inherent in all men.

In order to understand what Wordsworth is working towards in his revision of the passages describing the meeting with the Soldier, and in order to appreciate more fully his developing narrative skill, we must examine the passages from their inception. Wordsworth composes the first version of these lines in 1798, and Beth Darlington quotes it in "Two Early Texts: A Night-Piece and The Discharged Soldier."²³ Here, then, is Wordsworth's earliest description of the Soldier:

He was in stature tall,
 A foot above man's common measure tall,
 And lank, and upright. There was in his form
 A meagre stiffness. You might almost think
 That his bones wounded him. His legs were long,
 So long and shapeless that I looked at them
 Forgetful of the body they sustained.
 His arms were long & lean; his hands were bare;
 His visage, wasted though it seem'd, was large
 In feature; his cheeks sunken; and his mouth
 Shewed ghastly in the moonlight. From behind
 A mile-stone propp'd him, & his figure seem'd
 Half-sitting & half-standing. I could mark
 That he was clad in military garb,
 Though faded yet entire. His face was turn'd
 Towards the road, yet not as if he sought
 For any living thing. He appeared
 Forlorn and desolate, a man cut off
 From all his kind, and more than half detached
 From his own nature.

He was alone,
 Had no attendant, neither dog, nor staff,

Nor knapsack--in his very dress appear'd
 A desolation, a simplicity
 That appertained to solitude. I think
 If but a glove had dangled in his hand
 It would have made him more akin to man.
 Long time I scanned him with a mingled sense
 Of fear and sorrow. From his lips meanwhile
 There issued murmuring sounds as if of pain
 Or of uneasy thought; yet still his form
 Kept the same fearful steadiness. His shadow
 Lay at his feet & moved not.

(Darlington, 1798, ll. 41-73, p. 434)

In her comments on the changes in this and other passages, Darlington claims that "An examination of the passages Wordsworth struck out reveals a changing emphasis in his conception of the Soldier. He eliminates those descriptions in which the man appears most helpless and pathetic (e.g., ll. 44-45 and 131-36), thus stressing the power to endure suffering rather than the suffering itself. The Soldier becomes less human, as a consequence, and closer in character to the more symbolic Leech Gatherer" (pp. 429-30). Granted, as Darlington suggests, the lines "You might almost think/ That his bones wounded him" (ll. 44-45) are poignant. By dwelling extensively on the man's size and on his isolation and alienation from his fellow beings, however, Wordsworth makes the Soldier appear slightly grotesque and something less than human. In this passage, the Soldier does not even have the dignity of hope. In the 1805 lines, Wordsworth modifies his description of the Soldier as follows:

He was of stature tall,
 A foot above man's common measure tall,
 Stiff in his form, and upright, lank and lean--
 A man more meagre, as it seemed to me,
 Was never seen abroad by night or day.
 His arms were long, and bare his hands; his mouth
 Shewed ghastly in the moonlight; from behind,
 A milestone propped him, and his figure seemed
 Half-sitting and half-standing. I could mark
 That he was clad in military garb,

Though faded yet entire. He was alone,
 Had no attendant, neither dog, nor staff,
 Nor knapsack; in his very dress appeared
 A desolation, a simplicity
 That seemed akin to solitude. Long time
 Did I peruse him with a mingled sense
 Of fear and sorrow. From his lips meanwhile
 There issued murmuring sounds, as if of pain
 Or of uneasy thought; yet still his form
 Kept the same steadiness, and at his feet
 His shadow lay, and moved not.

(1805, IV, 405-25)

Here, finally, is the 1850 version:

He was of stature tall,
 A span above man's common measure tall,
 Stiff, lank, and upright, a more meagre man
 Was never seen before by night or day.
 Long were his arms, pallid his hands; his mouth
 Looked ghastly in the moonlight: from behind,
 A mile-stone propped him; I could also ken
 That he was clothed in military garb,
 Though faded, yet entire. Companionless,
 No dog attending, by no staff sustained,
 He stood, and in his very dress appeared
 A desolation, a simplicity,
 To which the trappings of a gaudy world
 Make a strange back-ground. From his lips, ere long,
 Issued low muttered sounds, as if of pain
 Or some uneasy thought; yet still his form
 Kept the same awful steadiness--at his feet
 His shadow lay, and moved not.

(1850, IV, 390-407)

In the modifications to the 1850 passage, Wordsworth still depicts the Soldier as an example of deep human suffering, capturing the man's pathetic state and total isolation, but he also suggests that the man has a human dignity that even intense suffering has failed to diminish. What suggests the innate dignity of the man most effectively are those revisions that contrast the "awful steadiness" (l. 406) of the Soldier to the "trappings of a gaudy world" (l. 402).²⁴ And in the 1850 lines, Wordsworth stresses not so much the alienation of the man from the world

as the world from the man. By mentioning the "gaudy world," Wordsworth both universalizes the event and stresses its great personal significance to him. The present tense of "Make" (l. 403) implies that "the trappings of a gaudy world" were then, and still are, a "strange background" (l. 403) for profound human suffering, and it implies, as well, the deep influence that the meeting had on the young man, because the older poet recalls it in vivid detail, as though it were just occurring as he revises the poem years later.

Wordsworth takes care to include himself as part of that "gaudy world" in the revised passage, not by alluding to his own immature "sense/ Of fear and sorrow" (ll. 420-21) as he does in the A text, but by adding the precise word "Companionless" (l. 398) to the description. With this word, he forms a much stronger imagistic and narrative link between this passage and the passages in which he describes his own youthful walks with his loyal "companion" (1805, IV, 179; 1850, IV, 187) the "rough terrier of the hills" (1805, IV, 86; 1850, IV, 95). Unlike the carefree and rather selfish youth who "sauntered, like a river murmuring" (1805, IV, 110; 1850, IV, 119) while caught up in the "vernal heat/ Of poesy" (1805, IV, 94-95; 1850, IV, 103-04), the soldier has no "faithful dog" (1850, IV, 186) to protect his good name and reputation for sanity. Instead, he stood completely alone, and "Issued low muttered sounds, as if of pain/ Or some uneasy thought" (1850, IV, 404-05).

There is no "memorable pomp" (1805, IV, 331; 1850, IV, 324) about the soldier. His simple dignity in the face of suffering sets him apart from everything in the scene. The inversion in lines 398-400 gives a powerful rhetorical emphasis to the simple, yet strong subject and verb. "He stood" at the beginning of the revised line 400. This, and the again

simple, but powerful "awful steadiness" (l. 406) remind us finally how much the soldier is beginning to take on "A character of quiet more profound/ Than pathless wastes" (1850, IV, 368-69).

In his comparison of the 1805 and the 1850 passages, Hobsbaum asserts the superiority of the 1805 version:

These sharp, detached details never lapse into catalogue: what fuses them together is the sense of the man's vulnerability and loneliness. And it is Wordsworth's greatness that he can make so static a mode as description--description, moreover, of a stationary object--develop in the manner of narrative. This effect of development is partly owing to the poet's sense of the beholder: we are keenly aware of Wordsworth himself watching the old man.

Unfortunately this awareness has faded out in revision, and, with it, half the significance of the events recorded:

A man more meagre, as it seemed to me,
Was never seen abroad by night or day

becomes merely assertion--

a more meagre man
Was never seen before by night or day

This latter is no more than prosaic. Not only has the sense of observation been blunted, but also the keening 'e'-sounds of the original have been muffled by a change in word-order that reduces the key-word 'meagre', to insignificance, and removes all expressiveness from the rhythm. (Tradition and Experiment, p. 190)

Let us examine Hobsbaum's criticism point by point using both the 1805 and the 1850 passages.

Hobsbaum claims that the details never lapse into catalogue in the A text, and that "what fuses them together is the sense of the man's vulnerability and loneliness." But they are not very successfully fused, as we can see when we examine the 1805 line, "Stiff in his form, and upright, lank and lean" (l. 407; my italics). Notice the difference in the 1850 parallel lines "Stiff, lank, and upright; a more meagre man/ Was never seen before by night or day" (ll. 392-93). In another study in

which he discusses Shakespeare's language, Hobsbaum asserts that "This language is not a matter of the individually well-chosen word . . . but rather the way in which the words act upon each other and so create a total context."²⁵ The same criticism should apply to Wordsworth's diction, and when we apply it to the 1850 lines, we see how the "Stiff, lank, and upright" act upon each other, and, in conjunction with the "tall" at the end of the preceding line, give us a precise, concrete, and compact description of the "stationary object" that far surpasses that of the A text. Furthermore, the firm, hard consonants of "tall," "Stiff," and "lank" create a terse enjambment between the lines that, along with the spondaic opening of line 392, enacts, within the line itself, the stiffness and rigidity that the line denotes. This produces, once again, the "blunt, subdued solemnity" of which Graff speaks (see p. 150 above) and which is so in keeping with the subject at hand.

As for the lines that Hobsbaum admires and quotes from the A text (ll. 408-09), we must concede that the "e" sounds are, indeed, muffled in the 1850 revision. Muffled as well, however, is yet another of the numerous tricks of speech ("as it seemed to me" [l. 408]) that Wordsworth repeatedly uses in the 1805 Prelude. And the assertion that Wordsworth makes in the revised lines should not be taken as "merely assertion" as Hobsbaum suggests. In its 1850 form, this assertion strongly individualizes the intense suffering of the Soldier by stressing that, even after many years, Wordsworth can still attest to the fact that he has never met a more pitiful human being.

The two most significant revisions that Wordsworth makes in the account of the actual meeting are his deletions of the 1798 suggestions that there is something supernatural about the event²⁶ and his excision

of the rather pompous speech that he makes to the Labourer to whose cottage he brings the Soldier so that he can have food and shelter for the night. Although Moorman again complains that Wordsworth "omitted almost all his own remarks and so shortened [this account] considerably" (Moorman, II, 503), when we read the arrogant speech of the 1805 version,

At the door I knocked,
 Calling aloud, 'My friend, here is a man
 By sickness overcome. Beneath your roof
 This night let him find rest, and give him food
 If food he need, for he is faint and tired,'

(1805, IV, 483-87)

we cannot help agreeing with Richard Onorato when he points out that "In the 1805-06 version, the Good Samaritan has an objectionable tone, the 'I' sounding imperious."²⁷ It obviously sounded imperious to Wordsworth as well, because he later revised these lines to the quieter and more poised:

At the door I knocked,
 And earnestly to charitable care
 Commended him as a poor friendless man,
 Belated and by sickness overcome.

(1850, IV, 448-51)

This revision, with its maturity and calmness, gives an enriched plausibility to the ending of the narrative. It brings the episode to a conclusion by convincingly depicting not only the compassion of the Labourer, but the newly-learned compassion of the youthful traveller as well.

The final verse paragraph, as John Nabholz points out, "provides the last and most meaningful image of reciprocity in Book IV" (p. 92). The most important change that Wordsworth makes in this passage

is in his description of the Soldier from "the poor unhappy man" (1805, IV, 501) to "the patient man" (1850, IV, 465). One could argue that by this change, Wordsworth is describing how his own youthful perspective toward humanity has been broadened and enlarged by the meeting with a man who patiently accepts his unhappy situation in life. And, certainly, John Beer, pointing out the similarity between the ending of Book IV and the ending of Paradise Regained, has a valid point when he suggests that

. . . just as Milton's hero needed the encounter with Satan in a wild place before he could properly proclaim the fatherhood of God, so the orphan Wordsworth had needed an encounter with an actual human being in a sublime place to gain his deepest awareness of the universal link between human beings. (Wordsworth in Time, p. 125)

But there is still Bostetter's criticism to deal with. It is hard "in this context to accept the 'quiet heart' as anything but the complacency growing out of a purely personal sense of well-being." But we must remember that Wordsworth is describing the growth of his mind in The Prelude. As he revises phrases such as "the poor unhappy man" to "the patient man," he seems to decrease the degree of sympathy and increase the degree of complacency that he claims to have felt at the time of the meeting. But this is precisely what he intends to do. As we shall see, especially in the 1850 Prelude, Wordsworth is particularly careful to delineate the uneven and extremely slow growth of his sensibilities. As Thomas Vogler suggests, "The degree of complacency, with which each withdrawal--or push--toward maturity is described, decreases, and the degree of relief with which he returns to the earlier time and setting increases until the final disillusionment of his hopes roused by the French Revolution."²⁸ The 1805 phrase "the poor unhappy man," attests to no real mental growth on the part of the adolescent. It suggests that,

at this point, he is still the subject of a sentimental, condescending, and too-facile sympathy that is evident in children. The phrase "the patient man," however, is more complex. It amplifies the suggestion that Wordsworth strongly puts forth throughout the revised Book IV, that the youth is beginning to have a real sympathy for men, a sympathy that is properly subordinated to an equanimity that borders on mature admiration and respect for the individual.

In Book IV, the youthful poet makes four journeys, all of which contribute to his growing awareness of the dignity of man and the brotherhood of all men. In the 1850 version, the Book begins with the carefree youth returning to the Lake District of his childhood, "A universe of Nature's fairest forms/ . . . / Magnificent, and beautiful, and gay" (ll. 9-11). But what Wordsworth makes clear, especially in this final version, is that after being guided by the "Charon of the flood" (l. 14), by Dame Tyson, and by Nature herself, and finally, by serving in turn, himself, as a guide to the suffering Soldier, he has made a beginning, but only a beginning, in the progress from an uncaring boy who wished only to exalt himself in his verse to the poet who, after having been moved to think deeply about human suffering, and who, after suffering much mental anguish himself, would go on to exalt the mind of man and explain how it becomes "A thousand times more beautiful than the earth/ On which he dwells, above the frame of things" (1805, XIII, 447-48; 1850, XIV, 451-52). Hobsbaum asserts that the narrative development of the Discharged Soldier passages in particular and the entire 1805 Prelude in general is "partly owing to the poet's sense of the beholder: we are keenly aware of Wordsworth himself watching the old man" (see above, p. 189). But what he does not point out is that the narrative development

of the 1850 Discharged Soldier passages, and, in fact, of the entire Book is due, not only to the poet's sense of the beholder, but also to his sense of the mature artist engaged in the difficult task of describing and explaining the significance of a series of youthful events that showed him new truths about himself, his private world, and the world at large, "--the place where, in the end, we find our happiness, or not at all" (1850, XI, 143-44). By adding significant descriptive detail in some instances, by deleting extraneous material in others, by smoothing transitional segments between passages, and by giving us a more maturely responsible assessment of his adolescent development, Wordsworth creates, in the final version of Book IV, a narrative that is more psychologically plausible and intellectually stimulating than the 1805 account, one that greatly enhances the overall superiority of the 1850 Prelude.

III

Although Book V is entitled "Books," Wordsworth deviates from the strict autobiographical mode in this section in order to give us his views on a series of related subjects, all of which have influenced the growth of his mind and imaginative powers. Wordsworth divides Book V into eight specific segments: the Preamble, the Arab dream-vision, an apostrophe to Coleridge, a eulogy to Wordsworth's mother, a condemnation of then-contemporary educational practices, the Boy of Winander and the Drowned Man episodes, and, finally, a discussion of the influence of books on Wordsworth's early development. Although Michael Jaye is correct to assert that there is no single, unifying theme in Book V,²⁹

the Book, as a whole, is not the chaotic assortment of topical treatments that Hartman and Havens make it out to be.³⁰ What these critics fail to take into account is that Book V follows immediately after the Discharged Soldier passages at the conclusion of Book IV, in which Wordsworth begins to assert the paradoxical state of the human condition; that is, that it is pitiful on the one hand, but admirable on the other. Almost all of Book V is informed by this paradox. It restates it more directly, and it affirms, for the second time in The Prelude, Wordsworth's belief in and dedication to the idea of the great worth of human life. But Book V does more than this. It also recapitulates much that the youthful Wordsworth has learned up to the end of his first summer vacation from Cambridge, and it finally sings a hymn of praise and thanksgiving to all the "guides" (1850, V, 168)--Nature, man, the "living presence," and his own mind--that have shaped his creative powers to this stage in his life.

*"Aside from the greatly modified attack on contemporary education and the revision of the first ten lines of the Preamble, both of which we have already examined in previous chapters, all of the revisions to Book V are minor. It is instructive, however, to examine some of these minor revisions, especially in the Arab dream-vision sequence, because they illustrate the relationship of this segment to the main narrative and suggest that it is not the mysterious, closed narrative that critics have traditionally thought it to be.

Immediately after the Preamble, Wordsworth relates his dream-vision of the Arab with the stone and shell (1805, V, 49-165; 1850, V, 50-165). Here, he shifts to a form of indirect address, but still retains the serious tone of the Preamble, while carrying forward its main idea. The most important revision that Wordsworth makes in this section

and the most obvious one to the reader is that, in the final version, Wordsworth claims the dream as his own as he tells it to a friend, whereas, in all the MSS. versions before D, he claims that a "Philosophic Friend" (A², C) relates the dream to him. W. G. Stobie objects to this change. Stobie, whose thesis is that the central idea of Book V is that "the world of books is a force second only to that of nature in forming and developing the human mind" (p. 367), asserts that; by this change, Wordsworth is intentionally misleading the reader:

The structural pattern of this book is clearer in the A-text than it is in the E-text, for in the A-text the long account of the dream is told by a friend as his experience. As de Selincourt points out, this justifies the presence of the friend. In the E-text the dream is given to Wordsworth, which, as de Selincourt also observes, is more plausible, though it makes the presence of the friend to whom it is told unnecessary. But in first giving it to the friend, Wordsworth indicates to the reader that this book is topical rather than autobiographical in structure; in the E-text he makes the structure in these lines conform to that of the rest of the poem, but in so doing he misleads the reader about the structure of this book--and its point as well. (p. 367)

Because he cannot quite fit his thesis into all of the segments of the Book and hence cannot fit the segments of the Book together into a coherent unit, Stobie assumes that it must have a topical structure. But this is only partially correct. The Book actually moves between two modes, the loosely autobiographical and the topical. The first describes the people, places, and experiences that helped to shape Wordsworth's sensibilities as a youth, the second asserts some of the philosophical viewpoints that have been shaped by these people, places and experiences. Book V is a transitional Book, a digression and a pause in the story of Wordsworth's life that the poet makes in order to reaffirm his belief in himself and in the worth of human existence. And, following from all of

this, Book V is, most importantly, a reaffirmation and a celebration of Wordsworth's belief in the power of his own mind to overcome all obstacles, limitations, and dangers, whether self-imposed or externally imposed. Not the least of these dangers are the "occasional but persistent fears of madness" (see note 19, p. 354 below) that John Beer discusses in Wordsworth in Time. These haunted Wordsworth throughout his life and we see them reflected regularly in his poetry. By claiming the Arab dream-vision as his own in the 1850 Prelude, Wordsworth is not trying to mislead the reader. He is, finally, attempting to "fix the ~~wavering~~ balance of [his] mind" (1805, I, 650; 1850, I, 623) by coming to terms with the threat of madness, and, here, with great personal strength and psychological insight, he comes very near to conquering the problem.

Wordsworth begins this segment, in the 1850 text, by linking it more carefully to the Preamble than he does in earlier versions, and, only in this version, does he link it to Book IV as well:

Whereupon I told,
 That once in the stillness of a summer's noon,
 While I was seated in a rocky cave
 By the sea-side, perusing, so it chanced,
 The famous history of the errant knight
 Recorded by Cervantes, these same thoughts
 Beset me, . . .

 Sleep seized me, and I passed into a dream.
 I saw before me stretched a boundless plain
 Of sandy wilderness, all black and void,
 And as I looked around, distress and fear
 Came creeping over me, when at my side,
 Close at my side, an uncouth shape appeared
 Upon a dromedary, mounted high.
 He seemed an Arab of the Bedouin tribes:
 A lance he bore, and underneath one arm
 A stone, and in the opposite hand, a shell
 Of a surpassing brightness.

(1850, V, 56-62; 70-80)

Here, "once in the stillness of a summer's noon" (l. 57) more closely

links the dream-vision to the Preamble than does the 1805 line, "once upon a summer's noon" (l. 56) with its failure to mention the "stillness" so essentially a condition of Wordsworth's contemplative experiences. But perhaps even more important is the fact that while relating the dream itself, Wordsworth introduces the Arab, in the 1850 text, not merely by telling us that "To his great joy a man was at his side" (l. 76), but by omitting all reference to "joy," and by saying, "An uncouth shape appeared" (l. 75). "Uncouth shape" is precisely the same epithet that Wordsworth uses in the revised Book IV to describe the Discharged Soldier, and, with this revision, Wordsworth subtly invites us to compare and contrast the two solitaries and Wordsworth's encounters with them.

In both versions, the meeting with the Arab occurs in a desolate and isolated setting. The "boundless plain/ Of sandy wilderness, all black and void" (ll. 71-72), however, is much more suggestive of this desolation and more closely parallels the setting of the meeting with the Discharged Soldier than does the "Arabian waste,/ A desert" (ll. 71-72) of the A text. Wordsworth's addition, to the 1850 version, of "I looked and looked" (l. 84) also more closely parallels "I watched him" (1850, IV, 408) of the Discharged Soldier segment. In this meeting, however, Wordsworth does not subdue his heart's "specious cowardice" (1850, IV, 409) by setting aside the "distress and fear" (1850, V, 73) that he feels in order to make the brave gesture of meeting the "uncouth shape" before him. The "when at my side,/ Close at my side" (ll. 74-75) of the 1850 text stresses even more emphatically than does the A text the fact that Wordsworth has no control over this meeting. Unlike the Soldier who remains passively in the background until Wordsworth seeks him out, the mad Arab thrusts himself at the speaker. And the repetition of "at my

side," along with the strong trochaic emphasis on "Close," doubly strengthens the force of this involuntary meeting between an abnormal and a normal mind.

Wordsworth makes only slight changes in the actual description of the meeting itself. But by accepting the dream as his own and by making several precise revisions in the ending of the dream, Wordsworth more clearly and meaningfully delineates, in the 1850 version, the difference between the results of his encounter with calm rationality (as exemplified by the Soldier) and his encounter with irrationality (as symbolized by the Arab). For example, he leaves the Soldier voluntarily and calmly, receiving from him "The farewell blessing of the patient man" (1850, IV, 465). He cannot, however, part voluntarily with the Arab, whose madness and urgent mission enthrall him. In the A text, the "friend" relates that

A wish was now engendered in my fear
To cleave unto this man, and I begged leave
To share his errand with him.

(1805, V, 115-17)

In personalizing the dream, though, Wordsworth omits all references to fear. It is only an intense, irrational desire that overcomes him at this point:

Far stronger, now, grew the desire I felt
To cleave unto this man; but when I prayed
To share his enterprise, he hurried on
Reckless of me.

(1850, V, 115-18)

In the 1850 text, then, Wordsworth admits that, on the subconscious level that the dream represents, he is fascinated with the Arab and is excited

by the prospect of the pure and irrational experience that would come as a result of his union with madness. But what he is also suggesting in this passage is that, fascinated though he might be with madness and pure experience, when he attempts to embrace madness in order to analyze and understand its actions, it will have nothing to do with him, and disappears, as it came, of its own accord. Unlike the Discharged Soldier of his conscious experience, the Arab was, Wordsworth explains, "Reckless of me" (l. 118), completely self-absorbed and self-motivated, with no concern for the person whose life he has touched. But Wordsworth receives a "blessing" of a different sort from this encounter. It teaches him that when he stands up to his fear and his fascination with the irrational, it does not touch him, even though he, himself, might pursue it through many obstacles.

Wordsworth concludes the dream, in the 1850 version, by telling us:

And, looking backwards when he looked, mine eyes
 Saw, over half the wilderness diffused,
 A bed of glittering light: I asked the cause:
 'It is', said he, 'the waters of the deep
 Gathering upon us'; quickening then the pace
 Of the unwieldy creature he bestrode,
 He left me: I called after him aloud;
 He heeded not; but, with his twofold charge
 Still in his grasp, before me, full in view,
 Went hurrying o'er the illimitable waste,
 With the fleet waters of a drowning world
 In chase of him; whereat I waked in terror,
 And saw the sea before me, and the book
 In which I had been reading, at my side.

(1850, V, 127-40)

Wordsworth is careful to stress here, as he does not in the A text, the immense difficulties that face the Arab on his perilous mission. The "sandy wilderness, all black and void" (l. 72) has now become "A bed of

glittering light" (l. 129), the "dromedary" (l. 121) of the A text becomes "the unwieldly creature he bestrode" (l. 132), and the "desart sands" (1805, V, 135) become the much more foreboding "illimitable waste" (l. 136). These revisions suggest that no matter what the obstacles, the mad Arab will continue on his mission, a mission that becomes all the more futile and mad in the 1850 text with Wordsworth's addition of the more ominous obstacles the Arab must overcome.

The Arab is merely a dream-figure who will always be separate and distinct from Wordsworth as he is in the waking state. Wordsworth, however, uses the Arab and the dream-vision to make an important point:

Full often, taking from the world of sleep
 This Arab phantom, which I thus beheld,
 This semi-Quixote, I to him have given
 A substance, fancied him a living man,
 A gentle dweller in the desert, crazed
 By love and feeling, and internal thought
 Protracted among endless solitudes;
 Have shaped him wandering upon this quest!
 Nor have I pitied him; but rather felt
 Reverence was due to a being thus employed;
 And thought that, in the blind and awful lair
 Of such a madness, reason did lie couched.

(1850, V, 141-52)

By personalizing the dream, Wordsworth makes plain the fact that just as he learns in the waking state (as he will suggest later in the poem) that there are no completely rational or sane men, so, too, he learns from the dream experience that there are no completely insane men. He does not judge the Arab. Rather, he identifies with him when he begins to realize the delicate fragility of the human mind. And he concludes the segment by admitting that, should he ever find himself in similar circumstances to those of the Arab, he too might "go/ Upon like errand" (1850, V, 160-61).

In the 1850 text, by using the narrative framework of the dream-vision, by accepting the dream as his own, and by loosely connecting the dream imaginatively and thematically with the Discharged Soldier segment of Book IV, Wordsworth gains some effective and interesting results. He can both distance himself from the experience and play an integral role in it. He can approach the sensitive subject of madness with propriety, and yet emerge from the encounter intellectually unscathed and with his artistic integrity unchallenged. And, finally, with these back-to-back sequences, the one depicting an active, conscious experience in which the youth learns of the tenuous relationship between fear and compassion, the other describing a passive, subconscious encounter in which he learns the delicate balance between reason and passion, Wordsworth both demonstrates his flexibility of narrative method and gives the reader a sense of the important overriding narrative design of the poem that is not apparent in the A text.

CHAPTER IV

"COPYING THE IMPRESSION OF THE MEMORY":

THE ALPS, LONDON, AND RETROSPECT

Near the beginning of the 1805 version of Book VII, Wordsworth asks an important question:

Shall I give way,
• Copying the impression of the memory--
Though things remembered idly do half seem
The work of fancy--shall I, as the mood
Inclines me, here describe for pastime's sake,
Some portion of that motley imagery,
A vivid pleasure of my youth, and now,
Among the lonely places that I love,
A frequent daydream for my riper mind?

(1805, VII, 145-53)

In "Wordsworth's Prelude: The Poetic Function of Memory," Bennett Weaver comments briefly on this passage and suggests:

And the answer is, 'Yes, for pastime's sake, I shall. These are day-dreams where colours, lights, and forms change curiously. It will not be unamusing to play with them.' We lose this passage and something of its fine and careless candor in the later version. But we need not lose the point. (p. 14)

But the point that we should note and remember about this passage is that in it Wordsworth tells us precisely what he is doing in the A text. In this version he copies the impressions of memories, giving little consideration to whether or not these impressions are valid, and, therefore, the 1805 Prelude is as much careless effusion as "careless candor," because, in many instances that we have already seen and that we shall see, Wordsworth, in "copying the impression of the memory," and in

allowing himself to be governed by the "mood" that is affecting him during this process, actually distorts, in varying degrees, the "impressions" that his accounts should assert. Not only does Wordsworth remove these lines from the final version, but he also ceases merely to copy impressions in the 1850 Prelude, and, consequently, by thinking seriously about the memories that he records, he is able to give us not only his early views of his experiences, but also his later evaluation of his earlier impressions. In this chapter, I shall examine Books VI, VII, and VIII of The Prelude in order to demonstrate how Wordsworth's practice of combining memory and intellect in the final version of these Books imbues his earlier impressions with both a richness of thought and a sincerity of tone that is lacking in the 1805 Books. And, I shall also attempt to show that, by thinking seriously about his earlier memories and supplying detail that is missing in the A text, Wordsworth also enhances the narrative flow in these Books by giving his accounts of his early adventures in France, London, and the Lake District realism, psychological plausibility, and precision that are lacking in the 1805 text.

I

In Book VI, Wordsworth takes up the autobiographical mode once again and resumes the story of his life from the point at which he left off at the conclusion of Book IV. Book VI is divided into two distinct sections. Lines 1-331 of the A text (lines 1-319 of the 1850 version) describe Wordsworth's two final years at Cambridge University and the long vacation between them. The remainder of the Book, in both versions,

describes his journey across the Alps with his college friend, Robert Jones.

In "A Note on The Prelude, Book VI, 1-331 (1805)," K. E. Smith comments:

The movement of Book VI, 1-331 is complex and, on the surface at least, spasmodic. It functions as a bridge passage, linking two very different scenes of the poet's experience. We have heard about diverse aspects of his growth and education in Books I-V; we are about to follow the young man's first individual journey into the uncharted world of adulthood, as he sets out for his momentous crossing of the Alps (l. 332ff.). What lies between is a breathing space in which the mature poet, rather than pretend to a coherence in his younger self which he cannot actually find, ranges over all those aspects of his consciousness and situation which are relevant to our understanding of him. Looking more closely at this succession of verse paragraphs (eleven in all), we see a deliberately open and inconclusive self-appraisal emerging. To the impatient reader this may be annoying, but its effect is to impress on us the poet's search for honesty, his desire to show us the complexity of factors at work on him in this transitional stage. (p. 373)

Smith further suggests that "apart from the short ash-tree passage," this first section of Book VI is "not stylistically outstanding" (p. 375).

But Smith is only partially right, because he is only discussing the 1805 version of Book VI. When we look at the 1850 version of Book VI, we notice that Wordsworth makes several revisions that not only make the poetry stylistically superior, but also afford the 1850 lines a narrative unity and intellectual coherency that is lacking in the 1805 version.

For example, Wordsworth begins Book VI, in both versions, with a short Preamble in which he discusses his return to Cambridge from his first long vacation in 1789. In the A text, this reads as follows:

The leaves were yellow when to Furness Fells,
The haunt of shepherds, and to cottage life
I bade adieu, and, one among the flock
Who by that season are convened, like birds
Trooping together at the fowler's lure,

Went back to Granta's cloisters--not so fond
 Or eager, though as gay and undepressed
 In spirit, as when I thence had taken flight
 A few short months before. I turned my face
 Without repining from the mountain pomp
 Of autumn and its beauty (entered in
 With calmer lakes and louder streams); and you,
 Frank-hearted maids of rocky Cumberland,
 You and your not unwelcome days of mirth
 I quitted, and your nights of revelry,
 And in my own unlovely cell sate down
 In lightsome mood--such privilege has youth,
 That cannot take long leave of pleasant thoughts.

(1805, VI, 1-18)

This is the 1850 version of these lines:

THE leaves were fading when to Esthwaite's banks
 And the simplicities of cottage life
 I bade farewell; and, one among the youth
 Who, summoned by that season, reunite
 As scattered birds troop to the fowler's lure,
 Went back to Granta's cloisters, not so prompt
 Or eager, though as gay and undepressed
 In mind, as when I thence had taken flight
 A few short months before. 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; and you,
 Frank-hearted maids of rocky Cumberland,
 You and your not unwelcome days of mirth,
 Relinquished, and your nights of revelry,
 And in my own unlovely cell sate down
 In lightsome mood--such privilege has youth
 That cannot take long leave of pleasant thoughts.

(1850, VI, 1-19)

Wordsworth establishes his youthful sense of impending entrapment in the first six lines of both versions, but, in the 1805 lines, that is all he establishes. Here, the ominous linking of already dead "yellow" "leaves" to "that season" in which many birds are led to their deaths in "the fowler's lure," the "fowler's lure," itself, as a metaphor for Cambridge, and the simile linking birds destined for death with the youthful poet,

all evidence Wordsworth's inability, in 1805, to demonstrate that the youth is beginning to see life as an ongoing process. The long vowels of "yellow," "leaves," "adieu," "season," and "convened," introduce a dirge-like effect, that, along with the deliberate, halting rhythm introduced by the trochaic substitution at the head of line 5, the connotations of "Trooping," itself, and the passive construction, "are convened," suggest, once again, that the youth is being passively led back to Cambridge. And, although Wordsworth claims that he had been, at that time, "gay and undepressed," and that he returned to the university in "lightsome mood," the various elements of style in these opening lines suggest, instead, only a benign acceptance of his fate. In these lines from the A text, Wordsworth is merely "copying the impression" of a memory, and the result is dull poetry. But the 1850 lines are not dull poetry. Here, Wordsworth combines memory and intellect, and the result is a clear and precise assertion that the youth is taking yet another major step in his development as both a man and a poet, because he is beginning to understand the relationship between life and death, to apprehend life as a process, and to perceive an ordered, necessary, and harmonious relationship between the various forms, modes, and seasons of life. Here the sense of impending entrapment that the youth feels is mitigated by his sense of oneness with the universe, with his sense of at-homeness in both the Lake District and Cambridge. Here Wordsworth tells us, not that the leaves were "yellow," but that they were in the process of "fading" when he left the country for the university. And here he no longer speaks in idealized, romanticized terms about the "haunt of shepherds," but sensitively juxtaposes, instead, the more realistic "simplicities of cottage life" to the more intellectually rigorous life

at Cambridge. Here the "fowler's lure" is still a metaphor for Cambridge, and the simile linking the birds destined for death with the young poet remains as well, while the long vowels in "fading," "Esthwaite's," "bade," and "reunite" still introduce a dirge-like result into the first six lines. But the ominousness of the "fowler's lure" and the "troop to" is softened considerably in these lines by the word "reunite," with its implications of happy homecoming, while the alliteration of "summoned," "season," and "scattered" just slightly increases the pace of the rhythm and subtly suggests the more vigorous pace at which the youth actively "Went back" to the university.

But it is in his revised description of the Lake District itself that Wordsworth gives us our clearest insight into the youth's growing awareness of life as process. In the A text, he merely gives us a vague and unrealized account of the "mountain pomp/ Of autumn and its beauty (entered in/ With calmer lakes and louder streams)" (ll. 10-12). But he is so dissatisfied with merely "copying the [vague] impression" of this memory, that he revises these lines five times before he is satisfied with them. Because this is such an important revision, not only in this passage, but as it relates to the entire, final Prelude, I shall quote the variants below.

The second and third revisions of these lines are alternatives added to the B MS.

from the beauty and pomp
Of Autumn, entering under azure skies
To mountains clothe(d) in golden robe of fire,
To calmer lakes. . . .

Of Autumn azure skies and mountains clothed
In [crested?] fire with mild magnificence
Of calmer lakes

(de Sel., app. crit., MS. B, p. 175)

The fourth variant comes from the A² and C MSS.:

Of Autumn, undisturbed by ruffling winds
And entering with the mild magnificence
Of calmer Lakes

(de Sel., app. crit., MSS. A2 & C,
p. 175)

The fifth and last revision before the final draft is from the D MS.:

In the soft sunshine of their golden fern
Attired; from Autumn's mild magnificence
Her calmer Lakes

(de Sel., app. crit., MS. D, p. 175)

Although many critics single out line 11, "Clothed in the sunshine of the withering fern" as one of the finest stylistic improvements in the final Prelude, it is Geoffrey Hartman who gives us the definitive explanation, not only of the line itself, but of what Wordsworth is moving towards in his successive revisions of this variant. Hartman makes the important point that in these revisions, Wordsworth makes changes that are representative of the revisions as a whole, and because his discussion is important to an understanding of many of the revisions in the final Prelude, I shall summarize it here.

Hartman quotes all the variants and insists that

The most significant change is the disappearance of overt personification. The 1805 text has only a mild picture of autumn as a person, and may have been chosen for that reason over variants 2 and 3, which are alternatives added in MS B (contemporaneous with A) and could represent choices excluded from A rather than revisions. Variant 2 has the strongest personification, extending to both autumn and the mountains; variant 3 removes it, making autumn an adjective and increasing the impression of simultaneity by the simplest kind of connective (paratactical) syntax. But the resulting sentence is heavy and dangling. The fourth variant equilibrates the sentence once more by restoring the break after autumn; yet, wishing to carry over the idea of 'pomp' from previous versions, reintroduces personification through the metaphor in 'undisturbed

by ruffling winds.' The fifth variant strengthens personification though lessening the idea of pomp; and only in the final text of 1850 is there no trace of personification of either autumn or mountains except for the vestigial 'clothed.' (Wordsworth's Poetry, p. 205)

While Hartman points out that "Absence of personification certainly helps to make the last version the best (if we overlook the stilted 'Quitted, not loth . . .')," he insists that, when we study the texts, "we see that its removal is really the emergence of something else which accounts more positively for the felt improvement":

There is a more general conceptual shift from advent to presence, from picture-simultaneity to parousia, from hierarchy to reciprocity. Why this shift should please us is a difficult question. Does it please necessarily? . . . All I can say is that Wordsworth's shift is more than 'conceptual' in the sense that a whole series of relations, rather than one concept, is involved. (Wordsworth's Poetry, p. 205)

Hartman suggests that it is Wordsworth's refining of the idea of power that gives us pleasure when we read this line, and he devotes two full pages (pp. 206-07) to explaining how the poet does this. Hartman concludes by making the following observation:

Wordsworth's 'sunshine of the withering fern' mingles the notes of life and death and of cause and effect. The fern gives off the sunshine, but the sunshine is related to its withering. Life and death, darkness and light are now, as in the greater episode also described in Book VI, 'features/ Of the same face, blossoms upon one tree.' The Sublime is the subtle magnified. In this smallest instance, . . . Wordsworth incorporates his knowledge that nature renews itself unviolently in man and beyond him. Natura tota est nusquam magis quam in minimis. (Wordsworth's Poetry, p. 207)

Hartman suggests that, in this revision, we have the essence of the revisions to The Prelude (see Intro., p. 30), and he is, in part, correct. The essential idea that Wordsworth strives to incorporate into the final Prelude is that of a universal harmony permeating all. He eliminates,

for the most part, implications of disunity and discontinuity, and attempts, instead, to show the order and relationships of the universe.

It is in this revision, then, that Wordsworth demonstrates his gradual, youthful awakening to the realization that life, in all of its forms, has seasons of deprivation and seasons of fulfilment, times of birth, and times of death. Wordsworth is not merely playing with "colours, lights, and forms," in this passage. Throughout the final Prelude, especially throughout the revised Book VI, Wordsworth integrates colours, lights, and forms in order to show the youth's coming awareness of the interrelationship of time, as he personally conceives it, and time, as it passes as a universal continuum, are in harmony.¹ The "fern" must wither in order to give off its brilliance. The youth must experience, what are for him, periods of death in life, at Cambridge, in London, and during the French Revolution, before he can become a poet. We can believe Wordsworth here when he says that he returned to Cambridge in "lightsome mood," because he has finally demonstrated, in the revised passage, that what the youth realizes as he sits in his "unlovely cell" at Cambridge is that this period of rest and dormancy will be for him, as for the forms of Nature that he witnessed during his summer vacation, a phase of renewal, refurbishment and preparation that is necessary for new and continued growth.

The young man who returns to Cambridge after having vows made for him during the summer is quite different from the youth who left Cambridge at the end of his first year of residence. He is no longer content just to read Spenser, Chaucer, or Milton. He now wishes to be one of their company himself:

Those were the days
 Which also first emboldened me to trust
 With firmness, hitherto but lightly touched
 By such a daring thought, that I might leave
 Some monument behind me which pure hearts
 Should reverence.

(1850, VI, 52-57)

It was during this period, Wordsworth tells us, in both versions, that "the dread awe/ Of mighty names was softened down and seemed/ Approachable, admitting fellowship/ Of modest sympathy" (1850, VI, 60-63). The youth is now beginning to feel at home at Cambridge, and he will use the last years of his stay at the university to further his reading and become more familiar with Nature and mathematics.

Wordsworth makes only one change in those passages in which he gives us a description of the "College groves" (1850, VI, 67) and the charming description of his favorite tree, "an ash which Winter for himself/ Decked as in pride, and with outlandish grace" (1850, VI, 78-79). We should pay particular attention to the revised phrase "outlandish grace," here, because, as we shall soon see, what Nature is gradually teaching the young poet to do is to seek out other images and symbols of grace. We must understand the term "grace," here, not as a term of religion, but as a term of aesthetics. As I said at the conclusion of the second chapter, Wordsworth has a very precise mathematical mind. From childhood on he is a genius at integration, at seeing relationships and unities in Nature. But it is only when he comes to the urban centres, Cambridge, London, and Paris during the Revolution, that he learns to differentiate, to pick out from totalities, meaningful, individual symbols for poetry. Here, during his second term at Cambridge, the youth picks out two symbols: the single ash and geometry. And because he has

carefully studied the ash tree and other forms of Nature, he can relate it and other natural forms to the geometry in which he is now becoming so interested. Wordsworth explains this process as follows in the 1850 text:

for, having scanned,
Not heedlessly, the laws, and watched the forms
Of Nature, in that knowledge I possessed
A standard, often usefully applied,
Even when unconsciously, to things removed
From a familiar sympathy.

(1850, VI, 100-05).

It is from his study of, not only "living Nature" (l. 119) as he claims in the A text, but "the laws" and "forms" of Nature that Wordsworth begins to learn that there are principles governing Nature, and that these principles could best be understood by a study of mathematics, the "clear synthesis built up aloft/ So gracefully" (1805, VI, 182-83; 1850, VI, 162-63; my italics).

Although Wordsworth tells us that, as a youth, he "was a better judge of thoughts than words" (1850, VI, 106), and that he often succumbed to "The dangerous craft of culling term and phrase/ From languages that want the living voice/ To carry meaning to the natural heart" (1850, VI, 110-12), he tells us that his youthful love of geometry was a real and honest one. In the revised Prelude, he explains:

Yet may we not entirely overlook
The pleasure gathered from the rudiments
Of geometric science. Though advanced
In these inquiries, with regret I speak,
No farther than the threshold, there I found
Both elevation and composed delight:
With Indian awe and wonder, ignorance pleased
With its own struggles, did I meditate
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;

From star to star, from kindred sphere to sphere,
From system on to system without end,

(1850, VI, 115-28)

Geoffrey Durrant argues that

This passage makes plain that 'geometric science' was, for Wordsworth, intimately linked with Newtonian astronomy and the natural laws--with that region of 'science' for which Wordsworth so often expresses his deep admiration, and with which he records none of the dissatisfaction aroused in his mind by the biological, psychological, and social sciences as practised in his day. It is in this area of science that Wordsworth is most deeply interested; and there we shall find the strongest influence on the actual texture and form of his poetry. (Great System, p. 21)

Durrant is correct here. But because he is not doing a study of the revisions to The Prelude, he does not point out that what this passage tells us, and the 1805 parallel passage does not, is that Wordsworth ultimately sees geometry, not as a master to the human mind, but as its servant. In the A text, Wordsworth describes geometry merely as "a leader to the human mind" (l. 147), but here, he mentions that the laws of geometry need not be mere abstractions, but may be employed "to serve the mind of earth-born man" (l. 126) in practical day-to-day matters.

Although Wordsworth devotes the entire Book III to a discussion of his first term at Cambridge, he tells us very little about his subsequent years of residence at the University. He does, however, admit, in both versions, that he wasted a great deal of time there. He claims that "multitudes of hours" were "Pilfered away, by what the Bard who sang/ Of the Enchanter Indolence hath called/ 'Good-natured lounging'" (1850, VI, 179-82). Wordsworth makes only one revision in this section. After claiming that he might have done better "in another place" (1805, VI, 207; 1850, VI, 187), he adds, to the 1850 text, "Yet why take refuge in that

plea?--the fault,/ This I repeat, was mine; mine be the blame" (ll. 188-89).

As K. E. Smith points out:

For most writers this portrayal of a mind deeply poetic yet rejoicing in the escape from poetry would be complex enough. Yet the poet's desire to fill out his picture with all the relevant details leads him to confess that much of his thought at this time was not of nature, poetry, geometry, or indeed any such high matters. Rather it was taken up with the indolence and not-unpleasing-melancholy which he admits to sharing with many other young gentlemen of leisure. If he was in many ways remarkable he was in many ways ordinary too, and it is important to him that we should be reminded of this unromantic truth. (p. 374)

This two-line addition to the final version seems to be an acknowledgement by the older Wordsworth that he derived benefits from Cambridge only insofar as he was willing to reach out for them, and that, at times, like many undergraduates, he was not prepared to reach very far. Here, he acknowledges that the university was ultimately not to blame for his youthful failure to flourish within its confines, but that the blame for this rested almost entirely within himself.

The final significant revision in the first half of Book VI occurs in Wordsworth's description of his second long vacation from Cambridge. In the 1805 version, he gives us this somewhat bland account:

In summer, among distant nooks I roved--
 Dovedale, or Yorkshire dales, or through bye-tracts
 Of my own native region--and was blest
 Between those sundry wanderings with a joy
 Above all joys, . . .

.
 The gentle banks
 Of Emont, hitherto unnamed in song,
 And that monastic castle, on a flat,
 Low-standing by the margin of the stream,
 A mansion not unvisited of old
 By Sidney, where, in sight of our Helvellyn,
 Some snatches he might pen for aught we know
 Of his Arcadia, by fraternal love
 Inspired--that river and that mouldering dome

Have seen us sit in many a summer hour,
 My sister and myself, when, having climbed
 In danger through some window's open space,
 We looked abroad, or on the turret's head
 Lay listening to the wild-flowers and the grass
 As they gave out their whispers to the wind.

(1805, VI, 208-32)

The following are the parallel lines from the 1850 text:

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;
 Pried into Yorkshire dales, or hidden tracts
 Of my own native region, and was blest
 Between these sundry wanderings with a joy
 Above all joys. . . .

.....
 The varied banks
 Of Emont, hitherto unnamed in song,
 And that monastic castle, 'mid tall trees,
 Low-standing by the margin of the stream,
 A mansion visited (as fame reports)
 By Sidney, where, in sight of our Helvellyn,
 Or stormy Cross-fell, snatches he might pen
 Of his Arcadia, by fraternal love
 Inspired;--that river and those mouldering towers
 Have seen us side by side, when, having clomb
 The darksome windings of a broken stair,
 And crept along a ridge of fractured wall,
 Not without trembling, we in safety looked
 Forth, through some Gothic window's open space,
 And gathered with one mind a rich reward
 From the far-stretching landscape, by the light
 Of morning beautified, or purple eve;
 Or, not less pleased, lay on some turret's head,
 Catching from tufts of grass and hare-bell flowers
 Their faintest whisper to the passing breeze,
 Given out while mid-day heat oppressed the plains.

(1850, VI, 190-223)

In these lines describing events that occurred during the poet's second long vacation in 1799, Wordsworth sets one tone against another, surrendering the vigorous, active tone at the beginning to a minor, passive tone at the end, so that it is the passive tone that becomes the

more dominant and memorable. He is most successful in doing this in the 1850 lines, in which the superior quality of the narrative allows him to draw a more direct contrast between the tones that he wishes to convey.

In both versions, the lines give us, at first, the quality of simple narrative. The narrative of the 1850 lines is, however, much more vigorous and assertive than it is in the A text. In the revised version, Wordsworth claims that he had definite purposes in mind during this vacation. Unlike the first vacation that he describes in Book IV (and the second, as he describes it in the A text), this vacation was one on which the youthful poet wished to "quest for works of art, / Or scenes renowned for beauty" (ll. 190-91). Here, Wordsworth claims that he did not merely passively rove the countryside, but vigorously and actively "explored" (l. 191) and "Pried into" (l. 194) the natural details of the countryside in which he found himself. And this exploration and prying leads to a much more realized and vital, remembered scene. Here, Dovedale's "spiry rocks" (l. 193) and the freshness and vitality of the "blue current" of the "streamlet" (l. 192) that ran between them contrasts vividly with the decaying Brougham Castle and the "mouldering towers" (l. 211) of the countryside.

The historical and visual perspective that we gain from the 1850 lines is much more precise and clearly delineated than it is in the A text. The shallow and vague imagery of the A text, "some window's open space" (l. 229), "the turret's head" (l. 230) gives way, in the 1850 version, to imagery that gives us a sharp impression of both the tower in which Wordsworth and his sister stood and the scene that they saw from that tower. The "darksome windings of a broken stair" (l. 213), the "ridge of fractured wall" (l. 214) and "some Gothic window's open space"

(l. 216) render the scene within the ancient building unforgettable, while the "purple eve" (l. 219), the "tufts of grass" and "hare-bell flowers" with their "faintest whisper" (ll. 219; 221-22) reinforce each other to render the external scene equally memorable for the reader.

Wordsworth strengthens the visual perspective that he gives us in the 1850 lines by employing a trochaic inversion at the beginning of line 218. The "looked/ Forth" of lines 215-16 gives a pause and a feeling of hesitancy in the movement of the passage, a movement that has already been greatly slowed by the collocation of difficult consonants in line 214. This trochaic substitution, while enacting the sense of space that the scene suggests, also helps to shift the tone to one of quiet passivity. It fixes our attention on what is to come, and what is to come is the quiet recognition by Wordsworth and his sister of the universal and eternal beauties of Nature. But it is not just the beauty of Nature that Wordsworth comments upon in this section. Wordsworth ends the passage on a somewhat surprising note by alluding to the "mid-day heat" that "oppressed the plains" (l. 223).² The strong sense of closure is effected at the end of this passage by the long, heavy vowels and the alliterated "p's" of "oppressed" and "plains." Sound sustains sense and strengthens the tone of complete passivity, for we sense that, in this line, Wordsworth is demonstrating that all things, the "one mind" (l. 217) of the poet and his sister, the architectural ruins, and Nature herself, are subject to the uncontrollable aspects of time and weather.

Wordsworth shifts the scene quite dramatically in the second half of Book VI. Here, he describes his third long vacation on the continent with his college friend, Robert Jones. The pair landed "at Calais on the very eve/ Of that great federal day" (1805, VI, 356-57;

1850, VI, 345-46), and felt that

. . . Europe at that time was thrilled with joy,
France standing on the top of golden hours,
And human nature seeming born again.

(1850, VI, 339-41)

It was there, Wordsworth tells us in both versions, that they saw

Dances of liberty, and, in late hours
Of darkness, dances in the open air.

(1805, VI, 381-82)

(1850, VI, 371-72)

But Wordsworth adds to the 1850 text the subdued warning that these dances were

Deftly prolonged, though grey-haired lookers on
Might waste their breath in chiding.

(1850, VI, 373-74)

Wordsworth makes no major revisions in the passages in which he describes the earliest part of his travels during that summer. The first major revision comes with the added passages on the Grande Chartreuse.

As Havens points out:

420-88. Although a number of long passages in the early manuscripts were omitted from the later, this is the only episode which was added in the course of many revisions. The lines are not remarkable; 426-35, 461-71, and 480-1 touch on subjects which lay deepest in Wordsworth's brooding nature, and in view of the strength of the impression the visit made on him . . . the surprising thing would seem to be not the later addition but the original omission of the account. . . . Towards such establishments and such emotions the Revolution had rendered Wordsworth indifferent if not somewhat hostile, but later, perhaps at the suggestion of Coleridge, who was troubled by his friend's 'atheism,' he was willing enough to say something of a place that had impressed him profoundly. (Mind, p. 423)

The fact that this addition, while not in the A text itself, is in several

of the variants, suggests its undiminished importance to the poet. These lines, contrary to what Havens suggests, are significant, and even remarkable, first, because of what they tell us about the poet, and second, because of what they assert both about the co-existence of human liberty and orthodox religion and about the possibilities of the co-existence of orthodox religion and Nature.

Wordsworth begins the passage by complaining that, as they approached the Chartreuse, they saw

Arms flashing, and a military glare
 Of riotous men commissioned to expel
 The blameless inmates, and belike subvert
 That frame of social being, which so long
 Had bodied forth the ghostliness of things
 In silence visible and perpetual calm.

(1850, VI, 424-29)

Although Havens may be right when he suggests that these lines owe something to the influence of Coleridge, it seems more likely that they owe a great deal as well to the influence of Edmund Burke, who, in his Reflections on the Revolution in France, has this to say about the confiscation of monastic properties:

In all the views of receipt, expenditure, and personal employment, a sober legislator would carefully compare the possessor whom he was recommended to expel, with the stranger who was proposed to fill his place. Before the inconveniences are incurred which must attend all violent revolutions in property through extensive confiscation, we ought to have some rational assurance that the purchasers of the confiscated property will be in a considerable degree more laborious, more virtuous, more sober, less disposed to extort an unreasonable proportion of the gains of the labourer, or to consume on themselves a larger share than is fit for the measure of an individual, or that they should be qualified to dispense the surplus in a more steady and equal mode, so as to answer the purposes of a politic expenditure, than the old possessors, call those possessors, bishops, or canons, or commendatory abbots, or monks, or what you please.³

Of the monks themselves, Burke goes on to say:

Suppose them no otherwise employed than by singing in the choir. They are as usefully employed as those who neither sing nor say. As usefully even as those who sing upon the stage. They are as usefully employed as if they worked from dawn to dark in the innumerable servile, degrading, unseemly, unmanly, and often most unwholesome and pestiferous occupations, to which by the social economy so many wretches are inevitably doomed. If it were not generally pernicious to disturb the natural course of things, and to impede, in any degree, the great wheel of circulation which is turned by the strangely directed labour of these unhappy people, I should be infinitely more inclined forcibly to rescue them from their miserable industry, than violently to disturb the tranquil repose of monastic quietude. (Reflections, p. 271)

Wordsworth's lines faithfully echo Burke's sentiments. He regrets that the "blameless inmates" are victims of the revolution, even while speaking as an ardent supporter of the revolution. And even Nature concurs and is sympathetic:

--'Stay, stay your sacrilegious hands!--The voice
Was Nature's, uttered from her Alpine throne;
I heard it then and seem to hear it now--
'Your impious work forbear, perish what may,
Let this one temple last, be this one spot
Of earth devoted to eternity!'

(1850, VI, 430-35)

The assertion here is that Nature and orthodox religion can and should co-exist together since they interact and strengthen each other through their joint influence of "soul-affecting solitude" (l. 421; his italics).

It is not, however, Nature, but the poet who must speak, finally, for the co-existence of these two, and Wordsworth makes this special plea for tolerance:

Thus by conflicting passions pressed, my heart
Responded; 'Honour to the patriot's zeal!
Glory and hope to new-born Liberty!
Hail to the mighty projects of the time!

Discerning sword that Justice wields do thou
 Go forth and prosper; and, ye purging fires,
 Up to the loftiest towers of Pride ascend,
 Fanned by the breath of angry Providence.
 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.

(1850, VI, 440-56)

But Wordsworth insists that the monastery be spared not just "for the sake/ Of conquest over sense, hourly achieved/ Through faith and meditative reason" (ll. 457-59), but also for

humbler claim

Of that imaginative impulse sent
 From these majestic floods, yon shining cliffs,
 The untransmuted shapes of many worlds,
 Cerulean ether's pure inhabitants,
 These forests unapproachable by death,
 That shall endure as long as man endures,
 To think, to hope, to worship, and to feel,
 To struggle, to be lost within himself
 In trepidation, from the blank abyss
 To look with bodily eyes, and be consoled.

(1850, VI, 461-71)

Wordsworth realizes that destruction of the man-made centre of worship will lead, inevitably, to the destruction of the peripheral sanctuary that Nature offers to sick and troubled minds. John Beer, in Wordsworth in Time, suggests that in this passage, "Once again, the sense of mountain-experience as taking place within an 'Ether' with power in some sense to preserve man from the 'blank abyss,' is given dramatic expression" (p. 167). In this passage, then, Wordsworth once again stresses the concept that he first asserted in the soliloquy to solitude at the

conclusion of the revised Book IV; that is, that Nature and solitude work together for the common good of humanity, but that they are "Most potent when impressed upon the mind/ With an appropriate human centre" (IV, 358-59). If the "human centre" is destroyed, then the forests are approachable by death, and the "shapes of many worlds" are transmuted into the mundane, ordinary, and everyday shapes that man sees about him continually. Man must, Wordsworth asserts, be able "To look with bodily eyes, and be consoled" (l. 471) at Nature in its undefiled state. He must be able to come in contact with "ether's pure inhabitants" (l. 465) in order to save himself from the "blank abyss" (l. 470) that he is constantly in danger of succumbing to in the everyday world. The tolerance that Wordsworth demonstrates in this passage is more than tolerance. It is a wisdom that includes both a respect for religions other than his own and a psychological overview of the healing power both of religion and Nature. Combined, the two can help and heal man. Destroy one, and the other is destroyed to the detriment of mankind.

"That day we first/ Beheld the summit of Mont Blanc, and grieved/ To have a soulless image on the eye" (ll. 452-54) Wordsworth continues in the A text. He strengthens the correspondence between this Book and the opening of the revised Book IV, however, when he opens the 1850 version of these lines by saying:

That very day
From a bare ridge we also first beheld
Unveiled the summit of Mount Blanc, and grieved
To have a soulless image on the eye.

(1850, VI, 523-26)

In the revised Book IV, Wordsworth tells us that what was "Proudly revealed with instantaneous burst" (l. 10) after he had climbed the "bare

ridge" (l. 3) was "A universe of Nature's fairest forms" (l. 9). Here, however, what is revealed on the "bare ridge" is the "soulless image" of Mount Blanc. Mount Blanc disappoints Wordsworth for three specific reasons. First, it shatters the preconceived idea that the young man had held with regards to the sublimity of the mountain. Second, Wordsworth concentrates solely on the summit of the mountain and pays little attention to anything else about or around it. And third, Wordsworth concentrates solely on the visual image of the mountain. It presents "a soulless image on the eye" (my italics). The travellers' next sighting, however, "The wondrous Vale/ Of Chamouny" (1805, VI, 456-57; 1850, VI, 528-29) made "rich amends,/ And reconciled [them] to realities" (1805, VI, 460-61; 1850, VI, 532-33) because they came upon it unexpectedly, with no preconceived ideas about what it should be, because it offered a wealth of imagery and had no central fixed point upon which the travellers had to concentrate, and because it satisfied all of the senses.⁴ "With such a book/ Before our eyes," Wordsworth claims in the A text,

we could not chuse but read
A frequent lesson of sound tenderness,
The universal reason of mankind,
The truth of young and old.

(1805, VI, 473-77)

But the more mature Wordsworth, not content with "copying the impression of the memory," thinks about his memory of the scene and tells us that what the youthful travellers "could not chuse but read" were more specific lessons, "Lessons of genuine brotherhood, the plain/ And universal reason of mankind" (1850, VI, 545-46).

In the 1850 text, Wordsworth greatly compresses his introduction to the actual crossing of the Alps, and he makes only minor revisions in

the lines describing the actual crossing itself. He does, however, make several important revisions in the apostrophe to the imagination that he interjects between this episode and the unrevised description of the sighting of the Ravine of Gondo. Here is the 1805 apostrophe to the imagination:

Imagination!--lifting up itself
 Before the eye and progress of my song
 Like an unfathered vapour, here that power,
 In all the might of its endowments, came
 Athwart me. I was lost as in a cloud,
 Halted without a struggle to break through,
 And now, recovering, to my soul I say
 'I recognize thy glory'. In such strength
 Of usurpation, in such visitings
 Of awful promise, when the light of sense
 Goes out in flashes that have shewn to us
 The invisible world, doth greatness make abode,
 There harbours whether we be young or old.
 Our destiny, our nature, and our home,
 Is with infinitude--and only there;
 With hope it is, hope that can never die,
 Effort, and expectation, and desire,
 And something evermore about to be.
 The mind beneath such banners militant
 Thinks not of spoils or trophies, nor of aught
 That may attest its prowess, blest in thoughts
 That are their own perfection and reward--
 Strong in itself, and in the access of joy
 Which hides it like the everflowing Nile.

(1805, VI, 525-48)

Here is the revised version of these lines:

Imagination--here the Power so called
 Through sad incompetence of human speech,
 That awful Power rose from the mind's abyss
 Like an unfathered vapour that enwraps,
 At once, some lonely traveller, I was lost;
 Halted without an effort to break through;
 But to my conscious soul I now can say--
 'I recognize thy glory': in such strength
 Of usurpation, when the light of sense
 Goes out, but with a flash that has revealed
 The invisible world, doth greatness make abode,
 There harbours, whether we be young or old.
 Our destiny, our being's heart and home,

Is with infinitude, and only there;
 With hope it is, hope that can never die,
 Effort, and expectation, and desire,
 And something ever more about to be.
 Under such banners militant, the soul
 Seeks for no trophies, struggles for no spoils
 That may attest her prowess, blest in thoughts
 That are their own perfection and reward,
 Strong in herself and in beatitude
 That hides her, like the mighty flood of Nile
 Poured from his fount of Abyssinian clouds
 To fertilise the whole Egyptian plain.

(1850, VI, 592-616)

It is important to note that, while Wordsworth inserts this passage between those passages in which he describes his youthful disappointment at having crossed the Alps unawares (even more disappointing in the 1850 text, in which he adds "For still we had hopes that pointed to the clouds" [l. 587]) and just prior to his description of the sighting of the chaos of Gondo, when he realizes the limitations of his imagination, the actual experience of which he speaks in this passage does not occur when he is on his youthful travels, but years later, when he is thinking about his Alpine adventures as he composes the poem.⁵ The simple revision of "And now, recovering, to my soul I say" (1805, VI, 531) to "But to my conscious soul I now can say" (l. 598) in the final text clarifies this point (all italics mine).

In the 1805 passage, Wordsworth tells us that, rather than assisting him to create poetry, the "Imagination" prevents him from creating it. It distracts him from "the eye and progress of [his] song" (l. 526) and causes him to become "lost as in a cloud" (l. 529). It comes "In all the might of its endowments" (l. 528) to thwart the poet in his work, but Wordsworth does not tell us the origin of this power or the reason the power which should most be assisting him to create poetry is

now preventing him from doing so.

Before I discuss the first six lines of the 1850 version, I would like to direct the reader's attention back to an essentially unrevised statement that Wordsworth makes near the conclusion of Book V:

Visionary power
Attends the motions of the viewless winds,
Embodied in the mystery of words.

(1850, V, 595-97)

Here, in the passage under consideration, Wordsworth still addresses the autonomous "Imagination," but as he does not in the A text, he here directs our attention to a crucial point. This point is, not that the imagination itself interrupts his "song," but that while it is the "Imagination" that he relies upon to help him to create poetry, when he attempts to describe the "Power" of the imagination in that poetry, he cannot do so because of the "sad incompetence of human speech" (l. 593). At this stage of the poem, then, what Wordsworth wants us to be aware of is that although the imagination can help the poet to describe nearly everything else, and that it is "Embodied in the mystery of [the] words" of his poetry, it is of no assistance to him when he wishes to describe the imagination itself. It is not the imagination itself that interrupts the poet at this stage, but his inability to describe, in his poetry, the action of the imagination that has the "strength/ Of usurpation" (ll. 599-600) that causes the poet to pause and reflect. It is not the "power" of the imagination that Wordsworth is discussing in the 1850 lines, but the failure of imaginative power that arrests his attention here. And, we must note another important point in the 1850 lines. It is a personal failure that Wordsworth is discussing here, not the

universal power of the imagination, for, as the Norton editors point out, "In 1805 the experience described is recurrent, and available to others; in 1850, the lines can be read as referring to a single apocalyptic event" (Gill, p. 217). As he will go on to suggest in the Gondo passages, a poet with a finer imagination (or God, himself) could, perhaps, find order in the Ravine of Gondo, but he could not.

But this failure of the imagination is not altogether a failure. As "That awful Power rose from the mind's abyss" (l. 594), it directed his attention downward, so to speak, to its original source, "the mind's abyss" itself. In the 1850 version, the "light of sense" does not go "out in flashes," like a flickering light bulb, as it does in the 1805 lines, but, rather, it "Goes out, but with a flash that has revealed/ The invisible world" (1850, VI, 601-02). It is only at this point that Wordsworth understands why the "Imagination" has diverted him away from the world of external reality. His contemplation of the failure of imaginative power has made him focus, not on the external world, but upon himself, and it is at this point that he realizes the wisdom of the "Imagination," and understands how, when the imagination diverts him from one source of inspiration, it is, at the same time, leading him to a finer and richer source for his creative (and personal) development. In the A text, with the phrase "have shewn to us" (l. 535), Wordsworth insinuates that this is a universal phenomenon. But in the 1850 version, by deleting this phrase and by adding the final two lines to the passage, Wordsworth implies that this is a personal experience--an experience unique to himself as the poet of Nature. In the final lines, as Geoffrey Hartman points out, "the hiding that bespeaks mystery and apocalypse opens once more into nature. The imagination hides itself by

overflowing as poetry, and is compared to the Nile which overflows its banks and the Egyptian plain" (Wordsworth's Poetry, p. 69). It not only "overflows" the plain in Wordsworth's case, it, like the Nile, also fertilizes the whole of his creative actions by giving him rich, new sources to contemplate. It helps him inevitably to know what Wordsworth will later tell us all great poets know, "the consciousness/ Of whom they are" (1805, XIII, 108-09; 1850, XIV, 114-15). But it is strange that Hartman (who has given us many fine insights into the incremental redundancies and repetitions in The Prelude) fails to point out that the Nile, the complex metaphor that Wordsworth uses for the imagination in this passage, is also a symbol of regular recurrence as well as fertility. And because this passage constitutes the last major revision in Book VI, I would like to point out several recurrences that culminate in this passage, not merely to demonstrate that there are recurring words, phrases, and ideas in the poem, but to demonstrate how Wordsworth uses these in the final Prelude to delineate important stages in the growth of his mind.

For example, it was on a morning that magnificently "rose" (1850, IV, 324) during his summer vacation that the youth became "A dedicated Spirit" (1850, IV, 337). It was only after the Discharged Soldier "rose" (1805, IV, 438; 1850, IV, 412) and "Returned [Wordsworth's] salutation" (1805, IV, 439; 1850, IV, 414) that the youth first started to become aware of the suffering of humanity. And it was while watching, as a child, as the Drowned Man "Rose, with his ghastly face, a spectre shape/ Of terror" (1850, V, 450-51) that the poet realized that there was nothing to fear because his "inner eye had seen/ Such sights before, among the shining streams/ Of faëry land, the forests of romance" (1805,

V, 475-77; 1850, V, 453-55). In this passage, for the first time, the imagination "rose" without external stimuli, "Proceeding from a source of untaught things/ Creative and enduring, [and] may become/ A power like one of Nature's" (1850, XIII, 310-12; my italics). The fact that Wordsworth's youthful imagination is now beginning to imitate the action of Nature is not enough. And Wordsworth makes this plain when, in the 1850 text, he speaks of the "source of untaught things" as "the mind's abyss" (l. 594).

By referring to the origins of the imagination as the "mind's abyss," and by likening the imagination, itself, to "the mighty flood of Nile," which has its origins in "Abyssinian clouds" (ll. 614-15), Wordsworth is again implying that the imaginative faculty can be a very dangerous one. The word "abyss," itself, refers us back to the Chartreuse passages that Wordsworth adds to the 1850 version of this Book, in which he speaks of the "blank abyss" (l. 470) that man can be lost within if he does not have external sources of serenity and harmony with which to console himself. The word also reminds us of Wordsworth's childhood habit of reaching out to the external world in order to assure himself that there was, indeed, an external reality outside of himself and that the "abyss of idealism"⁶ in which he often found himself could be overcome. The "invisible world" (l. 602), then, can, to the older Wordsworth, be a home of "greatness," but it can also be a source of confusion, romantic effusion, and, if the person does not use it with restraint coupled with reason, it can also be a source of madness. Wordsworth cannot imagine any harmony or order in the Ravine of Gondo. There is no triumph of imagination there, as some critics assert, nor is there a failure of imagination. As Wordsworth looks at the chaos of the

Ravine with its

Winds thwarting winds, bewildered and forlorn,
 The torrents shooting from the clear blue sky,
 The rocks that muttered close upon our ears,
 Black drizzling crags that spake by the way-side
 As if a voice were in them, the sick sight
 And giddy prospect of the raving stream,

(1850, VI, 628-33)

he does not try to make of this scene a unified and harmonious whole.

This is a triumph of reason over imagination. He is beginning to learn his limitations as a man and as a poet, and, although he will meet with some success as he deals with the chaos of London, his reasoning faculties will always prevent him from imagining and describing order where there is none.

II

Book VII records and fuses together the impressions of London that Wordsworth received during three fairly lengthy stays in that city. On the whole, Wordsworth strongly disapproved of London, finding it a "perpetual whirl/ Of trivial objects, melted and reduced/ To one identity" (1850, VII, 725-27), a place that put "The whole creative powers of man asleep" (1805, VII, 655; 1850, VII, 681). But although he found London, by day, to be a "monstrous ant-hill on the plain/ Of a too busy world" (1850, VII, 149-50), Wordsworth was impressed and moved by "The blended calmness of the heavens and earth,/ Moonlight and stars, and empty streets, and sounds/ Unfrequent as in deserts" (1850, VII, 660-62) of London by night, and it was in London, as in Cambridge, that he realized that the "Composure and ennobling Harmony" (1805, VII, 741; 1850,

VII, 771) that Nature had demonstrated to him in the Lake District of his youth were sufficiently strong as forces and memories to inspire, sustain, and comfort him even in the midst of the "blank confusion" (1805, VII, 696; 1850, VII, 722) of the huge metropolis.

In "Wordsworth's Prelude: The Poetic Function of Memory,"

Weaver focuses on Book VII in order to demonstrate that the 1805 Prelude

. . . gives edge to our inquiry about the poetic function of memory. We begin to suspect that when Wordsworth speaks of this power of the mind he often means something distinct and peculiar; and we have reason to believe that what he means by memory in 1805, is at times vitally different from that which he means in 1850. In 1805, memory is enhanced with witchery. It visits the hiding-places of his power at will, and returns joyously. But in the long interval between 1805 and the final revision, when age has come on, Wordsworth 'may scarcely see at all.' The light is often dim. What in 1805 he foresaw has in sad reality come true. The record of fact corresponds to the language of prophecy. And the point is simply that the poetic memory is a vital function of the poetic mind, and that when the mind begins to fail the function of memory is impaired. . . . However the matter is put, it is worth investigation. (p. 9; his italics)

As we have just seen in our examination of Book VI, Wordsworth is not content, in the 1850 Prelude, with merely copying the impressions of his earlier memories. He employs both thought and memory in order to give us, not only a description of past events, but an evaluation of those events as well. In Book VII, Wordsworth also greatly modifies his earlier memories of London while giving us, at the same time, a more comprehensive evaluation of himself and of the growth that his mind underwent while he was in that city.

In the first chapter of this study, we examined the first few lines of both versions of Book VII, and we saw the significant improvement that Wordsworth makes when he modifies his earlier description of himself as a poet who wished to sing "Aloud, in dithyrambic fervour" (1805, VII, 5)

to that of a serious poet who wrote "less impetuous" (1850, VII, 9) verse. And, in several other instances in the revised Book VII, Wordsworth changes his earlier description of himself in order both to sustain narrative flow and to introduce new thematic and imagistic concepts into his work. For example, he differentiates between imagination and fancy in the final text as he describes his childhood illusions about London. In the 1805 version, he tells us:

Marvellous things
My fancy had shaped forth of sights and shows,
Processions, equipages, lords, and dukes,
The King and the King's palace, and not last
Or least, heaven bless him! the renowned Lord Mayor--

(1805, VII, 108-12)

Here is the revised version of these lines:

Marvellous things
Had vanity (quick Spirit that appears
Almost as deeply seated and as strong
In a Child's heart as fear itself), conceived
For my enjoyment. Would that I could now
Recal [sic] what then I pictured to myself
Of mitred Prelates, Lords in ermine clad,
The King, and the King's Palace; and, not last,
Nor least, Heaven bless him! the renowned Lord Mayor.

(1850, VII, 102-10)

In the 1805 lines, Wordsworth demonstrates no real understanding that the grandiose expectations and misconceptions that he had held as a child are universally held by all children. In the 1850 lines, however, Wordsworth gives us a definition of childhood fancy that we recognize immediately as being universally applicable to all children. Here he is explicitly aware of the limitations and illusory quality of childhood fancy, so much so, in fact, that one is once more reminded of Graff's definition of "the characteristic illusion of the child," that is, "The vanity of seeing the

world as radiant with the delight of the perceiver" (Poetic Statement, p. 122). But the complexity of thought in the 1850 passage does not end here. Deceptive and illusory as this fancy is, Wordsworth remembers, from his own experience, that it afforded him many hours of innocent pleasure. The tension that he introduces with the line "Would that I could now/ Recal [sic] what I then pictured to myself" (ll. 106-07) enriches the main narrative by demonstrating that Wordsworth is both grateful for his mature insight into this childhood faculty and sad about the inevitable loss that the adult mind suffers and can never fully replace as the child begins to focus his attention on the more mundane and serious aspects of real life. But as we shall see, especially when we examine Book IX, Wordsworth carefully explains that this childhood fancy must give way to more serious and realistic matters before the child (or, in Wordsworth's case, the young man) can truly reach maturity.

While Wordsworth is slightly more critical of the immature and illusory concepts afforded him by his childhood fancy in the 1850 text, referring to them there not merely as "that which I in simpleness believed" (l. 89) as he does in the A text, but as "what my fond simplicity believed" (1850, VII, 85), his account of these childhood memories is sharper and more precise in the final version. The general and vague "sights and shows,/ Processions, Equipages, lords and dukes" (ll. 109-10) of the A text gives way, in the final version, to the more precise "mitred Prelates, Lords in ermine clad" (l. 108). Weaver's assertion that when age "has come on, Wordsworth 'may scarcely see at all,'" is simply not true. As we see from this example, and as we have seen and will see from many other examples in the revised Prelude, age, intellect, and memory all combine not to dim Wordsworth's descriptions and explanations

of his more youthful experiences, but to brighten and sharpen them.

Still discussing his childhood fancy and the early illusions that it afforded him of London, Wordsworth tells us, in the 1805 text,

Oh wondrous power of words, how sweet they are
 According to the meaning which they bring--
 Vauxhall and Ranelagh, I then had heard
 Of your green groves and wilderness of lamps,
 Your gorgeous ladies, fairy cataracts,
 And pageant fireworks. Nor must we forget
 Those other wonders, different in kind
 Though scarcely less illustrious in degree,
 The river proudly bridged, the giddy top
 And Whispering Gallery of St Paul's, the tombs
 Of Westminster, the Giants of Guildhall,
 Bedlam and the two figures at its gates,
 Streets without end and churches numberless,
 Statues with flowery gardens in vast squares,
 The Monument, and Armoury of the Tower
 These fond imaginations, of themselves,
 Had long before given way in season due,
 Leaving a throng of others in their stead;
 And now I looked upon the real scene,
 Familiarly perused it day by day,
 With keen and lively pleasure even there
 Where disappointment was the strongest, pleased
 Through courteous self-submission, as a tax
 Paid to the object by prescriptive right,
 A thing that ought to be.

(1805, VII, 121-45)

Here are the 1850 lines:

O, wond'rous power of words, by simple faith
 Licensed to take the meaning that we love!
 Vauxhall and Ranelagh! I then had heard
 Of your green groves, and wilderness of lamps
 Dimming the stars, and fireworks magical,
 And gorgeous ladies, under splendid domes,
 Floating in dance, or warbling high in air
 The songs of spirits! Nor had Fancy fed
 With less delight upon that other class
 Of marvels, broad-day wonders permanent:
 The River proudly bridged; the dizzy top
 And Whispering Gallery of St. Paul's; the tombs
 Of Westminster; the Giants of Guildhall;
 Bedlam, and those carved maniacs at the gates,
 Perpetually recumbent; Statues--man,
 And horse under him--in gilded pomp

Adorning flowery gardens, 'mid vast squares;
 • The Monument, and that Chamber of the Tower
 Where England's sovereigns sit in long array,
 Their steeds bestriding, every mimic shape
 Cased in the gleaming mail the monarch wore,
 Whether for gorgeous tournament addressed,
 Or life or death upon the battlefield.
 Those bold imaginations in due time
 Had vanished, leaving others in their stead:
 And now I looked upon the living scene;
 Familiarly pursued it; oftentimes,
 In spite of strongest disappointment, pleased
 Through courteous self-submission, as a tax
 Paid to the object by prescriptive right.

(1850, VII, 119-48)

What Wordsworth is trying to illustrate in both versions of this passage is the difference between fancy working alone (as it was in the passage that I quoted just previous to this one), and fancy being modified and disciplined to some extent by the child's imagination. When Wordsworth tells us that, in childhood, he envisioned London as a place replete with "mitred Prelates, Lords in ermine clad" (1850, VII, 108), he is describing the workings of his childhood fancy in shaping a romantic, idealized world that exists, for the most part, solely in the mind of the child. In the passage that we are now discussing, however, Wordsworth is still describing the actions of childhood fancy, but he is also describing how the child's imagination is beginning to discipline that fancy to help him shape, with at least some degree of accuracy and realism, a world that he has never personally seen, but that, in the main, exists. And, in the 1850 version of this passage, he is more successful than he is in the A text in showing the rational ordering faculty of the imagination beginning to exert its power. This last point is an important one, because, as Wordsworth will eventually tell us, imagination, as he defines it, "Is but another name for absolute power/ And clearest insight, amplitude of

mind, / and Reason in her most exalted mood" (1850, XIV, 190-92; my italics).

In the revised lines, Wordsworth begins, as he does in the A text, with an image of Nature, the "green groves." He deletes the thoroughly fanciful "fairy cataracts" of the A text, and instead, between the image of Nature and the final, human image, he places two images of light. Here, however, more than in the A text, it is significant that he speaks of a "wilderness of lamps" (my italics) because both the lamps and the fireworks are artificial means of light that, in one instance, dim the natural light of the stars, and in the other, distract man momentarily at least, from it. It is also significant that when Wordsworth does mention the human image, he gives it more emphasis than he does in the A text by placing it in the emphatically final position of the Vauxhall-Ranlagh catalogue, but he also stresses that the human images ("gorgeous ladies") are encased, in a manner of speaking, "under splendid domes." The "fireworks" are still "magical" here, and the "domes" are "splendid," but what Wordsworth seems to be implying in these revised lines is that the child does not realize that artificiality and restriction, enticing though they may be for a time, can have the result of separating and distracting man from the true beauties of Nature.⁷

Another important revision that Wordsworth makes in this passage is his more precise description of the "Statues." The ordering faculty of the child's imagination places these "Statues" in the midst of "flowery gardens" that are, in turn, "mid vast squares" (my italics). Although the child's imagination places the figure of man precisely in the middle of the picture, it does not, as yet, give him the power to distinguish between the artificial "gilded pomp" of the "Statues" (which

the child envisions as adding beauty not artificiality to the scene) and the truly memorable pomp" (1805, IV, 331; 1850, IV, 324) of Nature. Nor does it give him the ability to realize that "Statues" of men do not bring as much order and repose to their surroundings as do real men. Although Wordsworth, as a young adult, is greatly disillusioned with much of what he sees when he does visit London in person, he tells us a few lines after this passage that he also experienced:

Private courts,
 Gloomy as coffins, and unsightly lanes
 Thrilled by some female vendor's scream, belike
 The very shrillest of all London cries,
 May then entangle our impatient steps;
 Conducted through those labyrinths, unawares,
 To privileged regions and inviolate,
 Where from their airy lodges studious lawyers
 Look out on waters, walks, and gardens green.

(1850, VII, 180-88)

Impatient to get away from the discordant screams of the female vendor, Wordsworth comes to a most harmonious setting with "waters, walks, and gardens green" in the heart of the bustling metropolis. Here, man has ordered for himself a sanctuary from the day-to-day discordances of the city, and the scene comes as a welcome sight to the young Wordsworth, not only as a place of solace and serenity, but as part of a childhood dream come true. But here, Wordsworth does not mention any statues. Here, he mentions only real men, symbols of human law and order, the "studious lawyers" who work in the midst of these surroundings and "look out" upon the "waters, walks, and gardens green."

Yet another important revision in this passage demonstrates not so much the interaction of childhood fancy and imagination as the growing imaginative faculty of the youthful Wordsworth. To his childhood

catalogue of "bold imaginings" Wordsworth adds the precise image, "Bedlam, and those carved maniacs at the gates, / Perpetually recumbent" (ll. 132-33). The child does not realize the true significance of this image. To him, it represents another example of "carved" beauty in the heart of London. He seems to think that if there is any madness in London, it will be, like the "carved maniacs," harmless, and unable to affect him personally, because it will be, like the statues, controlled and contained by other men. What he will find out, when he does visit the city, is that much of its madness is uncontained or controlled, and that it can affect him personally in very serious ways. What he also learns, when he is more mature, is that symbols of madness are not natural and do not belong, as natural, in centres of human existence. And what he will do, as a poet in later life, is single out representations of order and refinement that elevate man, rather than degrade him, and bring them to our attention in his poetry.⁸

Wordsworth also gives us a more explicit warning about the dangers of the imagination at the beginning of the 1850 passage than he does in the 1805 lines. In the A text, he simply tells us that it is dangerous to accept, as true, the meanings that others have imposed upon words. Words are, he tells us there, "sweet . . . / According to the meaning which they bring" (ll. 121-22). In the 1850 lines, however, he warns that we often not only accept the meanings that others impose upon words, but we often embellish these meanings with interpretations of our own that we wish were true, but that sometimes are not. In other words, we often give to words "the meaning that we love" (1850, VII, 120). And that is precisely what the young Wordsworth did as a child.

In the 1850 version, the mature poet sharply and forcefully

interrupts his childhood recollections of London when he begins to describe the "living scene" of that city by exclaiming, "Rise up, thou monstrous ant-hill on the plain/ Of a too busy world!" (ll. 149-50). More than the vaguely critical parallel lines of the A text, "And first, the look and aspect of the place--/ The broad highway appearance, as it strikes/ On strangers of all ages" (ll. 154-56), these 1850 lines, with their obvious vehemence, register, in no uncertain terms, Wordsworth's intense disapproval, not only of London itself, but of the "too busy world" in general.

Although Wordsworth makes very few revisions in the catalogues of sights and sounds of London that he presents in the A text, he does make some interesting revisions in those passages in which he describes some of the individuals whom he met during his London stay. Two of these individuals were a mother and a baby whom he encountered in a London theatre. In the A text, Wordsworth begins his description of the pair as follows:

foremost I am crossed
 Here by remembrance of two figures: one
 A rosy babe, who for a twelvemonth's space
 Perhaps had been of age to deal about
 Articulate prattle, child as beautiful
 As ever sate upon a mother's knee;
 The other was the parent of that babe--
 But on the mother's cheek the tints were false,
 A painted bloom.

(1805, VII, 366-74)

Here is the 1850 description:

foremost of the scenes,
 Which yet survive in memory, appears
 One, at whose centre sate a lovely Boy,
 A sportive infant, who, for six months' space,
 Not more, had been of age to deal about
 Articulate prattle--Child as beautiful

As ever clung around a mother's neck,
 Or father fondly gazed upon with pride.
 There, too, conspicuous for stature tall
 And large dark eyes, beside her infant stood
 The mother; but upon her cheeks diffused,
 False tints too well accorded with the glare
 From play-house lustres thrown without reserve
 On every subject near.

(1850, VII, 334-47; my italics)

Wordsworth's revised description of this mother is much more precise than his 1805 description. Yet, he admits, at the end of the final discussion of the pair:

The mother now
 Is fading out of memory, but I see
 The lovely Boy as I beheld him then
 Among the wretched and the falsely gay,
 Like one of those who walked with hair unsinged
 Amid the fiery furnace.

(1850, VII, 365-70)

The first point that I wish to make concerns not the baby, but the mother, in these passages. According to Weaver, the last passage gives us an example of a "poetically dead" use of the term "memory" (p. 9). Weaver asserts that here (and presumably in the opening section of the 1850 passage that I quote, but that he does not), "the term is smothered with narrative dullness" (p. 10). But Weaver does not quote the corresponding, final lines from the A text:

The mother, too,
 Was present, but of her I know no more
 Than hath been said, and scarcely at this time
 Do I remember her.

(1805, VII, 392-95)

These lines are the very embodiment of narrative dullness, something that Weaver either fails to mention or fails to recognize. Nor does Weaver

seem cognizant of the fact that Wordsworth is, first and foremost, a poet, and that when he revises, he revises for a definite purpose. And the purpose here is to show the difference between this:

There, too, conspicuous for stature tall
 And large dark eyes, beside her infant stood
 The mother; but upon her cheeks diffused,
 False tints too well accorded with the glare
 From play-house lustres thrown without reserve
 On every object near.

(1850, VII, 342-47)

and this:

He was of stature tall,

 He stood, and in his very dress appeared
 A desolation, a simplicity,
 To which the trappings of a gaudy world
 Make a strange back-ground.

(1850, IV, 390; 400-403;
 all italics mine)

The mature Wordsworth revises this passage in order to show that, as a younger man in London, he was beginning to become aware that there was a difference in the quality of people. He had learned compassion from the Discharged Soldier, but he only wants to forget this mother, and his youthful (and mature) judgment of her is explicit in this final description of her that he gives us in the 1850 text.

But this is not to say that the poet does not have deep compassion for the infant. In the revised passage, he changes the age of the baby from "a twelvemonth's space" to "six months' space." He does this in order to direct our attention back to the revised "infant Babe" passage of Book II and its significant word "already" (1850, II, 246; 248), so that we can compare the two infants. The baby in London,

sate surrounded with a throng
 Of chance spectators, chiefly dissolute men
 And shameless women; treated and caressed,
 Ate, drank, and with the fruit and glasses played,
 While oaths and laughter and indecent speech
 Were rife about him as the songs of birds
 Contending after showers.

(1850, VII, 359-65)

The question that is quietly implicit in these lines is: what is this baby learning to do "already"?

Wordsworth makes yet another important revision in this passage. He tells us that this baby was "as beautiful/ As ever clung around a mother's neck,/ Or father fondly gazed upon with pride." By mentioning the "father" here, Wordsworth prepares us for his moving description of the father with the sickly infant, a passage that he moves from Book VIII of the 1805 text to Book VII of the final version, so that it contrasts more vividly (is "set off by foil") with the description of the mother and infant in the theatre. He does not make any important changes within the passage itself. He does, however, change the lines that open the description. Here are the preliminary lines from the A text:

And, is not, too, that vast abiding-place
 Of human creatures, turn where'er we may,
 Profusely sown with individual sights
 Of courage, and integrity, and truth,
 And tenderness, which, here set off by foil,
 Appears more touching? In the tender scenes
 Chiefly was my delight, and one of these
 Will never be forgotten.

(1805, VIII, 837-44)

Here is the beginning of the 1850 description:

But foolishness and madness in parade,
 Though most at home in this their dear domain,
 Are scattered everywhere, no rarities,
 Even to the rudest novice of the Schools,

Me, rather it employed, to note, and keep
 In memory, those individual sights
 Of courage, or integrity, or truth,
 Of tenderness, which there, set off by foil,
 Appeared more touching. One will I select;
 A Father--for he bore that sacred name--

(1850, VII, 594-603)

Weaver once again singles out the 1850 passage, and, after quoting only lines 598-600, tells us that here the term "memory" is "used in dead statement" (p. 10). But we should recognize this passage because it is, in part, one of the two thematic additions that Wordsworth makes in the final Prelude (see p. 82 above). It is only when we know this that we can fully appreciate the lines, because they are important, not only here, but throughout the entire Prelude of 1850.

But Wordsworth does not just describe babies and their parents in Book VII. "'Tis one perhaps already met elsewhere,/ A travelling cripple, by the trunk cut short,/ And stumping with his arms" (ll. 218-20), Wordsworth tells us in the A text. But the more experienced Wordsworth has no qualifiers in the final version. The assertion, "'Tis one encountered here and everywhere;/ A travelling cripple" (ll. 202-03) universalizes the suffering of the cripple and demonstrates that the youth in London is beginning to notice the suffering about him and its universal quality. He demonstrates the same results when he adds "(a sight not rare)" (1850, VII, 638) to his description of the blind beggar in the 1850 text.

But the youthful Wordsworth also enjoyed some of the sights and sounds of London. In the A text he describes a London preacher who had caught his attention:

These are grave follies; other public shows
 The capital city teems with of a kind
 More light--and where but in the holy church?
 There have I seen a comely bachelor,
 Fresh from a toilette of two hours, ascend
 The pulpit, with seraphic glance look up,
 And in a tone elaborately low
 Beginning, lead his voice through many a maze
 A minuet course, and, winding up his mouth
 From time to time into an orifice
 Most delicate, a lurking eyelet, small
 And only not invisible, again
 Open it out, diffusing thence a smile
 Of rapt irradiation exquisite.

(1805, VII, 544-57)

Wordsworth does not change his amusing, satirical portrait of this preacher in the 1850 text, but he deletes lines 544-46 of the A text, and replaces them with lines that balance his criticism of this one minister against praise of the truly devout ministers of the church:

Nor did the Pulpit's oratory fail
 To achieve its higher triumph. Not unfelt
 Were its admonishments, nor lightly heard
 The awful truths delivered thence by tongues
 Endowed with various power to search the soul;
 Yet ostentation domineering, oft
 Poured forth harangues, how sadly out of place!

(1850, VII, 544-50)

In this revision, as in so many of the revisions to Book III, Wordsworth demonstrates a more balanced and mature point of view and illustrates that he is capable of praising virtue while condemning vice in one and the same institution.

"The matter which detains me now will seem/ To many neither dignified enough/ Nor arduous" (ll. 489-91), Wordsworth suggests in the A text. "It is," he continues in the same version,

doubtless, in itself
 Humble and low--yet not to be despised
 By those who have observed the curious props
 By which the perishable hours of life
 Rest on each other; and the world of thought
 Exists and is sustained.

(1805, VII, 491-96)

The greatly improved, 1850 lines read as follows:

The matter that detains us now may seem,
 To many, neither dignified enough
 Nor arduous, yet will not be scorned by them,
 Who, looking inward, have observed the ties
 That bind the perishable hours of life
 Each to the other, and the curious props
 By which the world of memory and thought
 Exists and is sustained.

(1850, VII, 458-65)

Of the 1805 lines, Weaver asserts, "This is not poetry, and Wordsworth knew it. Yet it is unified and in the main sensible. When he attempted to make it into poetry (1850) it is doubtful that he succeeded; since he destroyed the unity and confused the sense" (p. 11). What Weaver asserts here is nonsense. As Burton suggests, Wordsworth has here erected a "structure that cannot even be imagined" (One Wordsworth, p. 194). There are no "curious props" upon which the "perishable hours of life/ Rest." Nor are there any "curious props" "By which the perishable hours of life/ Rest on each other." The "perishable hours of life" are bound to each other by thought and memory, and, in most instances, by powerful feelings. The "curious props/ By which the world of memory and thought/ Exists and is sustained" are the experiences of life. In the 1850 passage, "the word, memory," does not, as Weaver suggests, hang "like an interdict upon the lines" (p. 11). It is a word that forms both the verbal and the conceptual link between the past ("the perishable hours of life") and the present

("thought"). And, in union with "thought," "memory" creates for the poet, and for all men, a "world" of references with regards to the past that can be applied to the present.

And it is this harmoniously unified "world of memory and thought" that enables the more mature Wordsworth to realize, finally, that, what he had apprehended on nights in London as a youth, nights "when no one looks about,/ Nothing is listened to" (1805, VII, 641-42; 1850, VII, 667-68) was not merely "The calmness, beauty, of the spectacle,/ Sky, stillness, moonshine, empty streets, and sounds/ Unfrequent as in deserts" (1805, VII, 634-36), but

The blended calmness of the heavens and earth,
Moonlight and stars, and empty streets, and sounds
Unfrequent as in deserts.

(1850, VII, 660-62)

Even in the "endless streets" (1850, VII, 68) of London, where, by day, "Pleasure whirls about incessantly,/ Or life and labour seem but one" (1850, VII, 70-71), the youth realizes that there is "diffused,/ Through meagre lines and colours, and the press/ Of self-destroying, transitory things,/ [A] Composure, and ennobling Harmony" (1850, VII, 768-71).

When the more mature Wordsworth thinks about his earlier memories of London, he realizes that what he gradually became aware of during this period was that

As the black storm upon the mountain top
Sets off the sunbeam in the valley, so
That huge fermenting mass of human-kind
Serves as a solemn back-ground, or relief,
To single forms and objects, whence they draw,
For feeling and contemplative regard,
More than inherent liveliness and power.

(1850, VII, 619-25)

But he remembers, too, that after witnessing St. Bartholomew's Fair, a "Parliament of Monsters" (1850, VII, 718) that he turned once again to the sublime forms of Nature for assurance that there was, indeed, an overriding harmony in the universe. In the last important revision of Book VII, Wordsworth explains:

Attention springs,
 And comprehensiveness and memory flow,
 From early converse with the works of God
 Among all regions; chiefly where appear
 Most obviously simplicity and power.
 Reflect how everlasting streams and woods,
 Stretched and still stretching far and wide, exalt
 The roving Indian. On his desert sands
 What grandeur not unfelt, what pregnant show
 Of beauty, meets the sun-burnt Arab's eye:
 And, as the sea propels, from zone to zone,
 Its currents, magnifies its shoals of life
 Beyond all compass spread, and sends aloft
 Armies of clouds,--even so, its powers and aspects
 Shape for mankind, by principles as fixed,
 The views and aspirations of the soul
 To majesty. Like virtue have the forms
 Perennial of the ancient hills; nor less
 The changeful language of their countenances
 Quickens the slumbering mind, and aids the thoughts,
 However multitudinous, to move
 With order and relation.

(1850, VII, 740-61)

The power of these lines results from the force of the precise verb "Reflect" (l. 745), and from the subtle "order and relation" (l. 761) of those powers of Nature and man upon which Wordsworth would have us "Reflect."

We should note that none of the Nature imagery here is derived from Wordsworth's memory of the Lake District.¹⁰ The "everlasting streams and woods" "exalt," not an Englishman, but "The roving Indian." The "pregnant show" of the "desert sands" is meant for the "sun-burnt Arab's eye." The "sea" is not just the sea off the coast of England.

And "the ancient hills," by virtue of the simple fact that Wordsworth refers to them as "hills," and not "mountains," seem not to be those forms with which we have become familiar in earlier Books. By using this imagery, and by not referring merely to the images of the native regions as he does in the parallel lines of the A text, Wordsworth is subtly making the point that his youthful stay in London and the contact it afforded him with men from all parts of the world had the quiet result of making him realize that there were other ways of life besides his own, and that there were other sublime sources of natural inspiration for men besides the Vale of Esthwaite.

All of the Nature imagery that Wordsworth uses here is symbolic of the sublime and the eternal. All of it is general, and, as the passage moves to its conclusion, this imagery becomes more and more abstract: "streams and woods," "desert sands," the "sea" with its "powers and aspects," and the "forms/ Perennial" and "countenances" of the "ancient hills." The final image is particularly abstract and subtle in that it quietly suggests biblical connotations.

The power of Nature, at the beginning of this passage, is immediate and specific. The "streams and woods" give the "Indian" immediate physical pleasure. They afford him a freedom of expanse for his "roving" movements while they also "exalt" him by serving as a magnificent background to his activities. The "desert sands" also give the Arab physical pleasure, but they have a more abstract and less definable power as well, in that Wordsworth intentionally mentions that they nourish the Arab's sense of "grandeur" and "beauty." The "sea" has an even more abstract power, a power that, unlike that of the "streams and woods" and the "desert sands," is intermittent and ever-changing

("aspects"). It "Shape[s] for mankind, . . . / The views and aspirations of the soul/ To majesty," and, although we cannot specifically define this power or know precisely when it will have its deepest effect on man, we know that it fulfills a definite spiritual need for him. Finally, "the ancient hills" and the "changeful language of their countenances" have the power to awaken "the slumbering mind" of man and aid "the thoughts, / However multitudinous, to move/ With order and relation." This is the most abstract and unknowable power of all, in that it works by degrees over long periods of time as it assists man in the difficult task of self-mastery. As he builds to this climax, we realize that it is not primarily the physical, emotional, or spiritual gifts of Nature that Wordsworth most values. Rather, it is the power of Nature to order his thoughts and to show him the intricate relationships between various parts of the universe that Wordsworth most values here. And, as we shall see, especially when we examine the final three books of The Prelude in the revised version, these powers become significantly more important to Wordsworth as he matures. It is, finally, these powers of Nature that Wordsworth credits with being most influential to the growth and development of his mind.

Like the Nature imagery, all of the human imagery in this passage is general and unspecific, and, also like the Nature imagery, this imagery becomes more abstract as the passage progresses: "The roving Indian," "the sun-burnt Arab," "mankind," "the slumbering mind." But, unlike the powers of Nature, the powers of man's mind under the influence of Nature, become progressively more specific and directed: "roving," observing, aspiring, ordering and relating. And, as we "Reflect" upon the powers of the mind of man as Wordsworth presents them

Here, we realize that the order in which he presents them is precisely the same order in which his own youthful mind gradually acquired its own powers. In the 1850 text, by delicately counterpointing, in a rationally progressive, alternate order the powers of Nature and man, Wordsworth demonstrates how the powers of Nature assist both man in general and this youth in particular to move from child-like irresponsibility to mature, responsible self-mastery.

What Weaver asserts is true. What Wordsworth "means by memory in 1805 is at times vitally different from that which he means in 1850" (p. 232 above). "The world of memory and thought" (1850, VII, 464) is not one in 1805, but it is in 1850. In the 1850 version, in which Wordsworth allows memory and rational thought to interact, he enriches his narrative both by universalizing it and by adding to it vital information about the growth of his own mind that he does not include in the A text. He also refines his narrative so that it describes in more precise and realistic terms the various stages in development that his mind underwent in its movement from childhood fantasy to mature imaginative power. At the end of Book VII of the revised version, the youth, we know, has reached the stage in his development at which his imaginative faculties can discern both universal and particular harmonies. Even in the "vast mill" (1805, VII, 693; 1850, VII, 719) of London, he can impose order upon chaos, can find a "blended calmness" and an "ennobling harmony" between man and Nature, and finally can differentiate and integrate relationships between man and Nature, both on the personal and universal level, where, to the undiscerning and undisciplined mind, no harmonies, correspondences, or relationships exist at all.

III

After discussing his youthful stay in London and its influence upon him, Wordsworth pauses, in Book VIII, to review the progress he has made up to this point. Although Bernard Groom is correct when he asserts that "'Retrospect' (Book VIII) is the least satisfactory of all the books," he is wrong to suggest that the reason for this is because "much of it reverts to the past without greatly enriching the main narrative" (Unity, p. 77). Book VIII is the least satisfactory Book in The Prelude because, as Havens suggests:

Of all the books of The Prelude the A version of VIII is the most loosely knit, discursive, repetitious, and leisurely --'digressive' is hardly the word since nearly all the passages are connected, if somewhat remotely, with the main theme. The structure was much improved in revision but in architectonics (never Wordsworth's strong point) VIII remains weaker even than V. (Mind., p. 452)

Havens suggests that "the tangential and repetitious character of the book, despite the effort that was made to relate the several passages to one another and to the general theme" will be evident from the outline he gives of the Book (Mind, pp. 452-53). And, when we examine the outline, we know that Havens is correct. But despite its weakness in architectonics, Book VIII, especially in its 1850 form, is important to the central narrative because it anticipates what Carl Woodring refers to as "the man-centered Book IX to follow";¹¹ it clarifies certain points in the narrative that, to this point, Wordsworth has not made sufficiently clear; and it gives us some of our clearest insights, both within the Book itself and as they pertain to previous Books, into what W. B. Gallie refers to as Wordsworth's "philosophy,"¹² a philosophy that, once again, relies heavily upon memory as an integral part of the creative act.

Wordsworth makes six significant revisions in the first half of Book VIII.¹³ To his description of the "rustic fair" (1850, VIII, ii) that opens the Book, he adds a charming vignette of an elderly couple who are using the occasion to relive their childhood experiences.¹⁴ He deletes an extended passage (ll. 64-119) that explains, in somewhat repetitious detail, the influence of Nature during Wordsworth's stay in London and that describes a childhood scene in which the shepherd's dog plays the key role and that does not further the narrative in any way. He also deletes the extended "Matron's Tale" (ll. 222-311) from the final version and by doing so, he avoids the obvious breach in stylistic decorum that the tale introduces into the A text.¹⁵ In the fourth revision, Wordsworth introduces a new concept into The Prelude. After explaining that the "paradise/ Where [he] was reared" was "lovelier far" than "Gehol's matchless gardens" (1850, VIII, 98-99; 77), and after describing how the imagery of the Lake District, "the common haunts of the green earth" and "ordinary human interests" (1805, VIII, 166-67) were the two principles of joy in his early youth, Wordsworth proceeds, in the A text, to suggest that both of these

are fastening on the heart
 Insensibly, each with the other's help,
 So that we love, not knowing that we love,
 And feel, not knowing whence our feeling comes.
 Such league have these two principles of joy
 In our affections. I have singled out
 Some moments, the earliest that I could, in which
 Their several currents, blended into one--
 Weak yet, and gathering imperceptibly--
 Flowed in by gushes. My first human love,
 As hath been mentioned, did incline to those
 Whose occupations and concerns were most
 Illustrated by Nature, and adorned,
 And shepherds were the men who pleased me first

(1805, VIII, 169-82)

In the 1850 version, Wordsworth's treatment of this topic is greatly improved. Here, he claims that these two principles of joy

are fastening on the heart
 Insensibly, each with the other's help.
 For me, when my affections first were led
 From kindred, friends, and playmates, to partake
 Love for the human creature's absolute self,
 That noticeable kindness of heart
 Sprang out of fountains, there abounding most
 Where sovereign Nature dictated the tasks
 And occupations which her beauty adorned,
 And Shepherds were the men that pleased me first.

(1850, VIII, 119-28)

Gerald Graff rightly suggests that "No less than a human being, a poem achieves no coherent, stable identity as an entity 'in itself' unless it establishes a relationship to the world outside itself" (Poetic Statement, p. 30) and Yvor Winters insists that what is important in poetry and drama is "not action in itself, but the understanding of action," and that the action must be "so ordered and the comments upon the action . . . such that we can judge the action fully and intelligently" (Function of Criticism, pp. 60-61). If we apply these critical principles to both versions of the passage under discussion, we find that the 1805 passage offers no "'truth of correspondence outside the poem'" (Chapter I, p. 38) and no understanding of the action that has, to this point, taken place in the young man's mind. The 1850 passage, on the other hand, offers, in a precise and rationally organized argument, a summation that we know, both from reading Books I-VII and from our own experience, is universally applicable and follows rationally from what Wordsworth has already told us in the earlier Books.

In the 1805 lines, Wordsworth tells us relatively little, and what he does tell us contradicts much of what he has already told us (or

implied about) his youthful development. It also contradicts several points that he will make in forthcoming passages both in Book VIII and in later Books. He starts off well enough. The first five and a half lines of this passage are rhetorically impressive and we can accept them readily as a rational statement, on Wordsworth's part, about how he, personally, began to love human beings, and about how men, in general, come to love one another. As Wordsworth suggests in earlier Books it is not until years after an experience that he realizes the total significance of that experience. And so it is with most of us. Very often, like the poet, all of us "love, not knowing that we love, / And feel, not knowing whence our feeling comes." But we begin to have serious reservations about the intellectual basis of this passage when we read Wordsworth's assertion that he has previously recorded earlier experiences that "blended into one," "Weak" experiences that, he insists, gathered momentum and power, and, at some later date "Flowed . . . by gushes" into his more mature thoughts. And we have stronger reservations about the rationality of this passage when we read Wordsworth's strongly implied assertion that "shepherds" were his first "human love." Nowhere in the first seven Books of The Prelude, in either version, does Wordsworth bother to record day-to-day experiences that have not stood out vividly in his memory as singularly important occurrences. Nowhere does he suggest that these experiences "blended into one" or that they "Flowed . . . by gushes" into his later thoughts. And nowhere has he "mentioned" that "shepherds" were his "first human love." Wordsworth is emoting here. He is "copying the impression" of memories that do not exist in his mind or in ours, either as we review the poem itself, or as we apply the assertions that he makes in this passage to external reality outside of

the poem.

In the 1850 passage, however, Wordsworth is not merely emoting. Here, he tells us that his "affections" for man gradually grew from a love of his own particular family to a love of his friends, to a love of playmates, and, finally, to a more abstract love, "Love for the human creature's absolute self." And he tells us as well what most fostered this beginning love of humanity was "That noble kindness of heart" that he found to be universal in man, but that abounded most in the simple men and women of the Lake District. But Wordsworth's personal scale of love, here, rationally ordered as it is, should disturb us somewhat, because, in recognizing this progression of love as universally applicable outside of the poem itself, we realize that Wordsworth has, in his youthful development, missed one crucial step in his beginning love of humanity. Nowhere, either in this passage or in the first seven Books of The Prelude, does Wordsworth mention a youthful love and admiration for an individual adult, a love and admiration that could later be transferred to men in general. If we understand this crucial lack in Wordsworth's development, we come a long way, I think, in understanding why Wordsworth, at least as we come to know him in much of his poetry, is mainly a man who reverences the idea of the dignity of man, but one who does not personally become involved in the suffering of the individual. It is, then, not so much what Wordsworth says in this passage, but what he does not say, that is important. And it is his rationally presented argument that helps us to realize an important truth about him, as both a poet and a man. Although there are, of course, some exceptions, it is, as Wordsworth himself concedes, "The idea, or abstraction of the kind" (1850, VIII, 502) that he felt most strongly about. It was "not a

punctual presence, but a spirit/ Diffused through time and space" (1850, VIII, 610-11) that was his greatest love and joy.

The fifth significant revision is related to the one I have just discussed and it is related, as well, to a revision that I have already examined in Book VI (1850, VI, 125-28). This revision comes in the concluding lines of the central passage of Book VIII, a passage that W. B. Gallie refers to as one of the "masterpieces of argument" in The Prelude.¹⁶ In this passage, in both versions, Wordsworth gives thanks to "the God/ Of Nature and of Man"

That men before my inexperienced eyes
Did first present themselves thus purified,
Removed, and to a distance that was fit,

(1850, VIII, 301-05)

and that, during his childhood, he found Nature and the shepherds with whom he communed were a "sure safeguard and defence/ Against the weight of meanness, selfish cares,/ Coarse manners, vulgar passions, that beat in/ On all sides from the ordinary world/ In which we traffic" (1805, VIII, 453-57; 1850, VIII, 318-22). Without this early defence against the evil of the world, Wordsworth explains in the A text, "the soul"

Receives no knowledge that can bring forth good--
No genuine insight ever comes to her--
Happy in this, that I with Nature walked,
Not having a too early intercourse
With the deformities of crowded life
And those ensuing laughters and contempts
Self-pleasing, which if we would wish to think
With admiration and respect of man
Will not permit us, but pursue the mind
That to devotion willingly would be raised,
Into the temple and the temple's heart.

(1805, VIII, 461-71)

Wordsworth revises these lines in the 1850 text in order to explain that,

without these defences,

the soul

Receives no knowledge that can bring forth good,
 No genuine insight ever comes to her.
 From the restraint of over-watchful eyes
 Preserved, I moved about, year after year,
 Happy, and now most thankful that my walk
 Was guarded from too early intercourse
 With the deformities of crowded life,
 And those ensuing laughters and contempts,
 Self-pleasing, which, if we would wish to think
 With a due reverence on earth's rightful lord,
 Here placed to be the inheritor of heaven,
 Will not permit us; but pursue the mind,
 That to devotion willingly would rise,
 Into the temple and the temple's heart.

(1850, VIII, 325-39)

This revision serves three important purposes. Unlike the 1805 lines it once again stresses the important point that Wordsworth makes in the first two Books and in Book V with regards to the importance of freedom to the child. It expresses overt thanks to the past, and it establishes not only Wordsworth's "admiration and respect for man," but his reverence towards man as well. In the Book VI revision, Wordsworth refers to man as "earth-born man" (l. 126), but here, he begins to establish once again, the paradox with respect to the human condition that he spoke of at the beginning of Book V; that is, that man is pitiable on the one hand because of his mortal destiny, and admirable on the other. Man is, he tells us here, "earth's rightful lord,/ Here placed to be the inheritor of heaven" (ll. 335-36). The love of "the human creature's absolute self" that Wordsworth expressed in the revision just preceding this one involves, for the older poet, a reverence of which he does not speak in the A text, a reverence for man's immortal destiny as well as his human destiny. The full implications of this revision are best explained by

yet another revision of the same type that Wordsworth makes in the second half of Book VIII, a revision that, for the sake of clarity, I shall discuss here before I discuss the final, significant revision in the first half of the Book.

After a lengthy explanation of how Nature led him to a love of Man, Wordsworth adds:

Then rose
 Man, inwardly contemplated, and present
 In my own being, to a loftier height--
 As of all visible natures crown, and first
 In capability of feeling what
 Was to be felt, in being rapt away
 By the divine effect of power and love--
 As, more than any thing we know, instinct
 With godhead, and by reason and by will
 Acknowledging dependency sublime.

(1805, VIII, 631-40)

The revised version of this passage reads as follows:

In the midst stood Man,
 Outwardly, inwardly contemplated,
 As, of all visible natures, crown, though born
 Of dust, and kindred to the worm, a Being,
 Both in perception and discernment, first
 In every capability of rapture,
 Through the divine effect of power and love;
 As, more than anything we know, instinct
 With godhead, and, by reason and by will,
 Acknowledging dependency sublime.

(1850, VIII, 485-94)

The Norton editors interpret these lines as "One of the most extreme of the Christian revisions of The Prelude, introduced in 1838/39" (Gill, p. 301), while de Selincourt complains that this, and similar revisions, "give a new colour to his work, and are foreign to its original spirit" (p. lxxii). But here, in the revision that we discussed just previous to this one, and in the revision of the Book VI lines, all that Wordsworth

is doing is clarifying the dualistic nature of man as he has come to know it. He is also clarifying the distinction between man, as an individual, and mankind, as an abstract concept. Burton suggests that, in these revisions, we have the secret of Wordsworth's paradoxical feelings towards man, "that Wordsworth, admiring man less, admires him more. It is man the individual who is dust of the earth, mankind in the abstract who is lord of natural law" (One Wordsworth, p. 32). What Burton says here is, essentially, true. In revisions such as this one, what Wordsworth seems to be trying to explain and establish is not so much an orthodox Christian position with regards to man as his more youthful realization of the divinity of man as a race. He is attempting to show that, as a youth, he had come to that stage in his development at which he was beginning to realize, from "Outwardly" and "inwardly" contemplating the human condition, that man, destined as he is to suffer his mortal fate, is, nonetheless, exalted, as a race, above that fate. What the youth is beginning to appreciate in man, besides man's "perception," "discernment," and "capability of rapture" (ll. 489-90) is his two-fold ability to sense his oneness with divinity ("instinct/ With godhead" [ll. 492-93]) and to use free will and "reason" (l. 493) in acknowledging his dependence on a power higher than himself. And, although the youthful Wordsworth will come both to admire man less and more (Michel Beaupuy) as an individual during the French Revolution, this overriding concept of the divinity of the human race will be an idea that will stay with him throughout his lifetime, and it will be the central idea that he will celebrate throughout the entire canon of his poetry.

The last significant revision in the first half of Book VIII does not further the narrative, but it does clarify an idea in the A text

that we should, perhaps, take into consideration. In the 1805 version, Wordsworth explains that, as a child, one of the pleasures of country life that he most enjoyed was listening to the old people of the area talk about the past and about the ancient celebrations such as the "maypole dance" (l. 198) that were once a part of rural life. "This, alas," he continues,

Was but a dream: the times had scattered all
 These lighter graces, and the rural ways
 And manners which it was my chance to see
 In childhood were severe and unadorned.

(1805, VIII, 203-07)

In the 1850 text, Wordsworth revises this to:

Love survives;
 But, for such purpose, flowers no longer grow:
 The times too sage, perhaps too proud, have dropped
 These lighter graces.

(1850, VIII, 156-59)

Wordsworth's assertion, in the revised lines, should be even more meaningful to us today than it was to the readers of his own era. He is not advocating a return to primitive ritual here. He is simply suggesting that man can become so involved in technological and other intellectual advances that he often feels that he is above enjoying the simple pleasures of life. These pleasures, although unsophisticated, added a charm and grace to the lives of those who participated in them, and here, Wordsworth, both as a poet and as a man, deeply regrets their passing. In this revision, Wordsworth tells us more about the growth of the human mind in general than he does about the growth of his own mind, and what he tells us is that if we become too "sage" or "proud" to enjoy the lighter pleasures of life, we miss some of life's most enjoyable moments.

In the second half of Book VIII, Wordsworth makes four major revisions besides the one I have already discussed above. He deletes lines 498-510 of the A text, an unsatisfactory passage in which he merely asks why he should speak of the various categories of simple people with whom he came into contact as a child in the Lake District. The passage does not offer an answer to the question that it poses, and, lodged as it is between a discussion of Nature's "inferior creatures" (l. 491) and a long discourse on the imagination, serves no real purpose in the narrative. Conversely, the second major revision is a lengthy addition of a descriptive passage that, interesting as it is as a pure description of the Lake District, does little to further the narrative (ll. 458-75). The third revision is one that I have already discussed in my examination of the Book VII revisions--the removal of the description of the father with the sickly infant from the conclusion of Book VIII (ll. 83-59) to Book VII, where it more clearly contrasts with Wordsworth's description of the mother and babe whom he encountered in a London theatre.

The fourth and final major revision is really a series of minor revisions in which Wordsworth rethinks the memory of a memory of his visit to London. In both versions, Wordsworth tells us that, at the moment he said to himself "The threshold [of London] is now overpast," "A weight of ages did at once descend//Upon [his] heart" (1805, VIII, 700, 703-4; 1850, VIII, 549, 552-53). But, he tells us, a few lines later, in the A text, "And I only now/ Remember that it was a thing divine" (ll. 709-10). In the 1850 version, however, we gain a clear insight into Wordsworth's philosophy of memory in the revision "yet with Time it dwells/ And grateful memory, as a thing divine" (ll. 558-59; my italics). Here, not only has memory modified Wordsworth's conception of London, but his

gratitude to the past has turned what was, at first, conceived as a hell into one of his most precious memories. Also, in this section, Wordsworth adds the important line, "Eyes that perceive through minds that can inspire" (l. 589) to his description of how he became reconciled to what he had first thought was a total chaos in London. He was partially assisted in finding an order in this chaos by "minds that can inspire," that is, by reading of literary hells in the masterpieces of Milton, Dante, and Virgil. It is only in the final version that Wordsworth can say of London, "There I conversed with majesty and power" (l. 631), and it is only in the final version that the poet of Nature is generous enough to concede that it was in London, and not in the Lake District that he came fully to realize the impact of the "sublime idea" (l. 673; his italics) of the divinity of man. By clarifying this important point, Wordsworth enables us to go back to Book VII, and read it with new understanding and interest, and he also re-awakens our interest in the narrative to come, because after learning this fact, we are more prepared to expect that the youthful Wordsworth will gain far more from his visit to France than will be immediately apparent from the older poet's first descriptions of his youthful experiences during this period. It will only be in the final Book of The Prelude that we will come to realize that what the youth converses with during the French Revolution is the "majesty and power" of his own mind.

CHAPTER V

"THIS SORROWFUL REVERSE": POLITICS AND THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

Those who associate Wordsworth with daffodils, mountains and mystical experiences should realize that the "poet of Nature" held very strong views on other matters:

What! have you so little knowledge of the nature of man as to be ignorant, that a time of revolution is not the season of true Liberty. Alas! the obstinacy & perversion of men is such that she is too often obliged to borrow the very arms of despotism to overthrow him, and in order to reign in peace must establish herself by violence.¹

The young Wordsworth was an avid supporter of the French Revolution and he spoke out strongly against those who held what he then considered useless and restricting, traditional views:

M^r Burke roused the indignation of all ranks of men, when by a refinement in cruelty superiour to that which in the East yokes the living to the dead he strove to persuade us that we and our posterity to the end of time were riveted to a constitution by the indissoluble compact of a dead parchment, and were bound to cherish a corse at the bosom, when reason might call aloud that it should be entombed. (Prose Works, I, 48)

Edmund Burke and his conservative political opinions were definitely not applauded by Wordsworth in the spring of 1793:

M^r Burke, in a philosophic lamentation over the extinction of Chivalry, told us that in those times vice lost half its evil, by losing all its grossness; infatuated moralist! (Prose Works, I, 35-36)

But after reading Wordsworth's severe condemnation of Bishop Watson and those who had "partaken of M^r Burke's intoxicating bowl" (Prose Works,

I, 49), we are shocked when we turn to The Prelude of 1850, and find:

Genius of Burke! forgive the pen seduced
 By specious wonders, and too slow to tell
 Of what the ingenuous, what bewildered men,
 Beginning to mistrust their boastful guides,
 And wise men, willing to grow wiser, caught,
 Rapt auditors! from thy most eloquent tongue--
 Now mute, for ever mute in the cold grave.
 I see him,--old, but vigorous in age,--
 Stand like an oak whose stag-horn branches start
 Out of its leafy brow, the more to awe
 The younger brethren of the grove. But some--
 While he forewarns, denounces, launches forth,
 Against all systems built on abstract rights,
 Keen ridicule; the majesty proclaims
 Of Institutes and Laws, hallowed by time;
 Declares the vital power of social ties
 Endeared by Custom; and with high disdain,
 Exploding upstart Theory, insists
 Upon the allegiance to which men are born,--
 Some--say at once a froward multitude--
 Murmur (for truth is hated, where not loved)
 As the winds fret within the AEolian cave,
 Galled by their monarch's chain. The times were big
 With ominous change, which, night by night, provoked
 Keen struggles, and black clouds of passion raised;
 But memorable moments intervened,
 When Wisdom, like the Goddess from Jove's brain,
 Broke forth in armour of resplendent words,
 Startling the Synod. Could a youth, and one
 In ancient story versed, whose breast had heaved
 Under the weight of classic eloquence,
 Sit, see, and hear, unthankful, uninspired?

(1850, VII, 512-43)²

Do we call this political apostasy or do we call it maturity? In order to arrive at a fair answer to that question, we must turn to Books IX, X, and XI of The Prelude, where, especially in the 1850 text, Wordsworth, himself, gives us a clear and convincing reply.

Havens's assertion that "It was the French Revolution that made Wordsworth a great poet" (Mind, p. 493) is true, because, as Karl Kroeber rightly points out, "without the French Revolution there would be no Prelude."³ Before, and even for some time after he personally became

involved in this foreign crisis, Wordsworth was a political idealist, naïve and inexperienced in affairs that caused mass suffering and destruction. As James Scoggins suggests, Wordsworth

. . . saw France not as a real place and the revolutionists not as real, and therefore imperfect, people; they were for him characters in a romance, and France was 'a country in romance.' Real events he prized 'but little otherwise than I prized/ Tales of the poets,' and he and Beaupuy conversed as Dion and Plato. Instead of suffering Frenchmen he saw characters from romantic fiction--Angelica, Erminia, knights and satyrs.⁴

In Books IX, X, and XI, Wordsworth describes how he gradually came to put aside these fanciful, childish notions and embrace the revolutionary cause, and, subsequently, how he came to reject it. The rise of the Jacobin extremists, the September massacres of 1792, the execution of the King, the French invasion of Holland, France's offer to give armed assistance to all nations who wished to overthrow their governments, and even the Reign of Terror itself, were tolerable to the poet as temporary and necessary evils that would, he thought, give rise to a new order. But what he could not accept, and what made him turn away in despondency from the revolution to Godwinian rationalism and mathematics, was England's declaration of war on France in 1793 and the inability of France's leaders to bring liberty, fraternity, and equality to the French people after the death of Robespierre. The subsequent rise to power of Napoleon and France's attack on neutral Switzerland in 1798 were the final events that caused Wordsworth to renounce the revolution forever as a bitter personal and universal disappointment. Without the experiences of the French Revolution, however, Wordsworth would never have come to realize the enormity of his personal, moral strength to rise above such shattering disappointments, and the story of the growth of his mind would

have lacked the power to persuade other men that they could do the same. Summing up the influence of the revolution on Wordsworth's artistic development, Thomas De Quincey rightly suggests:

Mighty was the transformation which it wrought in the whole economy of his thoughts; miraculous almost was the expansion which it gave to his human sympathies; chiefly in this it showed its effects--in throwing the thoughts inwards into grand meditations upon man, his final destiny, his ultimate capacities of elevation; and, secondly, in giving to the whole system of the thoughts and feelings a firmer tone, and a sense of the awful realities which surround the mind; by comparison with which the previous literary tastes seemed . . . fanciful and trivial.⁵

I

In Book IX, Wordsworth deals mainly with Wordsworth's eight-month residence in France from December, 1791 to July, 1792, and with a description of his conversion to the revolutionary cause under the guidance of Michel Beaupuy. Aside from one structural change, the deletion of the rambling account of Vaudracour and Julia from the 1850 text, Wordsworth makes very few changes, even of a minor nature, in Book IX. As Havens suggests, "This is probably due to the uncomplicated subject matter, which is mainly narration and simple exposition" (Mind, p. 495). But it is interesting to look at some of the minor revisions that he does make in this Book, because they give us a more morally balanced view of the revolution that does the 1805 version, and they delineate more clearly than does the A text, Wordsworth's initial idealistic response to the revolution and his subsequent change in attitude towards it, both as he actually experiences it and in the

intervening years between the composition of the 1805 and the 1850 texts. These revisions, along with other revisions that Wordsworth makes in Books X and XI, also give us a more vivid, realistic, and morally responsible assessment of the events of the time.

Why does Wordsworth go to revolutionary France in the first place? His answer, in the 1805 version, is this:

Free as a colt at pasture on the hills
 I ranged at large through the metropolis
 Month after month. Obscurely did I live,
 Not courting the society of men,
 By literature, or elegance, or rank,
 Distinguished--in the midst of things, it seemed,
 Looking as from a distance on the world
 That moved about me. Yet insensibly
 False preconceptions were corrected thus,
 And errors of the fancy rectified
 (Alike with reference to men and things),
 And sometimes from each quarter were poured in
 Novel imaginations and profound.
 A year thus spent, this field, with small regret--
 Save only for the bookstalls in the streets
 (Wild produce, hedgerow fruit, on all sides hung
 To lure the sauntering traveller from his track)--
 I quitted, and betook myself to France,
 Led thither, chiefly by a personal wish
 To speak the language more familiarly,
 With which intent I chose for my abode
 A city on the borders of the Loire.

(1805, IX, 18-39; my italics)

Before Wordsworth gives us his answer in the 1850 version, he carefully revises the preamble to the Book in order to make it plain that he would rather not tread this ground at all and retell the story of his youthful descent into hell:

EVEN as a river,--partly (it might seem)
 Yielding to old remembrances, and swayed
 In part by fear to shape a way direct,
 That would engulf him soon in the ravenous sea--
 Turns, and will measure back his course, far back,
 Seeking the very regions which he crossed

In his first outset; so have we, my Friend!
 Turned and returned with intricate delay.
 Or as a traveller, who has gained the brow
 Of some aerial Down, while there he halts
 For breathing-time, is tempted to review
 The region left behind him; and, if aught
 Deserving notice have escaped regard,
 Or been regarded with too careless eye,
 Strives, from that height, with one and yet one more,
 Last look, to make the best amends he may:
 So have we lingered. Now we start afresh
 With courage, and new hope risen on our toil.
 Fair greetings to this shapeless eagerness,
 Whene'er it comes! needful in work so long,
 Thrice needful to the argument which now
 Awaits us! Oh, how much unlike the past!

Free as a colt at pasture on the hill,
 I ranged at large, through London's wide domain,
 Month after month. Obscurely did I live,
 Not seeking frequent intercourse with men,
 By literature, or elegance, or rank,
 Distinguished. Scarcely was a year thus spent
 Ere I forsook the crowded solitude,
 With less regret for its luxurious pomp,
 And all the nicely-guarded shows of art,
 Than for the humble book-stalls in the streets,
 Exposed to eye and hand where'er I turned.

(1850, IX, 1-33)

It is in these opening lines, much more than in the opening lines of the 1805 version, that Wordsworth demonstrates his more mature moral response to his subject and clearly sets the stage for what will, indeed, be "heroic argument" (1805, III, 182; 1850, III, 184), an "ampler [and] more varied argument" (1805, I, 671; 1850, I, 644) than he has offered in the previous eight Books of the poem.

Geoffrey Hartman and Ross Woodman give us the clearest explanations of what Wordsworth is doing with his greatly expanded 1850 opening. According to Hartman:

It is for a good reason that the poet hesitates to consider his crisis as an epoch or a cut in time that separates before and after. He may be 'engulphed' (IX. 4) once again even as he

writes; the very act of confrontation, moreover, if too direct and hasty, would already be against Nature and show the soul's impatience--a divine impatience. Hence Wordsworth engages in a host of dilatory tactics and relaxes his style overmuch. Too casual, too pedantic, too matter-of-fact; always looking back once more before proceeding; and welcoming too suspiciously those 'shapeless' anticipatory motions of the soul which are its poetry, he creates a highly undramatic narrative and associates its mazy rhythm with Nature's own [here Hartman quotes 1850, IX, 1-8].

A second 'traveler' simile follows, delaying while talking about delay. This double simile prefaces in true epic fashion the book in which our poet's notes must change to tragic. By genial coincidence, it is now the ninth book, as if The Prelude again were synchronized with Paradise Lost. Wordsworth cannot avoid any longer the story of his great change, and echoes in 'Oh, how much unlike the past!' (IX. 22) the classical tragic formula: quantus mutatus ab illo. His gradualism does not cease, and his argument does not alter; but he is forced to recognize, despite turns and windings, forward and backward glances, the apocalyptic implication of his break with nature. (Wordsworth's Poetry, pp. 242-43)

Ross Woodman, in "Child and Patriot: Shifting perspectives in The Prelude," advances Hartman's explanation one step further:

Placed in the context of his fresh start which he describes as a 'shapeless eagerness' (IX; 19), Wordsworth's record of his childhood and youth becomes the forging of the hero's armor which Wordsworth, as the hero of his own romance, must now put on to do mental battle in France. The 'charm' of that armor, its power to render him invincible, is about to be tested.⁶

Wordsworth is, then, in some senses, a reluctant hero, and he is all the more reluctant in the final version, in which the image of the backward traveller greatly contrasts with the image of the eager hero of the revised opening of Book IV who "bounded down the hill shouting amain" (l. 12) and even with the image of the disillusioned youth who, upon entering London for the first time, was able to hold in "grateful memory, as a thing divine" (1850, VIII; 559) even those vulgar sights of the great city that, upon first sight, greatly disappointed him. Wordsworth does not tell us, in these opening lines, as he does in the A text, that

his past memory of France is "ungenial, hard/ To treat of, and forbidding in itself" (ll. 16-17); rather, he enacts within the 1850 lines themselves, the turns and returns and the "intricate delay" (l. 8) that inhibit him from relating this painful part of his past.

But relate it he does, and, in the 1850 text, he approaches his subject in a calmer and more mature manner. He deletes ll. 23-30 from the final text and, although de Selincourt objects to this deletion, by insisting that "the A text of this passage (23-30) gives as a whole a more discerning account of what London had contributed to the growth of his mind than the versions in D and E" (p. 584), Wordsworth was right to make the excision, because this "discerning account," as de Selincourt calls it, is not "discerning" at all. It is very much at variance with Wordsworth's argument in the rest of Book IX, the argument that, after the young man left London, he was, for quite a long period, still the victim of "False preconceptions" (l. 26) and "errors of the fancy" (l. 27) "with reference to men and things" (l. 28). Because of this obvious thematic discrepancy, and "since juvenile errors are [his] theme" (1805, X, 637; 1850, XI, 54; my italics) in these sections of The Prelude dealing with the revolution, Wordsworth's deletions of these excessive claims in the final text prevent an undermining of the tone of responsibility and authenticity in the opening of the Book. In the final version, Wordsworth simply suggests that whatever small benefit he did derive from his stay in London came, not as a result of that city's broadening, cultural influence upon him, but as a result of his reading while he was in its "vast domain." The art and pomp of London did not impress him, and the loneliness that he experienced amid the London crowds was one that he would never forget, the loneliness of a "crowded

solitude" (l. 29).

Wordsworth also deletes from the final text the claim that he set out for France "chiefly" in order "To speak the language more familiarly" (1805, IX, 36-37). He simply asserts, instead, that "France lured [him] forth" (l. 34). With this deletion, he removes a rather unbelievable claim, since it is highly unlikely that this truly was his purpose for visiting France. But, as F. M. Todd reminds us, "As in the case of the earlier excursion, we must beware of taking this somewhat confused testimony as evidence of motives about which Wordsworth did not care to be specific, but in which we are particularly interested."⁷ Todd does add, however, that "we may at least remark that, if France did 'lure him forth', it was a France in revolution" (Politics, p. 38).

In both versions of The Prelude, Wordsworth gives us a vivid description of the early days of the revolution as he describes what he saw during his initial stopover in Paris and during his longer stay at Orleans. Here is the 1805 account of his visit to Paris:

In both her clamorous halls,
The National Synod and the Jacobins,
I saw the revolutionary power
Toss like a ship at anchor, rocked by storms;
The Arcades I traversed in the Palace huge
Of Orleans, coasted round and round the line
Of tavern, brothel, gaming-house, and shop,
Great rendezvous of worst and best, the walk
Of all who had a purpose, or had not;
I stared and listened with a stranger's ears,
To hawkers and haranguers, hubbub wild,
And hissing factionists with ardent eyes,
In knots, or pairs, or single, ant-like swarms
Of builders and subverters, every face
That hope or apprehension could put on--
Joy, anger, and vexation, in the midst
Of gaiety and dissolute idleness.

(1805, IX, 46-62)

Wordsworth leaves lines 46-57 unchanged in the final text. His later assessment of the "factionists" themselves, however, changes somewhat. Here, he describes them as a mixture of both good and evil, "Builders and subverters," whose attitudes vacillate readily between "hope" and "apprehension," and whose emotions range from "joy" to "anger, and vexation." In the final text, however, they become:

. . . hissing Factionists with ardent eyes,
 In knots and pairs, or single. Not a look
 Hope takes, or Doubt or Fear are forced to wear,
 But seemed there present; and I scanned them all,
 Watched every gesture uncontrollable,
 Of anger, and vexation, and despite,
 All side by side, and struggling face to face,
 With gaiety and dissolute idleness.

(1850, IX, 59-66)

This is the youthful traveller's first encounter with the revolutionaries, and the more mature poet depicts the scene, not merely as a half-hopeful, half-despairing one, but one that shows promise of the violence and disruption that will soon be very much a part of France. This mob, unlike the mob that Wordsworth describes in the 1805 text, demonstrates, not merely restlessness, but uncontrollable agitation, hatred, and despite. The members of the mob no longer appear to be working together for a common cause; rather, they appear to be set, even against each other, "struggling face to face" in an atmosphere of false gaiety and purposelessness.

Wordsworth also removes from the 1850 text the unconvincing 1805 claim that, during this early period in France, he had been "glad-- could living man be otherwise?--" (l. 69). He continues, instead, especially in the final version, to create the impression that, during this period of time, he was somewhat immature, because, as he explains,

he was excessively moved and inspired more by works of art than he was by the "various sights" (1850, IX, 74) to which he was then exposed. The revolutionary scenes

Appeared to recompense the traveller's pains
 Less than the painted Magdalene of Le Brun,
 A beauty exquisitely wrought, with hair
 Dishevelled, gleaming eyes, and rueful cheek
 Pale and bedropped with everflowing tears.

(1850, IX, 76-80)

These 1850 lines are superior to those in the A text because they are, unlike the earlier lines, an explicit judgment, not only of the painting itself, but of the youthful observer. Wordsworth's more precise and detailed references to the Magdalene's physical features, features that suggest deep, even frenzied, perpetual sorrow, give us a deeper insight into the mind of the sentimental, romantic, young viewer. We gain from the A text. In these lines, Wordsworth is not demonstrating "his chronic inadequacy as an art critic," as George L. Nesbitt suggests. He is giving us a more mature and steady appraisal of himself at a time when the suffering depicted in art moved him much more than the suffering he saw about him in daily life.

Wordsworth makes two minor changes as he explains that his reading prior to coming to France had prepared him inadequately for the events that he was to witness in that country. "Like others I had read, and eagerly/ Sometimes, the master pamphlets of the day" (ll. 96-97). He modifies this slightly in the final version to "Like others, I had skimmed, and sometimes read/ With care, the master pamphlets of the day" (ll. 96-97). The more mature poet would, seemingly, have us believe that his youthful interest in the revolution, at least initially, was not as

deep as he claims it to have been in 1805. The change once more reinforces the impression that we get of the young man throughout the revised Book IX, the impression that he was almost completely out of touch with the reality of the situation in France. It did not take the youth long, however, to realize that the accounts that he had previously read and the actual happenings in France were two quite different things. "Now do I feel how I have been deceived,/ Reading of nations and their works in faith" (ll. 173-74) Wordsworth explains in the A text. By changing this to "Now do I feel how all men are deceived" (l. 170; my italics) in the final version, Wordsworth universalizes his earlier assertion about the revolution, while also reaffirming the important idea that runs through the final version (and that this study stresses about the final version), the idea that it is limiting, even dangerous, to accept the accounts of others about certain situations without independently investigating those situations for ourselves.

Wordsworth explains, in both versions, that when he first came to France, he spent a great deal of time frequenting "the formal haunts of men,/ Whom, in the city, privilege of birth/ Sequestered from the rest" (1850, IX, 114-16). He claims, however, that this soon

Proved tedious, and I gradually withdrew
 Into a noisier world, and thus ere long
 Became a patriot, and my heart was all
 Given to the people, and my love was theirs.

(1850, IX, 121-24)

Wordsworth, himself, had never had to fight for personal liberty. He explains, in both versions, that, during his youth in England, he had taken liberty and equality for granted, because, during that time, he had scarcely ever encountered anyone, "whether boy or man,/ [Who] was vested

with attention or respect/ Through claims of wealth or blood" (1805, IX, 224-26; 1850, IX, 220-22). Nor, he claims in the A text,

was it least
Of many debts which afterwards I owed
To Cambridge and an academic life,
That something there was holden up to view
Of a republic, where all stood thus far
Upon equal ground, that they were brothers all
In honour, as of one community.

(1805, IX, 226-32)

Carl Woodring, in Politics in English Romantic Poetry, objects to the assertions that Wordsworth makes in these lines:

In truth, as others have remarked, the 'something' of a republic held before him must have been an ideal intensified by the notable absence of republican virtues from the actual Cambridge of his day. But Wordsworth is not only taking a case; he is making a case. From the only intimate knowledge conceivable, the knowledge of his own mind, he is showing how to rescue a typical young man of the time from representative bewilderment.⁹

In the final version, however, Wordsworth does not appear to wish to "rescue" anyone. He tones down this sentimentalized and idealized view of Cambridge, even to the extent of not mentioning the name of the university at all. His more generalized "academic institutes" (l. 224) in that version has the result of turning our minds back, not especially to Cambridge, but to the Hawkshead grammar school of Wordsworth's youth, so that we can accept, with much less skepticism, his assertions in these lines, because we know that it was at Hawkshead, more than at Cambridge, that "Distinction lay open to all that came" (1805, IX, 234; 1850, IX, 230).

Wordsworth makes yet another minor change as he describes his upbringing in England. His love of personal liberty, he says, is attributable to not only academic institutes. In the A text, he explains

that he must

Add unto this, subservience from the first
To God and Nature's single sovereignty
(Familiar presences of awful power).

(1805, IX, 237-39)

He emends this claim slightly in the 1850 text:

Add unto this, subservience from the first
To presences of God's mysterious power
Made manifest in Nature's sovereignty.

(1850, IX, 233-35)

In these lines, Nature is still sovereign to Wordsworth.¹⁰ It is the mysterious power of God demonstrated by Nature, along with the power of Nature itself, that he records here and credits with his personal love of "mountain liberty" (1805, IX, 242; 1850, IX, 238), a liberty that contrasts vividly in his youthful (and mature) mind with the unsettled, restrictive conditions in France.

Having had these early experiences in his youth, Wordsworth can neither accept nor admire the views of the Royalist soldiers with whom (he tells us in the A text) he "consorted" (l. 268) for a brief period after coming to France. While he removes the phrase "While I consorted with these royalists" (1805, IX, 268) from the final version, Wordsworth does not delete his description of how their callousness toward the ordinary people affected him, nor does he delete his final, youthful opinion of them. In fact, the italicized phrases that he adds to the 1850 description of these men demonstrates that the more mature Wordsworth is not as conservative as critics would have us believe, because they demonstrate that his later opinion of the Royalists was even more strongly negative than his youthful view of them:

No wonder, then, if advocates like these,
Inflamed by passion, blind with prejudice,
And stung with injury, at this riper day,
 Were impotent to make my hopes put on
 The shape of theirs, my understanding bend
 In honour to their honour; zeal, which yet
 Had slumbered, now in opposition burst
 Forth like a Polar summer: every word
 They uttered was a dart, by counter-winds
 Blown back upon themselves; their reason seemed
 Confusion-stricken by a higher power
 Than human understanding, their discourse
 Maimed, spiritless; and, in their weakness strong,
 I triumphed.

(1850, IX, 249-62; my italics)

But not all of the Royalists whom Wordsworth came to know in his early days in France shared these bigoted and, to Wordsworth, inhumane views. In both versions, Wordsworth gives us a lengthy description of Michel Beaupuy, a Girondin, and "A patriot, thence rejected by the rest,/ And with an oriental loathing spurned/ As of a different caste" (1805, IX, 296-98; 1850, IX, 290-92).

Beaupuy is "an upright man and tolerant" (l. 337) Wordsworth tells us in the A text, but in the 1850 version, he becomes a man "to all intolerance indisposed" (l. 329; my italics). But in order to appreciate fully what Beaupuy meant to the young Wordsworth, we must go back to Book VIII for a moment, and recall how carefully Wordsworth describes the shepherd there. The Norton editors strongly disapprove of Wordsworth's revision of this description. "The alpine shepherd of 1805, VIII, 381," they complain, "'springs up with a bound, and then away!,' in 1850 he can do nothing so simple:

Then from his couch he starts; and now his feet
 Crush out a livelier fragrance from the flowers
 Of lowly thyme, by Nature's skill enwrought
 In the wild turf.

(1850, VIII, 241-44)"

(Gill, p. 523)

Wordsworth does not regard this shepherd as a real person, but as an abstract ideal, a man who is perfectly at one with Nature in a pastoral setting. And, as David Perkins rightly points out, "Throughout Wordsworth's poetry there is a striking difference between the presentation of natural objects, so vivid, concrete, and detailed, and the presentation of human beings, so often mere, stark abstractions. Nature was loved as a reality, man as an idea" (Sincerity, p. 116). But notice, now, the manner in which Wordsworth describes the real man, his friend Michel Beaupuy:

Injuries

Made him more gracious, and his nature then
 Did breathe its sweetness out most sensibly,
 As aromatic flowers on Alpine turf,
 When foot hath crushed them.

(1850, IX, 294-98; his italics)

At no point in The Prelude does Wordsworth more successfully delineate a major step forward in the growth of his youthful mind than here. He is not idealizing Beaupuy in this description. Rather, he is bringing his idealized abstraction to life, in order to show that, as a youth, he was beginning to understand, at this point, that real men are truly more wonderful than any idealized man he can call to mind.

And wonderful Beaupuy was. He and Wordsworth spoke together of many things,

about the end
 Of civil government, and its wisest forms;
 Of ancient loyalty, and chartered rights,
 Custom and habit, novelty and change;
 Of self-respect, and virtue in the few
 For patrimonial honour set apart,
 And ignorance in the labouring multitude.

(1850, IX, 322-28; my italics)

Among the subjects that the two friends discussed were

the miseries
 Of royal courts, and that voluptuous life
 Unfeeling, where the man who is of soul
 The meanest thrives the most; where dignity,
 True personal dignity, abideth not;
 A light, a cruel, and vain world cut off
 From the natural inlets of just sentiment,
 From lowly sympathy and chastening truth;
Where good and evil interchange their names,
And thirst for bloody spoils abroad is paired
With vice at home.

(1850, IX, 344-54; my italics)

The italicized lines of the 1850 revision once again point out that the more mature Wordsworth does not hesitate to bring to the attention of his readers his strong views on the royal courts of Europe and the destruction and bloodshed caused by these courts, both at home and abroad, in their quest for riches.

Wordsworth claims that he and Beaupuy paid close attention to the people as they walked about the countryside conversing on various subjects. In the A text, he claims that they "beheld/ A living confirmation of the whole/ Before us in a people risen up/ Fresh as the morning star" (ll. 389-92). In the 1850 version, however, Wordsworth's description of Frenchmen as "a people from the depth/ Of shameful imbecility uprisen" (ll. 383-84) sounds a much stronger note that might easily be misconstrued until we realize, as Burton points out (One

Wordsworth, pp. 65-66), that Wordsworth does not blame the people themselves for their "imbecility," but, rather, he blames the "false teaching" (1850, X, 215) to which they have long been subjected.

But even on these walks with Beauvuy, the young Wordsworth often thought of less serious subjects. As he tells us in the A text, a romantic French landscape often distracted him:

Often in such place
 From earnest dialogues I slipped in thought,
 And let remembrance steal to other times
 When hermits, from their sheds and caves forth strayed,
 Walked by themselves, so met in shades like these,
 And if a devious traveller was heard
 Approaching from a distance, as might chance,
 With speed and echoes loud of tramping hoofs
 From the hard floor reverberated, then
 It was Angelica thundering through the woods
 Upon her palfrey, or that gentler maid
 Erminia, fugitive as fair as she.
 Sometimes I saw methought a pair of knights
 Joust underneath the trees, that as in storm
 Did rock above their heads.

(1805, IX, 445-59)

Those critics who accuse Wordsworth of trying to distort the truth by making himself appear more intelligent and mature as a youth when he revises the poem for the last time, should note what he does to passages such as the one above. When he revises passages such as this, he does not idealize his youthful self, but rather, he makes himself appear even more foolish and romantic than he does in the A text:

Oft amid those haunts,
 From earnest dialogues I slipped in thought,
 And let remembrances steal to other times,
 When, o'er those interwoven roots, moss-clad,
 And smooth as marble or a waveless sea,
 Some Hermit, from his cell forth-strayed, might pace
 In sylvan meditation undisturbed;
 As on the pavement of a Gothic church
 Walks a lone Monk, when service hath expired,
 In peace and silence. But if e'er was heard,--

Heard, though unseen,--a devious traveller,
 Retiring or approaching from afar
 With speed and echoes loud of trampling hoofs
 From the hard floor reverberated, then
 It was Angelica thundering through the woods
 Upon her palfrey, or that gentle maid
 Erminia, fugitive as fair as she.
 Sometimes methought I saw a pair of knights
 Joust underneath the trees, that as in storm
 Rocked high above their heads.

(1850, IX, 437-56)

Although a minor revision, this is an extremely important one, because in it, Wordsworth is stressing the dangers inherent in an excessive dependence on the imagination. People, real human beings, are suffering all around the youth, but he does not see them. He sees only the France of romance, a "Hermit" in "sylvan meditation" (ll. 442-43), a "lone Monk" who walks, ironically enough, "In peace and silence" (ll. 445-46), "moss clad" and "interwoven roots" that are "smooth as marble or a waveless sea" (ll. 440-41), and knights jousting underneath the trees. It takes Michel Beaupuy to point out to the young romantic with a penchant for the Gothic that the "sea" around him is not waveless, that the "storm" rocking about him is real, and that Angelica "Upon her palfrey" (ll. 451-52) is, in reality, a "hunger-bitten girl" (1805, IX, 512; 1850, IX, 510) with a starving cow.

The most moving account of the results of the revolution that Wordsworth gives us in Book IX is this description of the "hunger-bitten girl" whom he and Beaupuy encounter one day as they walk along discussing the affairs of France. Here is the 1805 version:

And when we chanced
 One day to meet a hunger-bitten girl
 Who crept along fitting her languid self
 Unto a heifer's motion--by a cord
 Tied to her arm, and picking thus from the lane

Its sustenance, while the girl with her two hands
 Was busy knitting in a heartless mood
 Of solitude--and at the sight my friend
 In agitation said, 'Tis against that
 Which we are fighting', I with him believed
 Devoutly that a spirit was abroad
 Which could not be withstood, that poverty,
 At least like this, would in a little time
 Be found no more, that we should see the earth
 Unthwarted in her wish to recompense
 The industrious, and the lowly child of toil.

(1805, IX, 511-26)

Wordsworth makes only minor revisions in this passage, but they are important revisions in that they point out the similarities between this girl and the Discharged Soldier of Book IV. In the A text, Wordsworth describes the Soldier as a man with "bare" hands (l. 410). He emends this to "pallid" hands (l. 394) in the final text. Similarly, he revises "the poor unhappy man" (l. 501) to "the patient man" (l. 465) in the final text. In the passage quoted above, "the girl with her two hands" (l. 516) becomes "the girl with pallid hands" (l. 514) while Wordsworth revises his 1805 description of her as "The industrious, and the lowly child of toil" (l. 526) to "The meek, the lowly, patient child of toil" (l. 524). With these two seemingly minor revisions, then, Wordsworth succeeds not only in adding narrative unity to the poem that is not present in the 1805 version, but he also universalizes human suffering. In the 1850 version of these lines, the underlying assertion is that the "Abject" (1850, IX, 521) poverty that Wordsworth sees about him in France is, like the travelling cripple whom he describes in Book VII, "encountered here and everywhere" (1850, VII, 202). It is the sight of this young girl, coupled with the memory of the blind beggar, the travelling cripple, and the Discharged Soldier, that finally converts the fanciful, idealistic, young poet into an avid revolutionary.

Wordsworth should have ended Book IX on this strong note. He continues on, however, in the 1805 text, to relate the monotonous saga of Vaudracour and Julia, a tale that he professes was told to him by Beaupuy,¹¹ but that is, in reality, the disguised and greatly modified account of his own illicit affair with Annette Vallon. Wordsworth deletes this rambling narrative from the 1850 version, and Burton devotes an entire chapter (pp. 92-104) to a defence of his reasons for doing so. A few examples from the 1805 story, however, should be enough to convince any reader that the deletion is a wise one. Here, then, in very abridged form, is the heart-rending account of the star-crossed young couple, beginning shortly before Julia gives birth to Vaudracour's illegitimate child:

A day or two before her childbed time
 Was Vaudracour restored to her, and, soon
 As he might be permitted to return
 Into her chamber after the child's birth,
 The master of the family begged that all
 The household might be summoned, doubting not
 But that they might receive impressions then
 Friendly to human kindness. Vaudracour
 (This heard I from one present at the time)
 Held up the new-born infant in his arms
 And kissed, and blessed, and covered it with tears,
 Uttering a prayer that he might never be
 As wretched as his father. Then he gave
 The child to her who bare it, and she too
 Repeated the same prayer--took it again,
 And, muttering something faintly afterwards,
 He gave the infant to the standers-by,
 And wept in silence upon Julia's neck.

(1805, IX, 779-96)

Here is another brief account of Julia's heroic lover:

oftener was he seen
 Propping a pale and melancholy face
 Upon the mother's bosom, resting thus
 His head upon one breast, while from the other

The babe was drawing in its quiet food.
 At other times, when he in silence long
 And fixedly had looked upon her face,
 He would exclaim, 'Julia, how much thine eyes
 Have cost me!'

(1805, IX, 811-19)

Meanwhile, the poor heroine, her indiscretion unforgiven by her father,
 learns that

she must retire
 To a convent and there be immured.

(1805, IX, 839-40)

The innocent victim of this melodrama,

after a short time, by some mistake
 Or indiscretion of the father, died,

(1805, IX, 907-08)

And Vaudracour,

From that time forth he never uttered word
 To any living,

(1805, IX, 912-13)

but

in those solitary shades
 His days he wasted, an imbecile mind.

(1805, IX, 934-35)

Even when Wordsworth deletes some of the more maudlin passages from this
 tale and modifies several others in an attempt to make the later version
 (published as a separate poem in 1820) more appealing, "there remains,"
 as Havens rightly points out, "an incongruous mixture of youthful romance
 and dreary realism which it would be most difficult to harmonize and,

with a hero like Vaudracour, to make effective" (Mind, p. 512). Burton defends the 1820 version of the poem by claiming that "Wordsworth's vacillating Vaudracour, real though he was, did not attract his public, and largely by tradition, I suspect, this is still not considered one of Wordsworth's better poems" (One Wordsworth, p. 101). Burton is partially right. "Vaudracour and Julia" is definitely not considered to be one of Wordsworth's better poems.¹² I suspect, however, that tradition has little to do with this evaluation.

Although Wordsworth spares us this tedious saga in the 1850 text, the ending of Book IX has little to recommend it. He simply tells us that he is not going to tell us this story, and that if we wish, we may read it at our leisure in its separate, 1820 form.

II

In Book X Wordsworth describes the situation in France from October, 1792 to the fall of Robespierre on July 28, 1794. In the first 189 lines (224 in the 1850 text), Wordsworth gives us a vivid, first-hand account of the happenings in Paris just prior to England's entry into the war against France. The Norton editors explain the situation:

Louis XVI was imprisoned, and effectively deposed, on August 10, 1792. The Coalition armies (1805: 'congregated host') of Austrian and Prussian troops invaded France nine days later, but without doing harm ('innocuously') because on September 20 the French achieved a highly important victory at Valmy, and the invaders retreated to the Rhine. (Gill, p. 358)

As he does at the beginning of Book VI, Wordsworth once again uses the "country versus the city" motif to begin his narrative. Here, however,

the city that he is about to enter is a far cry from the peaceful, academic town of Cambridge.

Wordsworth begins both versions of Book X by telling us that "It was a beautiful and silent day" (l. 1) when he left Orleans (and Annette) for Paris in late October, 1792. But in the 1850 text, he quickly follows up this opening statement by telling us that it was "A day as beautiful as e'er was given/ To soothe regret, though deepening what it soothed" (ll. 4-5). These lines are moving because, at one and the same time, they refer back to Wordsworth's pleasant associations with Beauvau and Annette, and ahead to his forthcoming disillusionment with the revolution. But when he enters Paris, Wordsworth is not yet disillusioned. In the 1850 text, he tells us:

The State, as if to stamp the final seal
On her security, and to the world
Show what she was, a high and fearless soul,
Exulting in defiance, or heart-stung
By sharp resentment, or belike to taunt
With spiteful gratitude the baffled League,
That had stirred up her slackening faculties
Into a new transition, when the King was crushed,
Spared not the empty throne, and in proud haste
Assumed the body and venerable name
Of a Republic.

(1850, X, 31-41)

The revisions that Wordsworth makes in this passage are quite interesting, because they demonstrate a slight shift in tone from the lines in the A text. In the 1805 version, Wordsworth tells us that the state acted "in a spirit of thanks" (l. 27) towards her enemies, and that she had "assumed with joy" (l. 29) the name of a Republic. Here, Wordsworth does not speak of joy, and it is only with a defiant, "spiteful gratitude" (l. 36) that France regards the coalition forces. In her comment on this

passage, Burton tells us:

Here in plain language he adds his conviction of the Allies' responsibility in re-arousing the revolutionary terror. England to his mind is still greatly to blame for entering the war against France. He retains this opinion. The war against Napoleon is justifiable. The earlier war against the French people is not. Nowhere in The Prelude is any revision that indicates a change of Wordsworth's attitude on this point. (One Wordsworth, p. 67)

Burton is only half right in her assertions, because during the period of which Wordsworth speaks in this passage, England had not as yet entered the war with France. He is, here, castigating the continental powers for their interference with French affairs, but the tone in which he does it indicates just a slight modification in his previous, wholehearted approval of and joy in revolutionary France's new government. It is no longer "enflamed with hope" (1805, X, 38), then, that Wordsworth returns to Paris, but only "Cheered" (1850, X, 48) with hope that he enters that city.

Wordsworth makes only minor revisions in his description of his walk through Paris to "The prison where the unhappy Monarch lay" (1805, X, 42; 1850, X, 51) and in his description of the Paris night scene. He does, however, change significantly his description of an event that Wordsworth would have us believe occurred on his second day back in Paris --Louvet's denunciation of Robespierre. Here is the 1805 account:

Whereat,
When a dead pause ensued and no one stirred,
In silence of all present, from his seat
Louvet walked singly through the avenue
And took his station in the Tribune, saying,
'I, Robespierre, accuse thee!' 'Tis well known
What was the issue of that charge, and how
Louvet was left alone without support
Of his irresolute friends.

(1805, X, 95-103)

This is the revised version of the event:

whereat,
 When a dead pause ensued, and no one stirred,
 In silence of all present, from his seat
 Louvet walked single through the avenue,
 And took his station in the Tribune, saying,
 'I, Robespierre, accuse thee!' Well is known
 The inglorious issue of that charge, and how
 He, who had launched the startling thunderbolt,
 The one bold man, whose voice the attack had sounded,
 Was left without a follower to discharge
 His perilous duty, and retire lamenting
 That Heaven's best aid is wasted upon men
 Who to themselves are false.

(1850, X, 108-20)

The 1850 account is much more sympathetic to Louvet, a moderate, whom the Norton editors tell us "denounced Robespierre as a would-be dictator on October 29, 1792, in the National convention" (Gill, p. 364). In this revision, more than in the A text, Wordsworth insinuates the dangers inherent in speaking out against leaders such as Robespierre and the indecisiveness (and cowardice) of the Girondin leaders in their refusal to back up this brave spokesman. It is this indecisiveness and lack of directed purpose after the death of Robespierre that prevent the French leaders from bringing about the liberty, equality, and fraternity that they had promised after the death of the dictator.

But despite his more mature awareness, in the 1850 text, of what was actually going on in France during this period, Wordsworth does not delete, from that version, his youthful hope that "power [would] arrive/ From the four quarters of the winds to do/ For France, what without help she could not do,/ A work of honour" (1850, X, 139-42). And he still retains, in the final version, his absolute certainty, as a youth, that great benefits would follow from the revolution: "from all

doubts/ Or trepidation for the end of things/ Far was I, far as angels
are from guilt" (ll. 143-45). Most important, however, he retains, in
the 1850 Prelude, an assertion that seems to me to negate most claims
that he toned down his youthful involvement with the revolution:

Yet would I at this time with willing heart
Have undertaken for a cause so great
Service however dangerous.

(1850, X, 152-54)

The Wordsworth of both 1805 and 1850 is still an idealist, and to him,
"man is only weak through his mistrust/ And want of hope where evidence
divine/ Proclaims to him that hope should be most sure" (1850, X, 161-63).
He still maintains, in the final version, his feeling that "a mind, whose
rest/ Is where it ought to be, in self-restraint,/ In circumspectio
simplicity,/ Falls rarely in entire discomfiture/ Below its aim, or meets
with, from without,/ A treachery that foils it or defeats" (ll. 173-78).
To these lines, Wordsworth adds the following in the 1850 text:

And, lastly, if the means on human will,
Frail human will, dependent should betray
Him who too boldly trusted them, I felt
That 'mid the loud distractions of the world
A sovereign voice subsists within the soul,
Arbiter undisturbed of right and wrong,
Of life and death, in majesty severe
Enjoining, as may best promote the aims
Of truth and justice, either sacrifice,
From whatsoever region of our cares
Or our infirm affections Nature pleads,
Earnest and blind, against the stern decree.

(1850, X, 179-90)

In this digression from the central narrative, Wordsworth makes an
important point, a point that illustrates not only his belief in the
revolution, but his belief in man. He insists here that, even though a

man should fail in an attempt "to promote the aims/ Of truth and justice," the very fact that he tries to further these causes by following the dictates of his conscience, affirms that he is, in no sense, a failure. And, if he should have to sacrifice his life for that which he believes in, the sacrifice would never be in vain.

Wordsworth continues, in the 1805 text, to tell us that France needed one "paramount mind" (l. 179) to lead her in her quest for freedom:

Well might my wishes be intense, my thoughts
 Strong and perturbed, not doubting at that time--
 Creed which ten shameful years have not annulled--
 But that the virtue of one paramount mind
 Would have abashed those impious crests, have quelled
 Outrage and bloody power, and in despite
 Of what the people were through ignorance
 And immaturity, and in the teeth
 Of desperate opposition from without,
 Have cleared a passage for just government,
 And left a solid birthright to the state,
 Redeemed according to example given
 By ancient lawgivers.

(1805, X, 176-88)

Wordsworth makes two important changes in the 1850 version of these lines. The first is his omission of "Creed which ten shameful years have not annulled" (l. 178), a deletion that de Selincourt claims "not only points to a loss of faith, it removes the implication that his own country bore her part in the shame which those years brought forth" (p. lxvii). But this is simply not true. By the time he revises the poem for the last time, Wordsworth fully realizes that the "ten years" of which he speaks in the A text were not "shameful," but highly productive for him as far as insight into the political situation was concerned. And, as far as removing "the implication that his own country bore her part in the shame," we shall soon see that, in no instance, does Wordsworth ever tone

down his anger over England's intervention in the war against France. The second important revision in this passage comes in Wordsworth's clarification of his statement about the "ignorance" (l. 182) of the French people. In the 1850 text, as I have already pointed out (see pp. 280-81 above), he refers to Frenchmen as people who were "Through ignorance and false teaching, sadder proof/ Of immaturity" (1850, X, 215-16). It is the teaching to which these people had been exposed, and not the people themselves, then, that Wordsworth castigates in the final text.

At this point in the narrative, Wordsworth tells us, in the 1805 version, "In this frame of mind/ Reluctantly to England I returned,/ Compelled by nothing less than absolute want/ Of funds for my support" (ll. 188-91). In the 1850 version, he suggests that his departure for England was made even more reluctantly than in the manner described in the A text:

In this frame of mind,
Dragged by a chain of harsh necessity,
So seemed it,--now I thankfully acknowledge,
Forced by the gracious providence of Heaven,--
To England I returned

(1850, X, 221-25)

Here, Wordsworth shows both his extreme reluctance to leave the revolutionary scene, and his belief that he has been spared what would almost certainly have been a dire fate if he had remained:

A poor mistaken and bewildered offering,--
Should to the breast of Nature have gone back,
With all my resolutions, all my hopes,
A Poet only to myself, to men
Useless, and even, beloved Friend! a soul
To thee unknown.

(1850, X, 231-35)

De Selincourt is quite wrong about Wordsworth's description of his return to England:

The originally bare account of his reluctant return homewards was elaborated into a passionately patriotic tribute to Albion's sacred shores, hardly expressing his sentiment at the time of which it was written. (p. lxxvii)

Wordsworth's 1850 description of this return is not "a passionately patriotic tribute" at all:

Twice had the trees let fall
Their leaves, as often Winter had put on
His hoary crown, since I had seen the surge
Beat against Albion's shore, since ear of mine
Had caught the accents of my native speech
Upon our native country's sacred ground.
A patriot of the world, how could I glide
Into communion with her sylvan shades,
Erewhile my tuneful haunt? It pleased me more
To abide in the great City, where I found
The general air still busy with the stir
Of that first memorable onset made
By a strong levy of humanity
Upon the traffickers in Negro blood;
Effort which, though defeated, had recalled
To notice old forgotten principles,
And through the nation spread a novel heat
Of virtuous feeling.

(1850, X, 236-53; my italics)

Here, Wordsworth tells us, as he does not in the A text, that he cannot simply "glide/ Into communion" with the "sylvan shades" of England; and forget what he has seen in France.¹³ He is more at home in London, where there was much talk about the bill being circulated then in the House of Commons for the abolition of the slave trade. Although Wordsworth admits "That this particular strife had wanted power/ To rivet [his] affections" (1850, X, 254-55; his italics), he welcomed it as yet another sign of the growing democracy of the age, and, in both versions, he insists, that he had felt at the time,

That, if France prospered, good men would not long
 Pay fruitless worship to humanity,
 And this most rotten branch of human shame,
 Object, so seemed it, of superfluous pains,
 Would fall together with its parent tree.

(1850, X, 258-62)

Wordsworth continues his narrative, in both versions, by telling us precisely how he had felt when England declared war on France. Here is the 1805 account:

Such was my then belief--that there was one,
 And only one, solicitude for all.
 And now the strength of Britain was put forth
 In league with the confederated host;
 Not in my single self alone I found
 But in the minds of all ingenuous youth,
 Change and subversion from this hour. No shock
 Given to my mortal nature had I known
 Down to that very moment--neither lapse
 Nor turn of sentiment--that might be named
 A revolution, save at this one time:
 All else was progress on the self-same path
 On which with a diversity of pace
 I had been travelling; this, a stride at once
 Into another region. True it is,
 'Twas not concealed with what ungracious eyes
 Our native rulers from the very first
 Had looked upon regenerated France;
 Nor had I doubted that this day would come--
 But in such contemplation I had thought
 Of general interests only, beyond this
 Had never once foretasted the event.
 Now had I other business, for I felt
 The ravage of this most unnatural strife
 In my own heart; there lay it like a weight,
 At enmity with all the tenderest springs
 Of my enjoyments. I, who with the breeze
 Had played, a green leaf on the blessed tree
 Of my beloved country--nor had wished
 For happier fortune than to wither there--
 Now from my pleasant station was cut off,
 And tossed about in whirlwinds.

(1805, X, 227-58)

Wordsworth makes several interesting revisions in the 1850 version of this passage. In the first place, he does not begin a new verse paragraph,

as he does in the 1805 text, and, by doing this, he avoids a certain loss of continuity that is evident in the A text. He next deletes the weak, first two lines of the A text, substituting, instead, a half question that leads directly and forcefully into the subject at hand:

What, then, were my emotions, when in arms
 Britain put forth her free-born strength in league,
 Oh, pity and shame! with those confederate Powers!

(1850, X, 263-65)

Instead of modifying his attack on Britain in these lines, Wordsworth greatly intensifies it. His deletion of lines 241 to 254, and his replacement of these lines with

As a light
 And pliant harebell, swinging in the breeze
 On some grey rock--its birth-place--so had I
 Wantoned, fast rooted on the ancient tower
 Of my beloved country, wishing not
 A happier fortune than to wither there,

(1850, X, 276-81)

serves three important purposes. First, it deletes the faulty assertion of the A text that England had looked upon the revolutionary situation from its inception with "ungracious eyes,"¹⁴ second, it deletes several lines which do not further the narrative in any way (they simply tell us that Wordsworth had and had not anticipated England's entry into the war), and third, it removes the unfortunate simile of the "weight,/ At enmity with all the tenderest springs/ Of my enjoyment" (ll. 251-53; my italics).¹⁵ The final lines offer a much more workable image that suggests both that Wordsworth was "fast-rooted" to England and that he was "pliant" enough to recognize that her actions toward France were unacceptable to him. He was so "pliant," in fact, that he admits, in both versions, that he

"Exulted, in the triumph of [his] soul,/ When Englishmen by thousands
were o'erthrown,/ Left without glory on the field, or driven,/ Brave
hearts! to shameful flight" (1850, X, 285-88).

In view of the revision, "And through the nation spread a novel
beat/ Of virtuous feeling" (1850, X, 252-53), we can readily understand
that when Wordsworth revises

Ere yet the fleet of Britain had gone forth
On this unworthy service, whereunto
The unhappy counsel of a few weak men
Had doomed it,

(1805, X, 290-93)

to

When the proud fleet that bears the red-cross flag
In that unworthy service was prepared
To mingle,

(1850, X, 315-17)

he is not modifying his attack on England; rather, he understands by the
time he revises the work for the last time that it is not just "a few
weak men" who were responsible for England's attack on France, but the
entire English nation. And, as A. V. Dicey suggests, Wordsworth "points
with statesmanlike sagacity to the one fact which, as every candid
historian now sees, provides a main explanation, though not the
justification, of the Reign of Terror."¹⁶ "That fact," as Dicey suggests,

is the invasion of France by foreign armies whose victory
threatened the independence of the country and probably might
have led to partial dismemberment of France. French patriotism
gave in 1789, neither for the first nor happily for the last
time, new strength to a government which, whatever its name or
its crimes, strove heart and soul to rout foreign invaders who
were supported by reactionists bent on restoring the worst
features of the ancien régime. (pp. 43-44)

The invasion of France by England and the first coalition forces added greatly to the Jacobin power, and Wordsworth does not mitigate his condemnation of England when he points this out in the final version:

In France, the men, who, for their desperate ends,
Had plucked up mercy by the roots, were glad
Of this new enemy. Tyrants, strong before
In wicked pleas, were strong as demons now;
And thus, on every side beset by foes,
The goaded land waxed mad; the crimes of few
Spread into madness of the many; blasts
From hell came sanctified like airs from heaven.

(1850, X, 331-38)

But it is not only England that Wordsworth castigates as he gives his vivid account of the Reign of Terror. His condemnation of the French Senate becomes even more vehement, in the final text, in which he revises the rather mild 1805 statement,

The Senate was heart-stricken, not a voice
Uplifted, none to oppose or mitigate.
Domestic carnage now flowed all the year
With feast days,

(1805, X, 327-30)

to the more vigorously condemnatory

The Senate stood aghast, her prudence quenched,
Her wisdom stifled, and her justice scared,
Her frenzy only active to extol
Past outrages, and shape the way for new,
Which no one dared to oppose or mitigate.

(1850, X, 351-55)

Here, Wordsworth does not merely allude to the ineffectual emotional reaction of the Senate, but also to its intellectual and moral ineffectuality as well. In this passage and the ones in which Wordsworth condemns England's part in the war against France, he demonstrates that

his own moral response to the French Revolution is a fair one. Although he is torn between a love of England and an intense hope for the betterment of the world as a result of the revolution, he does not hesitate, especially in the final version, to condemn the moral and intellectual actions of both countries when he feels that they are inconsistent with his values and with the wishes he has for the freedom of mankind.

In the last significant revision in Book X, Wordsworth gives us a much more vivid and precise description of how deeply the events of this period had affected him. In the A text, he tells Coleridge:

Most melancholy at that time, O friend,
 Were my day-thoughts; my dreams were miserable;
 Through months, through years, long after the last beat
 Of those atrocities (I speak bare truth,
 As if to thee alone in private talk)
 I scarcely had one night of quiet sleep,
 Such ghastly visions had I of despair,
 And tyranny, and implements of death,
 And long orations which in dreams I pleaded
 Before unjust tribunals, with a voice
 Labouring, a brain confounded, and a sense
 Of treachery and desertion in the place
 The holiest that I knew of--my own soul.

(1805, X, 368-80)

Here is the 1850 version of these lines:

Most melancholy at that time, O Friend!
 Were my day-thoughts,--my nights were miserable;
 Through months, through years, long after the last beat
 Of those atrocities, the hour of sleep
 To me came rarely charged with natural gifts,
 Such ghastly visions had I of despair
 And tyranny, and implements of death;
 And innocent victims sinking under fear,
 And momentary hope, and worn-out prayer,
 Each in his separate cell, or penned in crowds
 For sacrifice, and struggling with forced mirth
 And levity in dungeons, where the dust
 Was laid with tears. Then suddenly the scene
 Changed, and the unbroken dream entangled me
 In long orations, which I strove to plead
 Before unjust tribunals,--with a voice

Labouring, a brain confounded, and a sense,
 Death-like, of treacherous desertion, felt
 In the last place of refuge--my own soul.

(1850, X, 397-415)

The lines that Wordsworth adds to this passage should be noted by those critics who hold the view that the poet does not address the problem of evil, and, consequently, has little to say to modern man.¹⁷ The suffering that Wordsworth speaks of in these added lines is a suffering that is still very much a part of human existence. Here, Wordsworth describes vividly, not only the "innocent victims" of the Terror in France, but also the "innocent victims" of all politically corrupt systems. There are still people today who are "sinking under fear, / And momentary hope, and worn-out prayer," who struggle, to the end, to maintain some sense of human dignity and hope, until all hope fails. In these lines, especially in the 1850 text, Wordsworth gives us not only a vivid and psychologically plausible account of how deeply the Terror affected him, but he also gives us a realistic and honest account of how innocent Frenchmen, through no fault of their own, suffered under their own politically corrupt system.

After mentioning that there were, even during this terrible time "examples in no age surpassed / Of fortitude and energy and love, / And human nature faithful to herself" (1850, X, 487-89), and after describing his visit to the grave of his former headmaster, William Taylor, and his chance meeting with the stranger who informs him that "'Robespierre is dead!'" (1850, X, 573),¹⁸ Wordsworth breaks off the narrative in the 1850 version in order to begin a new Book. He ends Book X on a joyful and optimistic note by describing how, elated by the news of Robespierre's death, he went for a horseback ride on the beach.

To conclude the Book, he takes verbatim a line from Book II (1805, II, 144; 1850, II, 137), "We beat with thundering hoofs the level sand" (1805, X, 566; 1850, X, 603), the line that ends his description of his happy, childhood horseback rides as a schoolboy.

III

Wordsworth revises the opening lines to Book XI so that they contrast dramatically with the opening lines of the 1850 version of Book IX, in which the poet vacillates and hesitates as he approaches his subject. Here, he convincingly demonstrates both the growth of his more youthful mind and the growth of his mind in the intervening years between the composition of the two Preludes. Here, he shows that the fear of being engulfed (1850, IX, 4) by his subject is over and that he is ready to discuss this most painful part of his story with calm directness and mature composure:

FROM that time forth, Authority in France
 Put on a milder face; Terror had ceased,
 Yet everything was wanting that might give
 Courage to them who looked for good by light
 Of rational Experience, for the shoots
 And hopeful blossoms of a second spring:
 Yet, in me, confidence was unimpaired;
 The Senate's language, and the public acts
 And measures of the Government, though both
 Weak, and of heartless omen, had not power
 To daunt me; in the People was my trust,
 And, in the virtues which mine eyes had seen.

(1850, XI, 1-12)

The forthright manner in which he begins his narrative in these lines also contrasts vividly with the parallel lines in the 1805 version, in

which, it is clear, he does not, as yet, have complete control over his subject. For example, he does not have to qualify his statement that "Authority in France/ Put on a milder face" with the phrase "as is well known" (1805, X, 567), nor does he insist on explaining the "good" of which he speaks by saying, "good I mean/ at hand, and in the spirit of past aims" (1805, X, 571-72). In the 1805 lines, as well, Wordsworth seems to feel that he must repeat, to the point of tedium, the fact that his faith in the revolution had not been daunted, whereas in the revised version, his more calm acceptance of his youthful erroneous concepts about the revolution is much more convincing.

As he progresses with his narrative in the 1850 text, Wordsworth also shortens considerably his excessively long and melodramatic 1805 explanation that he had

never dreamt
That transmigration could be undergone,
A fall of being suffered, and of hope,
By creature that appeared to have received
Entire conviction what a great ascent
Had been accomplished, what high faculties
It had been called to. Youth maintains, I knew,
In all conditions of society
Communion more direct and intimate
With Nature, and the inner strength she has--
And hence, oftentimes, no less with reason too--
Than age, or manhood even.

(1805, X, 598-609)

He replaces these lines with the more succinct and convincing assertion that

Youth maintains,
In all conditions of society,
Communication more direct and intimate
With Nature,--hence, oftentimes, with reason too--
Than age, or manhood even.

(1850, XI, 27-31)

This deletion, and the deletion of the following italicized lines,

To Nature then,
 Power had reverted: habit, custom, law,
 Had left an interregnum's open space
 For her to stir about in, uncontrolled.
The warmest judgments, and the most untaught,
Found in events which every day brought forth
Enough to sanction them--and far, far more
To shake the authority of canons drawn
From ordinary practice,

(1805, X, 609-17)

greatly facilitate the narrative flow by allowing Wordsworth both to keep to the subject at hand and to juxtapose, more convincingly, the false, ineffectual, and short-lived power of Robespierre's régime with the true and eternal power of Nature, the power that helped him understand the reasons for the fall of Robespierre and to

see how Babel-like their task,
 Who, by the recent deluge stupified,
 With their whole souls went culling from the day
 Its petty promises, to build a tower
 For their own safety; laughed with my compeers
 At gravest heads, by enmity to France
 Distempered, till they found, in every blast
 Forced from the street-disturbing newsman's horn,
 For her great cause record or prophecy
 Of utter ruin.

(1850, XI, 35-44)

In both versions of The Prelude, Wordsworth insists that his feelings for Britain, at this time, were

too intense,
 And intermixed with something, in my mind
 Of scorn and condemnation personal,
 That would profane the sanctity of verse.

(1850, XI, 58-61)

"Our shepherds (this say merely) at that time," Wordsworth claims in the

A text, "Thirsted to make the guardian crook of law/ A tool of murder" (X, 645-47). While he emends this slightly in the final version to "Our Shepherds, this say merely, at that time/ Acted, or seemed at least to act, like men/ Thirsting to make the guardian crook of law/ A tool of murder" (XI, 62-65), Wordsworth's condemnation of the actions of his home country is still strong. The most mitigating change that Wordsworth makes in his discussion of his feelings toward Britain at that time comes a few lines later, when he revises the 1805 claim that Britons,

childlike longed
 To imitate--not wise enough to avoid.
 Giants in their impiety alone,
 But in their weapons and their warfare base
 As vermin working out of reach, they leagued
 Their strength perfidiously to undermine
 Justice, and make an end of liberty,

(1805, X, 650-56)

to the more moderate, but still condemnatory, claim that they

child-like longed
 To imitate, not wise enough to avoid;
 Or left (by mere timidity betrayed)
 The plain straight road, for one no better chosen
 Than if their wish had been to undermine
 Justice, and make an end of Liberty.

(1850, XI, 68-73)

But I agree with Burton when she claims that, in these lines, Wordsworth may be

more concerned over a mixed figure of speech than over his politics. In one sentence, he has called them child-like, giants, and has said they work like vermin! He removes the giants and the vermin and adds to the child-like description a phrase about their timidity. He admits a complete change of mind, however, when he inserts, 'than if their wish had been' preceding the statement that they leagued

to undermine
 Justice, and make an end of Liberty

There is actual rancor in the first message, and there is a statement he probably never believed in his more thoughtful moments. He has begun by saying what he thought, that through an unwholesome enthusiasm for law and because of a certain childish imitation, England was led into war. He has added lines entirely out of keeping with this beginning, and he later modifies their meaning so that they, too, express his feeling that ignorance of the true situation led England into the war. (One Wordsworth, pp. 69-70)

In these revised lines, then, Wordsworth partially admits that he might have been wrong about England's reasons for entering the war with France, that he might have judged too hastily her motives for becoming involved in the conflict.

But the most interesting revisions that Wordsworth makes in Book XI come in those sections of the Book in which he describes his own reaction toward France after he realizes that it is not "a country in romance" (1805, X, 696; 1850, XI, 112), but a country involved in serious wars of aggression. In both versions, Wordsworth tells us:

But now, become oppressors in their turn,
Frenchmen had changed a war of self-defence
For one of conquest, losing sight of all
Which they had struggled for: and mounted up,
Openly in the eye of earth and heaven,
The scale of liberty.

(1850, XI, 206-11)¹⁹

In the A text, Wordsworth describes his stubborn, youthful reaction to this as follows:

I read her doom,
Vexed inly somewhat, it is true, and sore,
But not dismayed, nor taking to the shame
Of a false prophet. But, roused up, I stuck
More firmly to old tenets, and, to prove
Their temper, strained them more; and thus, in heat
Of contest, did opinions every day
Grow into consequence, till round my mind
They clung as if they were the life of it.

(1805, X, 796-804)

In the revised version of these lines, however, we get a more deeply penetrating and more psychologically plausible account of the youth's reaction to this extremely disappointing turn of affairs:

I read her doom,
 With anger vexed, with disappointment sore,
 But not dismayed, nor taking to the shame
 Of a false prophet. While resentment rose
 Striving to hide, what nought could heal, the wounds
 Of mortified presumption, adhered
 More firmly to old tenets, and, to prove
 Their temper, strained them more; and thus, in heat
 Of contest, did opinions every day
 Grow into consequence, till round my mind
 They clung, as if they were its life, nay more,
 The very being of the immortal soul.

(1850, XI, 211-22)

It is only in these 1850 lines that we realize how deeply the young Wordsworth had been hurt by the events after the death of Robespierre. He had been wounded "to the very being of the immortal soul" (l. 222) and nothing "could heal, the wounds/ Of mortified presumption" (ll. 215-16). His dreams for revolutionary France were completely shattered, although, at the time, he still would not admit it.

"This was the time," Wordsworth tells us in the A text,

when, all things tending fast
 To depravation, the philosophy
 That promised to abstract the hopes of man
 Out of his feelings, to be fixed thenceforth
 For ever in a purer element,
 Found ready welcome.

(1805, X, 805-10)²⁰

Wordsworth makes only one important revision in these lines. As a more mature man, he realizes the inadequacies of Godwin's political theories, so instead of dignifying them with the name "philosophy" (l. 806), as he does in the A text, he refers to them, in the final version, as

"speculative schemes" (l. 224): And because he retains, in the final text, many of the lines from the A text that mock Godwin's theories, he does not deem it necessary to keep, in the final Prelude, the excessively long and slightly melodramatic, self-recriminatory lines from the 1805 version,

--yet I feel
 The aspiration--but with other thoughts
 And happier: for I was perplexed and sought
 To accomplish the transition by such means
 As did not lie in nature, sacrificed
 The exactness of a comprehensive mind
 To scrupulous and microscopic views
 That furnished out materials for a work
 Of false imagination, placed beyond
 The limits of experience and of truth,

(1805, X, 839-48)

but replaces them, instead, with the more succinct assertion:

--yet I feel
 (Sustained by worthier as by wiser thoughts)
 The aspiration, nor shall ever cease
 To feel it;--but return we to our course.

(1850, XI, 255-58; his italics)

It was during this time, Wordsworth asserts in both versions, that all men were shocked by the turn of events in France, and that his mind, in particular, "was both let loose, / Let loose and goaded" (1805, X, 862-63; 1850, XI, 272-73). He continues, in the 1805 text, to suggest that

After what hath been
 Already said of patriotic love,
 And hinted at in other sentiments,
 We need not linger long upon this theme,
 This only may be said, that from the first
 Having two natures in me (joy the one,
 The other melancholy), and withal
 A happy man, and therefore bold to look
 On painful things--slow, somewhat, too, and stern

In temperament--I took the knife in hand,
 And, stopping not at parts less sensitive,
 Endeavoured with my best of skill to probe
 The living body of society
 Even to the heart. I pushed without remorse
 My speculations forward, yea, set foot.
 On Nature's holiest places.

(1805, X, 863-78)

Here are the 1850, parallel lines:

After what hath been
 Already said of patriotic love,
 Suffice it here to add, that, somewhat stern
 In temperament, withal a happy man,
 And therefore bold to look on painful things,
 Free likewise of the world, and thence more bold,
 I summoned my best skill, and toiled, intent
 To anatomise the frame of social life,
 Yea, the whole body of society
 Searched to its heart.

(1850, XI, 273-82)

In the revised lines, Wordsworth is much less melodramatic, once again, in his assertions. He also appears to notice the lack of propriety in the 1805 metaphor of the knife, and replaces this with a more appropriate assertion that he attempted to "anatomise" the frame of society. He does not mention his penchant for melancholy in the final version, but, rather, he insists that, although he was stern in temperament, he was, by and large, an optimistic and happy man, a man of international, rather than national, loyalties, and, therefore, was able to examine all facets of the situation before him with scrupulous intensity. But this examination proved fruitless, and, as he tells us in the A text:

I lost
 All feeling of conviction, and, in fine,
 Sick, wearied out with contraries,
 Yielded up moral questions in despair,
 And for my future studies, as the sole

Employment of the inquiring faculty,
 Turned towards mathematics, and their clear
 And solid evidence.

(1805, X, 897-904)

Wordsworth leaves lines 897 to 900 unchanged in the final version. He deletes lines 901-04, however, and replaces them with the following lines:

This was the crisis of that strong disease,
 This the soul's last and lowest ebb; I drooped,
 Deeming our blessed reason of least use
 Where wanted most: 'The lordly attributes
 Of will and choice', I bitterly exclaimed,
 'What are they but a mockery of a Being
 Who hath in no concerns of his a test
 Of good and evil; knows not what to fear
 Or hope for, what to covet or to shun;
 And who, if those could be discerned, would yet
 Be little profited, would see, and ask
 Where is the obligation to enforce?
 And, to acknowledged law rebellious, still,
 As selfish passion urged, would act amiss;
 The dupe of folly, or the slave of crime.'
 Depressed, bewildered thus, I did not walk
 With scoffers, seeking light and gay revenge
 From indiscriminate laughter, nor sate down
 In reconcilment with an utter waste
 Of intellect; such sloth I could not brook,
 (Too well I loved, in that my spring of life,
 Pains-taking thoughts, and truth, their dear reward)
 But turned to abstract science, and there sought
 Work for the reasoning faculty enthroned
 Where the disturbances of space and time--
 Whether in matter's various properties
 Inherent, or from human will and power
 Derived--find no admission.

(1850, XI, 306-33)

Here, the "active partisan" (1805, X, 736; 1850, XI, 153) has reached the nadir of his experience with the revolution and is going through the most traumatic of the several rites of passage that lead, eventually, not only to his more adult understanding of the revolution and its shortcomings, but also to a clearer understanding of his own inadequacies. In order to

comprehend precisely what Wordsworth is clarifying in these added lines, we should note that when he re-introduces into the narrative the image of the tribunal, this time with himself serving, in the waking state, as Robespierre-like judge, he claims, in the A text:

Thus I fared,
 Dragging all passions, notions, shapes of faith,
 Like culprits to the bar,

(1805, X, 888-90)

whereas, in the 1850 text, his assertion is quite different:

So I fared,
 Dragging all precepts, judgments, maxims, creeds,
 Like culprits to the bar.

(1850, XI, 293-95)

In the 1850 version, then, Wordsworth is pointing out that, as a youth, he was not concerned with men's "passions," or ambiguous "notions," but with "moral questions" (1805, X, 900; 1850, XI, 305) only, and, in the lines that he adds to that text, he re-states this most emphatically.

In these lines, Wordsworth illustrates his more mature moral approach to the most difficult of moral questions. He asserts that our "blessed reason" is of little value to us when we have to decide between doing good or evil. Even if man could come to a true knowledge of right and wrong, the likelihood of his voluntarily choosing to do good, as opposed to doing evil, Wordsworth insists, is often negligible. In the first place, man often cannot discern which is which, but when he is able to do so, Wordsworth tells us, he is more likely to ask, "Where is the obligation to enforce?" (l. 317) than he is to do the right thing. Man's "selfish passion" (l. 319), Wordsworth insists, often gets in the way of his proper choice. Nonetheless, Wordsworth makes it clear, in this

passage, that he still values man's "reasoning faculty" (l. 329) as a reliable guide in life, and he, himself, turns to "abstract science" (l. 328) as a youth, in order to save his sanity.

But it is not mathematics that finally helps the youth or restores his faith in the goodness of life. In the A text, Wordsworth explains:

Ah, then it was
That thou, most precious friend, about this time
First known to me, didst lend a living help
To regulate my soul. And then it was
That the beloved woman in whose sight
Those days were passed--now speaking in a voice
Of sudden admonition like a brook
That does but cross a lonely road; and now
Seen, heard and felt, and caught at every turn,
Companion never lost through many a league--
Maintained for me a saving intercourse
With my true self (for, though impaired, and changed
Much, as it seemed, I was no further changed
Than as a clouded, not a waning moon);
She, in the midst of all, preserved me still
A poet, made me seek beneath that name
My office upon earth, and nowhere else.
And lastly, Nature's self, by human love
Assisted, through the weary labyrinth
Conducted me again to open day,
Revived the feelings of my earlier life.

(1805, X, 904-24)

Wordsworth makes several significant revisions in this passage. First, he deletes his primary reference to Coleridge as the regulator of his soul, because, as the Norton editors explain:

Wordsworth met Coleridge (the 'precious friend,' line 905) in
September 1795; they seem to have corresponded at times in the
next two years, but can have exerted no great influence upon
each other until June 1797). (Gill, p. 408)

Wordsworth simply begins the 1850 version of these lines, then, by giving "Thanks to the bounteous Giver of all good!" (l. 334) for his "beloved

Sister" (l. 335). And it is with regards to Dorothy that Wordsworth makes the second significant revision in this passage. He adds the line, "She whispered still that brightness would return" (l. 344), a line that signifies both the closeness the two felt for each other and Dorothy's ability to soothe and calm her brother during moments of personal disruption. The third important revision in these lines concerns the healing power of Nature. While he tells us, in the A text, that "Nature's self, [was] by human love/ Assisted" (ll. 921-22) in her efforts on behalf of his recovery, Wordsworth insists that it was "By all varieties of human love" (l. 350) that she was assisted, when he describes her powers of restoration in the final version.

Wordsworth makes no further major revisions in the 1850 version of Book XI. When discussing the "reanimating influence" (1850, XI, 389) of Dorothy and Nature, he mentions that these protected him, even during the time when

finally to close
 And rivet down the gains of France, a 'Pope
 Is summoned in, to crown an Emperor--
 This last opprobrium, when we see a people,
 That once looked up in faith, as if to Heaven
 For manna, take a lesson from the dog
 Returning to his vomit; when the sun
 That rose in splendour, was alive, and moved
 In exultation with a living pomp
 Of clouds--his glory's natural retinue--
 Hath dropped all functions by the gods bestowed,
 And, turned into a gewgaw, a machine,
 Set like an Opera phantom,

(1850, XI, 357-69)²¹

and he insists that the revolution, and, finally, this last action by France, of crowning Napoleon as Emperor, signifies not only a bitter disappointment for him, but a "sorrowful reverse for all mankind" (l. 403).

But he makes no revisions of major significance in the concluding sections of Book XI, sections in which he addresses Coleridge and wishes him a speedy and safe return from Italy to England.

In view of what Wordsworth tells us in the 1850 version of The Prelude, we know that, at no time does he ever present evidence that he was, in any way, a "lost leader," or that he gave up his ideals for the revolution without just cause. In a letter to James Losh, dated December 4, 1821, Wordsworth makes this point clear:

I should think that I had lived to little purpose if my notions on the subject of Government had undergone no modification--my youth must, in that case, have been without enthusiasm, and my manhood endued with small capability of profiting by reflexion. If I were addressing those who have dealt so liberally with the words Renegado Apostate, etc., I should retort the charge upon them, and say, you have been deluded by Places and Persons, while I have stuck to Principles--I abandoned France, and her Rulers, when they abandoned the struggle for Liberty, gave themselves up to Tyranny, and endeavoured to enslave the world. I disapproved of the war against France at its commencement, thinking, which was perhaps an error, that it might have been avoided--but after Buonaparte had violated the Independence of Switzerland, my heart turned against him, and against the Nation that could submit to be the Instrument of such an outrage. Here it was that I parted, in feeling, from the Whigs, and to a certain degree united with their Adversaries, who were free from the delusion (such I must ever regard it) of Mr Fox and his Party, that a safe and honourable Peace was practicable with the French Nation, and that an ambitious Conqueror like Buonaparte could be softened down into a commercial Rival. (L.Y., I, 56-57; his italics)

Bearing in mind what Wordsworth tells us here and in the revised Prelude, let us now turn briefly back to the passage on Burke at the beginning of this chapter, and see what it was about that statesman's political views that finally won the approval of this once ardent, revolutionary poet.

De Selincourt argues that this late addition "creates a misleading impression as to the state of [Wordsworth's] mind in that period of which the Book professes to be the record" (p. lxviii). This

is true, because, during the periods of his early London stays, Wordsworth was violently opposed to Burke's conservative teachings regarding revolution. But as we have seen, the final Prelude is not merely the account of Wordsworth's first twenty-eight years. It is also the account of the growth of his mind up to and including the time that he revised the work for the last time, and, as Burton rightly suggests:

Few other revisions in The Prelude indicate so clearly the growth of the poet's mind. In 1805 he remembers only that the parliamentary body had presented a kind of show; in 1820 he thinks in terms of the great men of the time. By 1839 he separates them, analyzes and summarizes their philosophy and, in a still clearer light, sees its influence on his own mind. This is not apostasy; it is the growth from the 'outward shows' of youth, through the period of the formation of ideas from these impressions, to the association of these ideas into a philosophy of life. If in this, as in all other learning processes, there has been some random movement, it has quite naturally subsided as the whole pattern of political life became more clear, and in this unifying and clarifying thought we may safely count Burke as a leading influence, though perhaps unrecognized at the time. (One Wordsworth, pp. 62-63)

It is only as he revises The Prelude for the last time, and uses both intellect and memory to record more honestly the events that he had witnessed and the experiences that he had undergone as a youth during the revolutionary period that Wordsworth comes, finally, to a full appreciation of the wisdom of Edmund Burke.

It is only as he records, for the last time, his memories of Liberté, Égalité, and Fraternité in action in the form of "hissing Factionists . . . struggling face to face," Royalists, "Inflamed by passion, blind with prejudice," and royal courts, "whose thirst for bloody spoils abroad [was] paired/ With vice at home," that Wordsworth can fully appreciate Burke's sentiments about Englishmen,

We have not (as I conceive) lost the generosity and dignity of thinking of the fourteenth century; nor as yet have we

subtilized ourselves into savages. We are not the converts of Rousseau; we are not the disciples of Voltaire; Helvetius has made no progress amongst us, (Reflections, pp. 181-82)

and praise the statesman for denouncing "all systems built on abstract rights" (l. 524). It is only when he describes, for the final time, his conversations with his beloved friend Michel Beaupuy upon "ancient loyalty," "chartered rights," and "patrimonial honour," and describes his memories of the Reign of Terror, Robespierre, the religion of reason, and the regicide, that Wordsworth fully understands the wisdom behind Burke's words,

Atheists are not our preachers; madmen are not our lawgivers.
 . . . In England we have not yet been completely embowelled of our natural entrails; we still feel within us, and we cherish and cultivate, those inbred sentiments which are the faithful guardians, the active monitors of our duty, the true supporters of all liberal and manly morals. . . . We fear God; we look up with awe to kings; with affection to parliaments; with duty to magistrates; with reverence to priests; and with respect to nobility, (Reflections, p. 182)

and applauds him for proclaiming the "majesty" "Of Institutes and Laws, hallowed by time" and for declaring "the vital power of social ties/ Endeared by Custom" (ll. 525-28). And, as he remembers and records, in the 1850 Prelude, the disappointment that was his when he attempted to find solace in Godwin's "speculative schemes," Wordsworth can appreciate Burke for "exploding upstart Theory" (l. 529). Finally, and most important, as Wordsworth concedes that England might possibly have had to go to war with France in order to protect her own interests, Wordsworth praises the elder statesman for insisting "Upon the allegiance to which men are born" (l. 530).²² It is in this late addition to the final version, then, that we realize, as Wordsworth surely did, that Edmund Burke was not an "infatuated moralist," but a brilliant statesman whose ideas with regards to the French Revolution were well ahead of his time.

CHAPTER VI

"MORE RATIONAL PROPORTIONS": RECOVERY AND RELEASE

In the final three Books of The Prelude, Wordsworth continues to explain how he eventually overcame his disillusionment with the French Revolution, and how he came, once again, to have faith in man and in his own creative powers. Although the philosophical centre of these Books is contained in the "Snowdon passages" at the beginning of the concluding Book, Wordsworth also gives us, in these three remaining Books, his final views on Nature, man, society, human love, and, once again, he discusses the poet and his function. In this last chapter, I shall examine the most important revisions that Wordsworth makes in those passages dealing with these subjects, and I shall also examine the "Snowdon passages" themselves, in order to demonstrate that Wordsworth's more rational assertions, and his more rational ordering of his assertions in his discussion of these topics, give us both a clearer understanding of their importance to the poet and a greater appreciation of Wordsworth's mature thought.

Wordsworth revises four passages in which he discusses the role of Nature both in his development and in his recovery from the revolution. The first of these is the opening verse paragraph of Book XI of the 1805 text (Book XII of the final text):

Long time hath man's unhappiness and guilt
Detained us: with what dismal sights beset
For the outward view, and inwardly oppressed
With sorrow, disappointment, vexing thoughts,

Confusion of the judgement, zeal decayed--
 And lastly, utter loss of hope itself
 And things to hope for. Not with these began
 Our song, and not with these our song must end.
 Ye motions of delight, that through the fields
 Stir gently, breezes and soft airs that breathe
 The breath of paradise, and find your way
 To the recesses of the soul; ye brooks
 Muttering along the stones, a busy noise
 By day, a quiet one in silent night;
 And you, ye groves, whose ministry it is
 To interpose the covert of your shades,
 Even as a sleep, betwixt the heart of man
 And the uneasy world--'twixt man himself,
 Not seldom, and his own unquiet heart--
 Oh, that I had a music and a voice
 Harmonious as your own, that I might tell
 What ye have done for me. The morning shines,
 Nor heedeth man's perverseness; spring returns--
 I saw the spring return, when I was dead
 To deeper hope, yet had I joy for her
 And welcomed her benevolence, rejoiced
 In common with the children of her love,
 Plants, insects, beasts in field, and birds in bower.
 So neither were complacency, nor peace,
 Nor tender yearnings, wanting for my good
 Through these distracted times: in Nature still
 Glorifying, I found a counterpoise in her,
 Which, when the spirit of evil was at height,
 Maintained for me a secret happiness.
 Her I resorted to, and loved so much
 I seemed to love as much as heretofore--
 And yet this passion, fervent as it was,
 Had suffered change; how could there fail to be
 Some change, if merely hence, that years of life
 Were going on, and with them loss or gain
 Inevitable, sure alternative?

(1805, XI, 1-41)

The 1850 version of these lines reads as follows:

LONG time have human ignorance and guilt
 Detained us, on what spectacles of woe
 Compelled to look, and inwardly oppressed
 With sorrow, disappointment, vexing thoughts,
 Confusion of the judgment, zeal decayed,
 And, lastly, utter loss of hope itself
 And things to hope for! Not with these began
 Our song, and not with these our song must end.--
 Ye motions of delight, that haunt the sides
 Of the green hills; ye breezes and soft airs,

Whose subtle intercourse with breathing flowers,
 Feelingly watched, might teach Man's haughty race
 How without injury to take, to give
 Without offence; ye who, as if to show
 The wondrous influence of power gently used,
 Bend the complying heads of lordly pines,
 And, with a touch, shift the stupendous clouds
 Through the whole compass of the sky; ye brooks
 Muttering along the stones, a busy noise
 By day, a quiet sound in silent night;
 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;
 And you, ye groves, whose ministry it is
 To interpose the covert of your shades,
 Even as a sleep, between the heart of man
 And outward troubles, between man himself,
 Not seldom, and his own uneasy heart:
 Oh! that I had a music and a voice
 Harmonious as your own, that I might tell
 What ye have done for me. The morning shines,
 Nor heedeth Man's perverseness; Spring returns,--
 I saw the Spring return, and could rejoice,
 In common with the children of her love,
 Piping on boughs, or sporting on fresh fields,
 Or boldly seeking pleasure nearer heaven
 On wings that navigate cerulean skies.
 So neither were complacency, nor peace,
 Nor tender yearnings, wanting for my good
 Through these distracted times; in Nature still
 Glorifying, I found a counterpoise in her,
 Which, when the spirit of evil reached its height,
 Maintained for me a secret happiness.

(1850, XII, 1-43)

If we insist, as Winters does, that a poet must "make a rational statement about an experience, at the same time employing his language in such a manner as to communicate the emotion which ought to be communicated by that rational understanding of the particular subject" (Function of Criticism, p. 161), then we must insist, as well, that the 1805 passage is a failure and the 1850 passage is a success.

At the conclusion of the 1805 passage, Wordsworth tells us that there has been a change in his attitude toward and feelings about Nature. He does not know precisely why this change has occurred. Perhaps it is,

on the one hand, a change brought about solely by his maturation, or, on the other hand, a change brought about by factors which he does not specifically mention or attempt to explain. As for the change itself, Wordsworth is equally vague. Is it a "loss" or is it a "gain"? Is this change "Inevitable," or is it a "sure alternative"? Wordsworth does not say. And we could understand and appreciate Wordsworth's conclusion at the end of this passage if, in the Book just preceding this one, in both versions, he had not taken pains to assure us that, even at the height of the revolution, he was still

a child of Nature, as at first,
Diffusing only those affections wider
That from the cradle had grown up with me,
And losing, in no other way than light
Is lost in light, the weak in the more strong.

(1805, X, 752-56)

(1850, XI, 168-72)

Following this very positive assertion that the revolution had, in no way, affected his feelings towards Nature, the conclusion to the 1805 passage that we are now considering is confusing, if not irrational. Had he wished, at this point, to assert that there was a change in his attitude towards Nature, Wordsworth should have made a precise and specific statement defining exactly what the nature of the change was. And, following from his assertions in the previous Book, this change would have to be described, most definitely, as a gain rather than a loss.

This is not the only problem in the 1805 passage. Here, Wordsworth's assertions about both what he is turning away from (the revolution) and what he is turning towards (Nature) are so vague and general that they exhibit no real understanding of either the revolution or the power of Nature, and so, again, they neither communicate nor

elicit an appropriate emotional response from the reader, who is aware only of the lack of conviction in Wordsworth's assertions. For example, if we examine what Wordsworth says about the revolution, we notice that what he is primarily turning away from is man's physical and emotional unhappiness. When we examine what Wordsworth considers to be the restorative powers of Nature, we find that these powers, as he describes them in the A text, are either vague, trite, fanciful, or powers that would appeal mainly to an immature and insecure adolescent. As he describes these restorative powers here, Wordsworth is merely describing a "felt experience." And because he makes no real effort to analyze this experience, we are left at the conclusion of the passage wondering precisely what it was in Nature that helped him regain his mental and emotional equilibrium, and, what is even worse, we are left in some doubt as to whether or not he really did have any help from Nature in regaining these.

In the 1850 passage, however, we have no such problems. Wordsworth tells us that he is turning away, not from man's "unhappiness and guilt," but from "human ignorance and guilt" (l. 1; my italics).¹ He is implying, with this phrase, that he is rejecting both the intellectual and moral base of the revolution, while, at the same time, he is also implying that general "ignorance and guilt" of humanity will no longer be a subject of discussion in this poem. Here, he does not tell us merely that he is turning away from "dismal sights," but he asserts, instead, that it is from the more universal "spectacles of woe" (l. 2) that he will turn. This revised phrase implies, with more precision and realism, the enormity of the wanton destruction that Wordsworth has witnessed during the revolution. The revolution, then, as the more mature Wordsworth

remembers it, did not produce merely a few particular "dismal sights," but, rather, it produced "spectacles" of wholesale destruction and mass suffering. Wordsworth also makes the interesting comment, in the 1850 text, that he was "Compelled to look" (l. 3) upon these "spectacles." Usually, passive constructions such as this weaken Wordsworth's argument. But here the phrase "Compelled to look" suggests that the young poet had to witness these spectacles, not only because he was in France at the time, but because experiencing such scenes was an integral part of his development as both a man and a poet.

Wordsworth's assertions about Nature and her restorative powers are much more convincing in the final version of this passage than they are in the A text. Here, he does not make the grandiose and somewhat child-like assertion that the "breezes and soft airs" of Nature "breathe/ The breath of paradise" (1805, XI, 10-11). Nor does he make the obvious observation that they "Stir gently" "through the fields" (1805, XI, 9-10). He insists, instead, that they "haunt the sides/ Of the green hills" (ll. 9-10), implying, by this, the strong, ever-present, spiritual power of the restorative breezes of Nature. But he does not merely stop here. He analyzes this power and asserts that it is a "power gently used" (l. 15). And what also impresses him about this "power" is that other natural forms do not resist it, but instead, interact with it. There is a "subtle intercourse" between the "breezes and soft airs" and the "breathing flowers" (ll. 10-11), flowers that, in other words, have a "power" and a life of their own. There is also a co-operation between these "breezes and soft airs" and the "complying heads of lordly pines" (l. 16), pines that offer no resistance to being moved and changed by these fellow, natural forces.

But Wordsworth is not taking us, full circle, back to the beginning of the poem when he mentions the "breezes and soft airs" in this passage. He is operating on a much higher intellectual level. At the beginning of the poem, he spoke only of a correspondence between himself and the breeze. Here, he realizes a correspondence between the "breezes and soft airs" and all of Nature. And these "breezes and soft airs" are not, like the breeze that Wordsworth mentions at the beginning of the poem, only mild forces "that gently moved/ With quickening virtue" (1850, I, 35-36). They are real powers as well, powers with enough force to "shift the stupendous clouds/ Through the whole compass of the sky" with only "a touch" (ll. 17-18; my italics). After observing this interaction between the various forms of Nature, Wordsworth makes the convincing assertion that if other men studied interactions such as these between forms of Nature, they could learn the vital lessons, "How without injury to take, to give/ Without offence" (ll. 13-14). But these interactions, Wordsworth insists, cannot be understood merely through casual observation. They must be "Feelingly watched" (l. 12), and "Man's haughty race" (l. 12), in order to benefit from such observations, must forget its own pride, and move to a receptive state of mental humility.

But Wordsworth has much more to explain about the power of Nature. As he does in the A text, he also mentions here the "brooks,/ Muttering along the stones" (ll. 18-19). But with one small revision in the 1850 passage, Wordsworth points out the relationship between Nature and time. In the A text, he merely says that these "brooks" made "a busy noise/ By day, a quiet one in silent night" (ll. 13-14). In the 1850 version, however, he tells us that they made "a busy noise/ By day, a quiet sound in silent night" (ll. 19-20; all italics mine). Here, again,

there is co-operation and harmonious relationship, this time between time and motion. Wordsworth observes that time and motion, on a universal level, co-operate as well, as he describes the tides, powerful enough to fear "no storm" (l. 23), kissing the "pebbly shore" (l. 22) of earth.

As Wordsworth does in the A text, he also mentions, here, the "groves" (l. 24) that minister to man, both as a protection from the cares of the external world and as a protection against his own "uneasy heart" (l. 28). But in this version, the "groves" are not just another associationist, romantic cliché in a series of associationist romantic clichés as they are in the A text. Wordsworth's rational understanding of the power of Nature lends conviction to his assertions about the "groves," enabling them, in turn, to convey a sincere sense of repose and finality to the argument. And gain, while these "groves" strongly remind us of Wordsworth's revised description of the "sheltered and the sheltering grove" (l. 69) in the 1850 Preamble to Book I, his purpose in mentioning them is not to return us, full circle, to the beginning of the poem, so that we end where we began. In the Preamble to the first Book, the poet only considered the "grove" in relation to himself. Here, by placing "man" in the midst of the "groves," Wordsworth is asserting a more universal and humanitarian viewpoint, because here, he is suggesting that all men, not just the poet, are nurtured and protected by Nature.

To be sure, there are stylistic problems in the 1850 passage. The sea, "kiss[ing] the pebbly shore" (l. 22) adds a note of sentimentality to an otherwise strongly realistic and rational argument. And the birds that "navigate cerulean skies" (l. 37) add artificiality and periphrasis of the kind that Wordsworth generally deplores. But in the latter case, the movement and joy in life that the phrase suggest far

outweigh the tone of artificiality, and while we cannot defend the phrase itself, out of context, we can appreciate the rational idea behind the revision. Wordsworth is attempting to eliminate yet another static catalogue within a catalogue ("Plants, insects, beasts in field, and birds in bower" [l. 28]) from the final version, so that he can more convincingly convey to us the emotion of joy in life that the 1805 list hardly conveys at all.

At the end of the 1850 passage, Wordsworth does not insist that there has been a change in his attitude towards Nature. His whole argument, however, convinces us that a change has, indeed, occurred. He no longer looks upon Nature as a child or an immature adolescent, appreciating only its beautiful outward forms. He has moved from a selfish pre-occupation with the physical beauties of Nature to an appreciation of the power behind the beauty of outward forms, and, in this passage, he demonstrates an understanding of that power with firmness and conviction. When he tells us here that he has found a "counterpoise" in Nature, we believe him, because, throughout the passage, he has described and explained this power and the "secret happiness" (l. 43) of calm and mature understanding that was his as he reaffirmed its existence. And, as he concludes the passage on a note of calm resolution, he invites us to believe both in the "counterpoise" of Nature and in the "counterpoise" of the poet's mind as he quietly celebrates, in his poetry, the peacefulness that Nature has restored to him.

Wordsworth takes his conclusions about Nature one step further in a second revision dealing with this subject. In the 1805 text, he exclaims:

O soul of Nature, excellent and fair,
 That didst rejoice with me, with whom I too
 Rejoiced; through early youth, before the winds
 And powerful waters, and in lights and shades
 That marched and countermarched about the hills
 In glorious apparition, now all eye
 And now all ear, but ever with the heart
 Employed, and the majestic intellect!
 O soul of Nature, that dost overflow
 With passion and with life, what feeble men
 Walk on this earth, how feeble have I been
 When thou wert in thy strength!

(1805, XI, 138-49)

Wordsworth does not revise the first five and a half lines of this passage, but he makes an important revision in the lines that follow these:

Powers on whom
 I daily waited, now all eye and now
 All ear; but never long without the heart
 Employed, and man's unfolding intellect:
 O Soul of Nature! that, by laws divine
 Sustained and governed, still dost overflow
 With an impassioned life, what feeble ones
 Walk on this earth! how feeble have I been
 When thou wert in thy strength!

(1850, XII, 98-106)

Here, Wordsworth does not refer to the forms of Nature at all, but to the "Powers" of Nature. And he no longer refers to his own intellect as "majestic" (l. 145) as he does in the A text. Instead, he asserts that he had employed "man's unfolding intellect" (l. 101) as he observed Nature, and, with this revision, he reminds us of an earlier revision that he made in Book II, in which he claims:

The seasons came,
 And every season wheresoe'er I moved
 Unfolded transitory qualities.

(1850, II, 288-90)

Just as Nature is constantly unfolding her qualities, so, too, is the mind of man constantly unfolding and growing. But unlike the qualities of Nature, the qualities of the mind of man are not transitory, either on the general or on the particular level. The mind of man is constantly growing and developing in wisdom and in understanding. And what Wordsworth's "unfolding intellect" has finally taught him about Nature is that it is "by laws divine/ Sustained and governed" (ll. 102-03) and that it "overflow[s]," not "With passion and with life" (1805, XI, 146-47), but with "an impassioned life" (l. 104). At the conclusion of the revised Book VII, Wordsworth tells us that, as a younger man, what he had most appreciated about Nature was her ability to aid "the thoughts,/ However multitudinous, to move/ With order and relation" (ll. 759-61). But here, he finally realizes that the reason she is able to do this is that she, herself, is governed by divine laws inherent in a supreme intellect that knows no disharmony.

At the beginning of Book XII (1850, Book XIII), Wordsworth makes yet another statement about Nature:

From Nature doth emotion come, and moods
 Of calmness equally are Nature's gift:
 This is her glory--these two attributes
 Are sister horns that constitute her strength;
 This twofold influence is the sun and shower
 Of all her bounties, both in origin
 And end alike benignant. Hence it is
 That genius, which exists by interchange
 Of peace and excitation, finds in her
 His best and purest friend--from her receives
 That energy by which he seeks the truth,
 Is roused, aspires, grasps, struggles, wishes, craves
 From her that happy stillness of the mind
 Which fits him to receive it when unsought.

(1805, XII, 1-14)

If we risk the heresy of paraphrase here, we arrive at a statement

something like this: Nature gives us emotion and moods of calmness. She is the best friend of the genius because she "rouzes" him and gives him the energy to aspire, grasp, struggle, wish, and crave after truth. She also affords him a stillness of mind that enables him to receive truth when it comes of its own accord, after he ceases to aspire, grasp, struggle, wish for, and crave after it. In the 1850 passage, however, Wordsworth does not assert that the genius, in accepting "help" from Nature, must fight his way through something reminiscent of "Rocks, Caves, Lakes, Fens, Bogs, Dens, and shades of death"² to arrive at the truth:

FROM Nature doth emotion come, and moods
Of calmness equally are Nature's gift:
This is her glory; these two attributes
Are sister horns that constitute her strength.
Hence Genius, born to thrive by interchange
Of peace and excitation, finds in her
His best and purest friend; from her receives
That energy by which he seeks the truth,
From her that happy stillness of the mind
Which fits him to receive it when unsought.

(1850, XIII, 1-10)

A paraphrase of Wordsworth's assertions in this passage reveals that what he is saying is simply that Nature gives us both moments of excitation and moments of calmness, energy to seek the truth and a serenity of mind to accept the truth when that truth manifests itself, of its own accord, without our seeking it. Here, there is no struggle, and there is no opposition between man's imagination and Nature, as there appears to be in the 1805 passage. And here Wordsworth does not negate his earlier claim, in his apostrophe to the imagination in Book VI, that the imagination, engaged in the creative act, "Seeks for no trophies, struggles for no spoils/ That may attest her prowess" (1850, VI, 610-11).

In the passage immediately following this one, Wordsworth makes

yet another important statement about Nature, a statement that he greatly revises in the 1850 version. Here are the 1805 lines:

Such benefit may souls of humblest frame
 Partake of, each in their degree; 'tis mine
 To speak of what myself have known and felt--
 Sweet task, for words find easy way, inspired
 By gratitude and confidence in truth.
 Long time in search of knowledge desperate,
 I was benighted heart and mind, but now
 On all sides day began to reappear,
 And it was proved indeed that not in vain
 I had been taught to reverence a power
 That is the very quality and shape
 And image of right reason, that matures
 Her processes by steady laws, gives birth
 To no impatient or fallacious hopes,
 No heat of passion or excessive zeal,
 No vain conceits, provokes to no quick turns
 Of self-applauding intellect, but lifts
 The being into magnanimity,
 Holds up before the mind, intoxicate
 With present objects and the busy dance
 Of things that pass away, a temperate shew
 Of objects that endure--and by this course
 Disposes her, when over-fondly set
 On leaving her incumbrances behind,
 To seek in man, and in the frame of life
 Social and individual, what there is
 Desirable, affecting, good or fair,
 Of kindred permanence, the gifts divine
 And universal, the pervading grace
 That hath been, is, and shall be. Above all
 Did Nature bring again this wiser mood,
 More deeply reestablished in my soul,
 Which, seeing little worthy or sublime
 In what we blazon with the pompous names
 Of power and action, early tutored me
 To look with feelings of fraternal love
 Upon those unassuming things that hold
 A silent station in this beauteous world.

(1805, XII, 15-52)

Aside from the "Snowdon passages" themselves, this is Wordsworth's most important statement about the influence of Nature upon his development. And, in the revised version of these lines, Wordsworth's assertions with regard to Nature convince us, more than his statements in the A text,

that it was Nature that was responsible for, not only the important intellectual and emotional growth of Wordsworth's mind, but its moral growth as well.

In the 1850 lines, Wordsworth does not claim that his is a "Sweet task" (l. 18) as he does in the A text, but that it is a "Smooth task" (l. 14) for him to explain what he, himself, has "known and felt" (l. 13). And he does not simply refer to this period of his life as one in which, "On all sides day began to reappear" (l. 22). Instead, he makes a much more meaningful imagistic link with previous episodes in his life by asserting that this was a time in which "the dawn" was "beginning now/ To re-appear" (ll. 18-19). He also makes the more rational assertion that the "Power" (l. 20) which he "had been taught to reverence" (l. 20) is the "visible quality and shape/ And image of right reason" (ll. 21-22; my italics). But the most important assertions that Wordsworth makes in the revised passage come in his explanation of precisely what the "Power" of Nature did for him in his developing years. Here, he does not claim that it "lifts/ The being into magnanimity" (ll. 31-32) as he does in the earlier version; rather, he insists that it "trains/ To meekness, and exalts by humble faith" (ll. 27-28).³ Of this revision the Norton editors complain, "The strength of 1805, 31-32, is sacrificed to neatness and conventional piety" (Gill, p. 439). But what the Norton editors do not take into consideration is that, while the 1805 lines are rhetorically impressive, the 1850 lines give us a more realistic appraisal of what the influence of Nature has, in fact, done for the young poet. In truth, what Wordsworth has been telling us throughout the entire Prelude is not that Nature had the power to influence the youth to bear his troubles calmly or to make sacrifices for the good of others, but that its main

power rested in its ability to reveal to the young man, not only his own powers, but his own limitations and failures as well. Contrary to what many critics and readers assume, Nature was never the complete answer to Wordsworth's problems. She only offered him a reliable means against which to measure his own capabilities, a guideline to demonstrate how harmonious life can be if we understand the principles and laws behind life. And, contrary to what Karl Kroeber asserts, the subject of The Prelude is not "power,"⁴ for, as Wordsworth explains in the revised conclusion of this passage:

Above all
 Were re-established now those watchful thoughts
 Which, seeing little worthy or sublime
 In what the Historian's pen so much delights
 To blazon--power and energy detached
 From moral purpose--early tutored me
 To look with feelings of fraternal love
 Upon the unassuming things that hold
 A silent station in this beauteous world.

(1850, XIII, 39-47)⁵

The lesson that Nature finally teaches the young poet is not merely to understand that some power and action is not "worthy or sublime" (1805, XII, 47), but that "power and energy detached/ From moral purpose" (ll. 43-44) is useless. The subject of The Prelude and the great lesson Wordsworth explains that he learns throughout the poem is not that there are certain forms of power, but that these various forms of power, imaginative power, the power of Nature, and the power of social action, must all be used both for the good of the individual and the good of mankind.

That Wordsworth uses his creative power for the good of man is evident in his concluding statements, both about man in the individual

sense, and man in the abstract, general sense. "Thus moderated, thus composed, I found/ Once more in Man an object of delight,/ Of pure imagination and of love" (1805, XII, 53-55; 1850, XIII, 48-50), Wordsworth tells us in both versions. But because his "sense of excellence--of right and wrong" (1850, XIII, 58) has been sharpened by the time he revises the poem for the last time, he can speak out more effectively against social evils here than he can in the A text. In the 1805 text, Wordsworth asserts:

With settling judgements now of what would last,
 And what would disappear; prepared to find
 Ambition, folly, madness, in the men
 Who thrust themselves upon this passive world
 As rulers of the world--to see in these
 Even when the public welfare is their aim
 Plans without thought, or bottomed on false thought
 And false philosophy; having brought to test
 Of solid life and true result the books
 Of modern statist, and thereby perceived
 The utter hollowness of what we name
 The wealth of nations, where alone that wealth
 Is lodged, and how increased; and having gained
 A more judicious knowledge of what makes
 The dignity of individual man--
 Of man, no composition of the thought,
 Abstraction, shadow, image, but the man
 Of whom we read, the man whom we behold
 With our own eyes--I could not but inquire,
 Not with less interest than heretofore,
 But greater, though in spirit more subdued,
 Why is this glorious creature to be found
 One only in ten thousand? What one is,
 Why may not many be? What bars are thrown
 By Nature in the way of such a hope?
 Our animal wants and necessities
 Which they impose, are these the obstacles?--
 If not, then others vanish into air.
 Such meditations bred an anxious wish
 To ascertain how much of real worth,
 And genuine knowledge, and true power of mind,
 Did at this day exist in those who lived
 By bodily labour, labour far exceeding
 Their due proportion, under all the weight
 Of that injustice which upon ourselves
 By composition of society

Ourselves entail. To frame such estimate
 I chiefly looked (what need to look beyond?)
 Among the natural abodes of men,
 Fields with their rural works--recalled to mind
 My earliest notices, with these compared
 The observations of my later youth
 Continued downwards to that very day.

(1805, XII, 69-111)

When Wordsworth revises these lines, he is much more assertive about what he has learned about man and about the evils of society. Here, he tells us not that he has learned "what makes/ The dignity of individual man" (1805, XII, 82-83), but "the worth/ And dignity of individual man" (ll. 80-81; my italics). And he expresses a much stronger judgment of the "Rulers of the world" (l. 68) whose plans, he tells us, are

without thought, or built on theories
 Vague and unsound; and having brought the books
 Of modern statistes to their proper test,
 Life, human life, with all its sacred claims
 Of sex and age, and heaven-descended rights,
 Mortal, or those beyond the reach of death;
 And having thus discerned how dire a thing
 Is worshipped in that idol proudly named
 'The Wealth of Nations', where alone that wealth
 Is lodged, . . .

.....
 I could not but inquire--

Why is this glorious creature to be found
 One only in ten thousand? What one is,
 Why may not millions be? What bars are thrown
 By Nature in the way of such a hope?
 Our animal appetites and daily wants,
 Are these obstructions insurmountable?

(1850, XIII, 70-92; his italics)

Works such as The Wealth of Nations, then, are not merely hollow tracts to the more mature Wordsworth. They are dangerous to the entire human race because they treat man, not as man, but as a soulless animal. It is interesting, too, that when Wordsworth speaks of "human life, with all

its sacred claims" (l. 73), he not only speaks of the spiritual "claims" of humanity, but the "claims/ Of sex and age" (ll. 73-74). While it is unfortunate that Wordsworth does not expand upon these topics in more detail, it is interesting that he acknowledges that the elderly, children, men, and women all have "sacred claims" in life. And it is interesting to note, too, in the final version, that Wordsworth is much more straightforward in his claim that the injustices that men suffer are brought about, not by society as a whole, but by individuals in society. It is an "injustice which upon ourselves/ Ourselves entail'" (ll. 99-100). It is clear to the more mature Wordsworth that it is the individual who must attempt to change the world for the better, and it is the duty of the poet to show him the way.

"This history, my friend, hath chiefly told/ Of intellectual power from stage to stage/ Advancing hand in hand with love and joy,/ And of imagination teaching truth" (XI, 42-45), Wordsworth tells Coleridge in the A text. In the 1850 text, however, his claim is quite different:

This narrative, my Friend! hath chiefly told
Of intellectual power, fostering love,
Dispensing truth, and, over men and things,
Where reason yet might hesitate, diffusing
Prophetic sympathies of genial faith.

(1850, XII, 44-48)

In the revised lines, Wordsworth does not indicate that "intellectual power" advances "hand in hand" with emotional fulfillment. Nor does he maintain that the faculty of the imagination has the power to teach truth. In the final text, Wordsworth asserts that the story he has told is not merely a personal one, but is one that has universal applications, in that it describes, first, how "intellectual power" fosters love and

dispenses truth. Havens's comments on this passage explain more fully:

The change was probably made because, while the imagination is indispensable for the acquisition of any but the more obvious, utilitarian truths (it is constantly used by the scientist), it is not itself the organ of truth, as the A text might be thought to imply. (Mind, p. 563)

For the more mature Wordsworth, then, "intellectual power" is not, per se, a means whereby the poet is taught the truth, but is the means by which he teaches the truth, after he has, with the aid of this "power," learned to love and reverence life.

We might have some difficulty with the line "Where reason yet might hesitate" (l. 47), and it is unfortunate that Wordsworth deletes from this Book the one passage that illuminates his meaning. In the 1805 text, he tells us that when he speaks of "reason," he is using the term for two entirely different processes of the mind:

There comes (if need be now to speak of this
After such long detail of our mistakes),
There comes a time when reason--not the grand
And simple reason, but that humbler power
Which carries on its no inglorious work
By logic and minute analysis--
Is of all idols that which pleases most
The growing mind. A trifler would he be
Who on the obvious benefits should dwell
That rise out of this process; but to speak
Of all the narrow estimates of things
Which hence originate were a worthy theme
For philosophic verse. Suffice it here
To hint that danger cannot but attend
Upon a function rather proud to be
The enemy of falsehood, than the friend
Of truth--to sit in judgement than to feel.

(1805, XI, 121-37)

Wordsworth deletes this passage probably because he thinks that by this stage in the poem we should understand that "reason" means both that integrated power of imagination and rational thought and minute analysis.

And, in the 1850 passage that we are examining, it would appear that he is using "reason" in the latter sense of the word. The "reason" that "yet might hesitate" here is the common, day-to-day "reason" that, without benefit of the integrated power of the imagination, is incapable of evaluating experience on anything higher than a materialistic or scientific level.

But Wordsworth, himself, is troubled by the term "reason" all the way through the poem. Near the conclusion of the final Book, he revises yet another passage in which he attempts to distinguish between the grand power of reason, and reason as it is used on a more mundane level. Here is the passage from the A text:

And balanced by a reason which indeed
Is reason, duty, and pathetic truth--
And God and man divided, as they ought,
Between them the great system of the world,
Where man is sphered, and which God animates.

(1805, XIII, 264-68)

Burton's assessment of these lines, while amusing, is, nonetheless, accurate. She claims that "It is too troublesome, reason which is reason and reason which is not! In the revision, however, we learn his meaning. Reason which is reason leans on Providence, is related to truth" (One Wordsworth, p. 36; her italics):

And balanced by pathetic truth, by trust
In hopeful reason, leaning on the stay
Of Providence; and in reverence for duty,
Here, if need be, struggling with storms, and there
Strewing in peace life's humblest ground with herbs,
At every season green, sweet at all hours!

(1850, XIV, 296-301)

In the 1805 version, then, "reason" is "duty and pathetic truth," whereas

in the final text, imagination is "balanced by pathetic truth, by trust/
In hopeful reason." And we shall see precisely how much more sensible
this assertion is than the assertion in the A text as we examine the
"Snowdon passages," in which Wordsworth's main aim is to explain how
imagination and reason must be balanced in the mature mind in order both
to recognize and express truth.

Wordsworth makes only one important revision as he describes
the ascent of Snowdon. Instead of telling us that "It was a summer's
night, a close warm night" (l. 10) as he does in the A text, he tells us
that "It was a close, warm breezeless summer night" (l. 11; my italics)
as he set out "to see the sun/ Rise from the top of Snowdon" (ll. 5-6).⁶
With this revision, Wordsworth is suggesting that he no longer needs a
"breeze" to give him joy (ll. 1-4) as he does at the beginning of the A
text, nor does he even need it to bring him joy (ll. 1-3) as he does at
the beginning of the 1850 poem. Now, he is capable of finding joy for
himself, and, in the A text, he describes this ~~process~~ process as follows:

Ascending at loose distance each from each,
And I, as chanced, the foremost of the band--
When at my feet the ground appeared to brighten,
And with a step or two seemed brighter still;
Nor had I time to ask the cause of this,
For instantly a light upon the turf
Fell like a flash. I looked about, and lo,
The moon stood naked in the heavens at height
Immense above my head, and on the shore
I found myself of a huge sea of mist,
Which meek and silent rested at my feet.
A hundred hills their dusky backs upheaved
All over this still ocean, and beyond,
Far, far beyond, the vapours shot themselves
In headlands, tongues, and promontory shapes,
Into the sea, the real sea, that seemed
To dwindle and give up its majesty,
Usurped upon as far as sight could reach.
Meanwhile, the moon looked down upon this shew
In single glory, and we stood, the mist
Touching our very feet; and from the shore

At distance not a third part of a mile
 Was a blue chasm, 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.
 The universal spectacle throughout
 Was shaped for admiration and delight,
 Grand in itself alone, but in that breach
 Through which the homeless voice of waters rose,
 That dark deep thoroughfare, had Nature lodged
 The soul, the imagination of the whole.

(1805, XIII, 34-65)

Here is the 1850 account:

Ascending at loose distance each from each,
 And I as chanced, the foremost of the band;
 When at my feet the ground appeared to brighten,
 And with a step or two seemed brighter still;
 Nor was time given to ask or learn the cause,
 For instantly a light upon the turf
 Fell like a flash, and lo! as I looked up,
 The Moon hung naked in a firmament
 Of azure without cloud, and at my feet
 Rested a silent sea of hoary mist.
 A hundred hills their dusky backs upheaved
 All over this still ocean; and beyond,
 Far, far beyond, the solid vapours stretched,
 In headlands, tongues, and promontory shapes,
 Into the main Atlantic, that appeared
 To dwindle, and give up his majesty,
 Usurped upon far as the sight could reach.
 Not so the ethereal vault; encroachment none
 Was there, nor loss; only the inferior stars
 Had disappeared, or shed a fainter light
 In the clear presence of the full-orbed Moon,
 Who, from her sovereign elevation, gazed
 Upon the billowy ocean, as it lay
 All meek and silent, save that through a rift--
 Not distant from the shore whereon we stood,
 A fixed, abysmal, gloomy, breathing-place--
 Mounted the roar of waters, torrents, streams
 Innumerable, roaring with one voice
 Heard over earth and sea, and, in that hour,
 For so it seems, felt by the starry heavens.

(1850, XIV, 33-62)

The Norton editors complain that "None of the other great passages of The Prelude--indeed of Wordsworth's poetry as a whole--suffered in revision

as did the Ascent of Snowdon" (Gill, p. 461). And Philip Hobsbaum agrees:

In the later Prelude, the Moon does not stand naked in the heavens, but 'hung' in a 'firmament'; and we lose the sense of immense height in favour of a description of this same firmament--'azure without cloud'.

Again, the 'vapours' of the early version are in flux--they 'shot themselves/ In headlands, tongues and promontory shapes'. But, in the later version, they appear as 'solid vapours stretched/ In headlands, tongues' Now this is a complete impossibility, since the vapours cannot be solid, and, if they were, could not be stretched--and, if they could be stretched, they would hardly stretch into forms as various as those of headlands, tongues and promontories. Such images as these could only be appropriate to something flexuous and evanescent.

But worst of all, Wordsworth's stark simplicity--'the moon looked down upon this show'--is Miltonised into this cumbrous periphrasis:

the full-orbed Moon,
Who, from her sovereign elevation, gazed
Upon the billowy ocean

All personality is drained off; we are left with received gestures, such as 'full-orbed', 'sovereign elevation'--which give us no idea of how things looked to the young Wordsworth--indeed, there is no sense of that passionate spectator at all!

These verbal points are not small ones, even in the local context of a single episode; and, multiplied as they are throughout the revised Prelude, they serve to blur and dissipate the sharp impressions of the original. I am not imputing deliberate falsification so much as a desire in the aging Wordsworth to restore the literary decorum which his younger self had so sharply outraged. These verbal changes, however, often produced an entire dislocation of narrative. (Tradition and Experiment, pp. 188-89; his italics)

I would argue that there is no "dislocation of narrative" in the 1850 version, that there is, instead, a rational conclusion to the narrative, a conclusion that we must examine closely, not in isolation, but in relation to the rest of the poem, in order to determine precisely what thoughts about Nature and the mind of man Wordsworth wishes to leave with us as he ends the story of the growth of his mind.

When we consider Hobsbaum's criticism of these lines, we

realize that we do "lose the sense of immense height in favour of a description . . . 'azure without cloud.'" But we also gain a sense of finality in this revision and a sense of illumination that we do not gain from the lines in the A text, because we know that the poet does not rely on Nature in the same way that he did at the beginning of the poem. Just as the night is "breezeless" (l. 11), so, too, it is also cloudless. The "yon azure sky" (l. 4) that he spoke of at the beginning of the 1850 poem is now clear and unimpeded by clouds. There is no "wandering cloud" (1850, I, 17) to guide the poet to the top of Snowdon, and, conversely, there is no "cloud" to come between the poet and the "full-orbed Moon," between the poet and the vision of truth that he experiences and that he expresses in his poetry.

We should pay particular attention to the "full-orbed Moon" in this passage, because, as John Beer suggests:

If we knew the Snowdon scene, and only that, we should be intrigued by the mysterious luminary in the sky, but inclined to dismiss it. But from the rest of human experience we know that if we were actually standing on the surface of that blank circle above we should find ourselves in a sunlit landscape. Its finite light 'feeds upon infinity', in fact, and transmits the light and power of the sun, otherwise unbearable to the eye of man, as a still stream which human sight finds refreshing. The fact neither negates nor confirms the gloomy implications of the immediate landscape; it simply suggests an alternative pattern of interpretation, a different possible focus.
(Wordsworth in Time, p. 189)

This full power of reflected light seems to be what Wordsworth wishes to express here. This light "gazed/ Upon the billowy ocean" (ll. 54-55) and penetrated "A fixed, abysmal, gloomy breathing-place" (l. 58). In this passage, Wordsworth does not assert that the entire scene "Was shaped for admiration and delight" (1805, XIII, 61) by Nature. Nor does he assert that "in that breach/ . . . had Nature lodged/ The soul, the imagination

of the whole" (ll. 62-65). He merely asserts that, "from her sovereign elevation" (l. 54) the moon's "clear presence" (l. 53) sheds reflected light upon the whole scene.

In his comments about the "solid vapours" (ll. 45-46), Hobsbaum seems to forget that Wordsworth, in the "Essay, Supplementary to the Preface of 1815," explicitly says,

The appropriate business of poetry (which, nevertheless, if genuine, is as permanent as pure science) her appropriate employment, her privilege and her duty, is to treat of things not as they are, but as they appear; not as they exist in themselves, but as they seem to exist to the senses, and to the passions. (Prose Works III, 63; his italics)

Here, Wordsworth is describing the "solid vapours," not as they really were, but as they seemed to be, in precisely the same shapes as they appeared in the A text, but, this time, in eternal repose, stretching into their various shapes. What Hobsbaum does not notice about the 1850 passage is the tranquillity and peace that Wordsworth stresses as he describes the entire scene. In the 1805 text, he tells us that the moon "stood" (l. 41) in the heavens. Here, he tells us that, like the child in Book I who "hung alone" as he watched a sky that "seemed not a sky/ Of earth" (1850, I, 336-39), and like the Boy of Winander who "hung/ listening" (1805, V, 406-407; 1850, V, 381-82) to the sounds of the owls, and even like the clock at Trinity that "hung" (1850, III, 53) near the youthful undergraduate's room, the moon "hung naked in a firmament" (l. 40). In this version, too, Wordsworth does not tell us that "the vapours shot themselves" (l. 47) into the various shapes, but that they stretched in solid repose into "the main Atlantic" (l. 47), the "billowy ocean, as it lay/ All meek and silent" (ll. 55-56).

The repose and calm of the natural scene is significant, because,

as Wordsworth proceeds to tell us, it is only in a corresponding calm and repose that he realizes the full significance of the scene. He tells us in the A text:

A meditation rose in me that night
 Upon the lonely mountain when the scene
 Had passed away, and it appeared 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 whatsoe'er is dim
 Or vast in its own being--

(1805, XIII, 66-73)

Wordsworth revises these lines to read:

When into air had partially dissolved
 That vision, given to spirits of the night
 And three chance human wanderers, in calm thought
 Reflected, it appeared to me the type
 Of a majestic intellect, its acts
 And its possessions, what it has and craves,
 What in itself it is, and would become.
 There I beheld the emblem of a mind
 That feeds upon infinity, that broods
 Over the dark abyss, intent to hear
 Its voices issuing forth to silent light
 In one continuous stream; a mind sustained
 By recognitions of transcendent power,
 In sense conducting to ideal form,
 In soul of more than mortal privilege.

(1850, XIV, 63-77)

While Burton's comment on the revised passage both illuminates it and defends it against charges of orthodox piety,⁷ it is Frank McConnell who suggests the most important point about these lines:

The key word in the whole passage is 'Reflected,' for while its most obvious meaning is 'reflection' in the sense of meditation or ratiocination, it is impossible to construe the phrase grammatically with this meaning. If we wish to read the sentence grammatically, with 'Reflected' referring to 'it,' the meaning toward which 'Reflected' tends is reflection in its purely optical non-intellectual sense, like reflections in a pool of water. Such an implicit meaning for the word gives the

whole construction 'in calm thought/ Reflected' a complexity which is almost a direct reversal of 1805's more simple-minded 'A meditation rose in me that night.' (Confessional Imagination, pp. 156-57)

What Wordsworth seems to be implying through this revision is that when he thought about this vision after it had "partially dissolved" into the air, there was "Reflected" within his own mind an "emblem" of the higher, creative mind. It is not the imagination, therefore, that brings forth this reflection. It is his conscious intelligence. And, as we look back to the passage just preceding this one in which Wordsworth describes the scene itself, we realize that, just as the reflected light of the moon illuminated the "dark abyss" of the imagination, so, too, has the conscious mind of the poet penetrated the secrets of the subconscious here. In these lines, then, Wordsworth's mind is both reflecting itself and the infinite mind of which it is a part. Here, then, the poet realizes that there is, within his own mind, a "Resemblance of that glorious faculty" of the universal, creative mind, a "Resemblance" "That his powers bear with them as their own" (ll. 89-90). And, it is only the 1850 passage that we realize precisely what Wordsworth means when he asserts that "imagination, . . . / Is but another name for absolute power/ And clearest insight, amplitude of mind,/ And Reason in her most exalted mood" (1805, XIII, 167-70; 1850, XIV, 189-92). Reason, imagination, and the powers of the universal, creative mind must all work together in the act of creation. Spiritual love "acts not nor can exist/ Without imagination" (XIV, 188-89) and "imagination" cannot function alone without "reason" and the illumination that "reason" gains from the creative mind of God, or as John Beer so aptly puts it:

Although The Prelude ends with the praise of intellectual love, therefore, it is an essential feature of the argument that this cannot be reached without their interlocking ministries [of imagination and awe]. Unless emotion is deepened by fear and reason illuminated by imagination, 'love' and 'intellect' remain no more than the combination of sentiment and reason which he deplored in his fashionable contemporaries. (Wordsworth in Time, p. 190)

It is only after Wordsworth revises this discussion of reason and imagination that he can extend his discussion, meaningfully, to an explanation of human love. In the 1805 text he advises us:

in some green bower
Rest, and be not alone, but have thou there
The one who is thy choice of all the world--
There, linger, lulled, and lost, and rapt away--
Be happy to thy fill; thou call'st this love,
And so it is, but there is higher love
Than this, a love that comes into the heart
With awe and a diffusive sentiment.
Thy love is human merely: this proceeds
More from the brooding soul, and is divine.

(1805, XIII, 156-65)

In the 1850 version, however, he tells us:

In some green bower
Rest, and be not alone, but have thou there
The One who is thy choice of all the world:
There linger, listening, gazing, with delight
Impassioned, but delight how pitiable!
Unless this love by a still higher love
Be hallowed, love that breathes not without awe;
Love that adores, but on the knees of prayer,
By heaven inspired; that frees from chains the soul,
Bearing, in union with the purest, best,
Of earth-born passions, on the wings of praise
A mutable tribute to the Almighty's Throne.

(1850, XIV, 176-87)

In the 1805 lines Wordsworth simply asserts that there is human love and divine love, and that we can enjoy the former, but should realize that the latter does exist. In the 1850 lines, however, Wordsworth asserts

that human love is "pitiabile" if it is not "hallowed" by divine love. What Wordsworth seems to be implying in these lines is that, like the creative act itself, if a power higher than man's does not take part in the act, there is no true creativity in the human love between a man and a woman. Unless both the man and the woman reverence a love higher than the love they have for each other, they do not experience and cannot express their personal love for each other in the deepest and most meaningful ways.

"I felt, and nothing else; I did not judge,/ I never thought of judging" (XI, 237-38) Wordsworth admits in the A text as he speaks about his own earlier days communing with Nature. In the 1850 text, however, his assertion about his youth is quite different:

Worshipping then among the depth of things,
 As piety ordained; could I submit
 To measured admiration, or to aught
 That should preclude humility and love?
 I felt, observed, and pondered; did not judge,
 Yea, never thought of judging.

(1850, XII, 184-89)

Harold Bloom asserts that it is "In the transition between these two passages [that] Wordsworth loses his Miltonic heritage, an insistence upon the creative autonomy of the individual soul" (Intro., p. 13). But even in 1805, Wordsworth did not believe in "the creative autonomy of the individual soul." Even as a young man, Wordsworth believed in God, and in the creative power of God permeating all of life. Never, as a poet, did he feel "and nothing else." In the 1805 version, his thought was immature and his emotional and stylistic responses to his thoughts undeveloped, but, even then, he worshipped "As piety ordained" among the deepest things. Wordsworth's Miltonic heritage is not a belief in the

autonomy of the individual or a belief in the autonomy of the creative act. His Miltonic heritage is his humanitarianism and his dedication to teaching man the truth about the inter-relationship between God, man, and Nature. And we can understand this best if we examine a revision that Wordsworth makes in a passage in which he discusses a youthful experience on the Salisbury Plain, during which he learns of the responsibilities of the poet. Here are the 1805 lines:

'twas my chance
 To have before me on the downy plain
 Lines, circles, mounts, a mystery of shapes
 Such as in many quarters yet survive,
 With intricate profusion figuring o'er
 The untilled ground (the work, as some divine,
 Of infant science, imitative forms
 By which the Druids covertly expressed
 Their knowledge of the heavens, and imaged forth
 The constellations), I was gently charmed,
 Albeit with an antiquarian's dream,
 And saw the bearded teachers, with white wands
 Uplifted, pointing to the starry sky,
 Alternately, and plain below, while breath
 Of music seemed to guide them, and the waste
 Was cheared with stillness and a pleasant sound.

(1805, XII, 338-53)

Here are the 1850 lines:

where'er the Plain
 Was figured o'er with circles, lines, or mounds,
 That yet survive, a work, as some divine,
 Shaped by the Druids, so to represent
 Their knowledge of the heavens, and image forth
 The constellations; gently was I charmed
 Into a waking dream, a reverie
 That, with believing eyes, where'er I turned,
 Beheld long-bearded teachers, with white wands
 Uplifted, pointing to the starry sky,
 Alternately, and plain below, while breath
 Of music swayed their motions, and the waste
 Rejoiced with them and me in those sweet sounds.

(1850, XIII, 337-49)

In the 1850 version, Wordsworth does not have "an antiquarian's" interest in the scene. He viewed it as a poet, in "a waking dream, a reverie." And he does not mention that the sacred rites of the Druid poet-priest-scientists took place on "untilled ground," or that a "stillness" permeated the scene. He mentions only that he saw the Druids alternately pointing to the heavens and to the earth, "while breath/ Of music swayed their motions," and that even the "waste/ Rejoiced with them" as they made their music. Here everything is in harmony, including the young Wordsworth himself, with whom the "waste" also rejoiced. He has learned that, as a poet, he will never walk apart, on "untilled ground," in "stillness," away from the rest of humanity. It will be his responsibility, as it was the responsibility of the Druids, to bring together for man a knowledge of the heavens and a knowledge of earth, of divine and human matters. And the fact that the "waste" "Rejoiced," not only with the ancient bards, but with the youthful poet, himself, attests to his acceptance, by Nature, as one of those who will bring into harmony in his verse, the diverse worlds of earth and heaven. It will be his duty to bring heaven down to earth for man and to explain to man his own inherent divinity. And there is no doubt that Wordsworth accepts the responsibility of the poet-priest. He closes the poem, in both versions, by telling Coleridge:

Prophets of Nature, we to them will speak
 A lasting inspiration, sanctified
 By reason, blest in faith: what we have loved,
 Others will love, and we will teach them how;
 Instruct them how the mind of man becomes
 A thousand times more beautiful than the earth
 On which he dwells, above this frame of things
 (Which, 'mid all revolutions in the hopes
 And fears of men, doth still remain unchanged)

In beauty exalted, as it is itself
Of quality and fabric more divine.

(1850, XIV, 446-56)⁸

But it is only in the 1850 Prelude, in which Wordsworth admits that "thoughts and things/ . . . learned to take/ More rational proportions" (ll. 283-85), that Wordsworth's assertions about Nature, God, and the mind of man have the conviction and the authority to gain, if not our acceptance, at least our respect.

NOTES

Introduction

¹F. W. Bateson, Wordsworth: A Re-interpretation (1956; rpt. London: Longmans Green and Co., Ltd., 1965), footnote 1, p. 42. It seems ironic that Bateson, whose major thesis in this work is that Wordsworth's greatness lies in his struggle to free himself from his own excessive subjectivity, should find nothing praiseworthy to say about the 1850 Prelude, the work in which Wordsworth most succeeds in this struggle. In this dissertation, unless otherwise acknowledged, all quotations from critics (and editors) cited in the Introduction will be from works reviewed here and will be acknowledged parenthetically in the text. In the following chapters, works cited here and works used repeatedly throughout the study will be identified by a shortened form of their titles.

²William Wordsworth, The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth: The Later Years, 1821-50, 3 vols., ed. E. de Selincourt (London: Clarendon Press, 1939), I, 473. Hereafter cited as LY.

³William Wordsworth, The Prelude, 1805, 1850, ed. E. de Selincourt, rev. Helen Darbishire (1926; rpt. London: Clarendon Press, 1959). All quotations from the variants coming between 1805 and 1850 will be from this edition and will be acknowledged parenthetically (as de Sel., app. crit.). All quotations from the de Selincourt Introduction will be from this edition, and all quotations from The Prelude will be from this edition in this chapter only.

⁴For a discussion of these lines and the ideas informing them, see Chapter III, pp. 146-47.

⁵For short discussions of the influence of Hartleian associationism on Wordsworth's earlier verse, see pp. 42-3, 57, 59 and passim.

⁶The revision is neither hard to understand nor hard to forgive. At 1805, XI, 306, Wordsworth refers to this figure as "A Girl." At I, 315, however, he suddenly changes her into "The Woman." In the 1850 text, he avoids this incongruous shift. Perhaps what bothers de Selincourt is the more overtly sexual implication of the word "female" in the final version.

⁷For a discussion of the Discharged Soldier passages, see Chapter III, pp. 183-93.

⁸Geoffrey Hartman, Wordsworth's Poetry 1787-1814 (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1964), p. 36. Hereafter cited as Wordsworth's Poetry.

⁹Margaret Drabble (Wordsworth [London: Evans Brothers Ltd., 1966], p. 79) points out that "Perhaps the first most important point to get straight about The Prelude is to decide what it is not. It is not a simple account of the poet's life. Wordsworth never says that it is; he never claims to have got his facts right, or his dates right, or to have told the whole truth. . . . More than any of his other works, it was written to please himself; it is the most private of his poems."

¹⁰Harold Bloom, The Visionary Company: A Reading of English Romantic Poetry (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1961), pp. 136-37. Hereafter cited as Visionary Company.

¹¹For a discussion of Wordsworth and the "felt experience," see Chapter I, Part I of the present study.

¹²Russell Noyes, William Wordsworth (New York: Twayne Publishers Inc., 1971), p. 123.

¹³William Empson, "Sense in The Prelude," in The Structure of Complex Words (London: Chatto & Windus, 1951), p. 294.

¹⁴Herbert Lindenberger, On Wordsworth's Prelude (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1963), Appendix One, p. 299.

¹⁵F. R. Leavis, "Reality and Sincerity," in A Selection from Scrutiny, 2 vols., ed. F. R. Leavis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), I, 257.

¹⁶Helen Darbishire, "Wordsworth's Prelude (1926)," The Nineteenth Century, 99 (May, 1926), 718-31. Rpt. in Wordsworth: The Prelude, ed. W. J. Harvey and Richard Gravil (London: Macmillan Press, Ltd., 1972), p. 84.

¹⁷Mary Moorman, William Wordsworth: A Biography, 2 vols. (London: Clarendon Press, 1965), Volume II, The Later Years, 502-10. Hereafter cited as Moorman I or II.

¹⁸C. H. Herford, Wordsworth (London: George Routledge & Sons, Ltd., 1930), p. 223.

¹⁹George McLean Harper, William Wordsworth: His Life, Works, and Influence, 2 vols. (1929; rpt. New York: Russell & Russell, Inc., 1960), II. 409.

²⁰George McLean Harper, "The Crisis in Wordsworth's Life and Art," Queen's Quarterly, 40 (February, 1933), 4.

²¹H. W. Garrod, Wordsworth: Lectures and Essays (2nd ed., 1927; rpt. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), p. 138.

²²Willard L. Sperry, Wordsworth's Anti-climax (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1935), Preface, p. v.

²³Hugh I'Anson Fausset, The Lost Leader: A Study of Wordsworth (London: Jonathan Cape, Ltd., 1933), Preface, p. 7.

²⁴David Perkins, "Introduction to Wordsworth," in English Romantic Writers (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1967), p. 175.

²⁵Yvor Winters, Forms of Discovery (n.p., Alan Swallow, 1967), p. 172.

²⁶Carlos Baker, "Sensation and Vision in Wordsworth," in English Romantic Poets: Modern Essays in Criticism, ed. M. H. Abrams (1960; rpt. London: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 109. Hereafter cited as "Sensation and Vision."

²⁷Robert Marchant, Principles of Wordsworth's Poetry (Swansea: The Brynmill Publishing Company, 1974), pp. 54-55. Hereafter cited as Principles.

²⁸Donald Davie, Articulate Energy: An Enquiry into the Syntax of English Poetry (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1955), p. 114.

²⁹Bennett Weaver, "Wordsworth's Prelude: The Poetic Function of Memory," in Wordsworth: Poet of the Unconquerable Mind, ed. Charles I. Proudfit (Ann Arbor, Michigan: The George Wahr Publishing Co., 1965), p. 9.

³⁰Philip Hobsbaum, Tradition and Experiment in English Poetry (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1979), p. 187. Hereafter cited as Tradition and Experiment.

³¹Carson C. Hamilton, Wordsworth's Decline in Poetic Power: Prophet into High Priest (New York: Exposition Press, 1963), p. 306.

³²William Wordsworth, The Prelude, 1798-99, ed. Stephen Parrish (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1977), MS. JJ, U^r, p. 95. The MS. photostat, p. 94, appears to read "Th' eternal spirit," and de Selincourt reprints it as such in his Appendix, p. 636. All quotations from the 1798-99 Prelude earlier than MS. V will be taken from this edition, hereafter cited as Parrish.

³³ Eugene Stelzig, All Shades of Consciousness: Wordsworth's Poetry and the Self in Time (The Hague: Paris: Mouton, 1975), pp. 14-15. Hereafter cited as All Shades of Consciousness.

³⁴ Mary E. Burton, The One Wordsworth (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1942), p. 22. Hereafter cited as One Wordsworth.

³⁵ Penelope June Stokes, "The Quest for Maturity: A Study of William Wordsworth's The Prelude," in Romantic Reassessment, ed. James Hogg (Salzburg, Austria: Institut Für Englische Sprache und Literatur, 1974), pp. 1-77. Hereafter cited as Quest.

³⁶ Gerald Graff, Poetic Statement and Critical Dogma (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970), p. 62. Hereafter cited as Poetic Statement.

³⁷ Bernard Groom, The Unity of Wordsworth's Poetry (London: Macmillan Press, Ltd., 1966), p. 87. Hereafter cited as Unity.

³⁸ R. D. Havens, The Mind of a Poet: A Study of Wordsworth's Thought with Particular Reference to The Prelude (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1941), p. 381. Hereafter cited as Mind.

³⁹ Hartman, Wordsworth's Poetry, pp. 206-07. I believe that Hartman gives us the definitive reading of this line on pp. 204-07.

⁴⁰ John Beer, Wordsworth in Time (Boston and London: Faber & Faber, 1979), p. 206.

⁴¹ Frank D. McConnell, The Confessional Imagination: A Reading of Wordsworth's Prelude (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), pp. 86, 87, 94, 98, 142, 143, 166. Hereafter cited as Confessional Imagination.

⁴² F. R. Leavis, Revaluation: Tradition and Development in English Poetry (1936; rpt. London: Chatto & Windus, 1972), p. 148. Hereafter cited as Revaluation.

⁴³ Yvor Winters, In Defence of Reason (New York: The Swallow Press, 1947), p. 453.

⁴⁴ For example, Groom defends certain revisions in the 1805 text, but he also informs us that "Wordsworth wrote best when he wrote on impulse" (p. 72). In the Preface to the 1972 edition of Wordsworth's Poetry, Geoffrey Hartman claims that "There is something peculiar in the way [Wordsworth's] text corrupts itself: the freshness of earlier

versions is dimmed by scruples and qualifications, by revisions that usually overlay rather than deepen insight" (p. xvii). Leavis complains, in Revaluation, that "Wordsworth went on tinkering with The Prelude through his life instead of completing the great 'philosophic poem' because, as he had in the end tacitly to recognize, his resources weren't adequate to the ambition--he very obviously hadn't enough material" (pp. 153-54).

⁴⁵William Wordsworth, The Prelude, 1799, 1805, 1850, ed. Jonathan Wordsworth, M. H. Abrams and Stephen Gill (New York & London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1979), The Texts: History and Presentation, p. 523. All quotations from the 1799, 1805 and 1850 Preludes will be taken from this edition, hereafter cited as Gill.

Chapter I: The Poet and the Purpose and Theme of "The Prelude"

¹Yvor Winters, The Function of Criticism (1957; rpt. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967), p. 161.

²Graff further explains that "A fatuous thesis will weaken a well-written poem, but a sound argument will not redeem a piece of doggerel. In short, a minimal degree of truth and soundness is a necessary but not a sufficient criterion of poetic value" (Poetic Statement, p. 156).

³William Wordsworth ("Preface to Lyrical Ballads [1800]," The Prose Works of William Wordsworth, ed. W. J. B. Owen and Jane Worthington Smyser, 3 vols. [London: Clarendon Press, 1975], I, 148), defines poetry as "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity: the emotion is contemplated till by a species of reaction the tranquillity gradually disappears, and an emotion, similar to that which was before the subject of contemplation, is gradually produced, and does itself actually exist in the mind. In this mood successful composition generally begins, and in a mood similar to this it is carried on." Hereafter cited as Prose Works.

⁴A reference to Geoffrey Hartman's comment on the revisions. See footnote 44, pp. 350-51 above.

⁵Aldous Huxley, "Wordsworth in the Tropics," Do What You Will (London: Watts & Co., 1936), pp. 90-103. In this essay, Huxley asserts:

The worst that Wordsworth's goddess [Nature] ever did to him was to make him hear

Low breathings coming after me, and sounds
Of undistinguishable motion, steps
Almost as silent as the turf they trod

was to make him realize, in the shape of 'a huge peak, black and huge,' the existence of 'unknown modes of being.' He seems to have imagined [sic] that this was the worst Nature could do. A few weeks in Malaya or Borneo would have undeceived him. Wandering in the hothouse darkness of the jungle, he would not have felt so serenely certain of those 'Presences of Nature,' those 'Souls of Lonely Places,' which he was in the habit of worshipping on the shores of Windermere and Rydal. (pp. 90-91)

Huxley also maintains that "The Wordsworthian adoration of Nature has two principal defects. The first . . . is that it is only possible in a country where Nature has been nearly or quite enslaved to man. The second is that it is only possible for those who are prepared to falsify their immediate intuitions of Nature" (p. 93). Although Havens points out that Huxley is overstating the case ("In 1807, Nature in the lake district was by no means enslaved to man," and "The dangerous and Unknown in Nature, had for Wordsworth unusual attraction" [Mind, p. 93]), Huxley does have a point about Wordsworth's philosophy of Nature.

⁶ Alexander Pope, "Peri Bathos," Selected Poetry and Prose, ed. William K. Wimsatt, Jr. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1961), pp. 331-32.

⁷ Oxford English Dictionary, 12 vols. (1933; rpt. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), III, 543. Hereafter cited as OED.

⁸ William Wordsworth, The Prose Works of William Wordsworth, 3 vols., ed. A. B. Grosart (London: Edward Moxon, Son & Co., 1876), III, 462. Hereafter cited as Grosart.

⁹ David Perkins, Wordsworth and the Poetry of Sincerity (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1964), p. 206. All further references to Perkins in this chapter will be from this edition, hereafter cited as Sincerity, and will be acknowledged parenthetically in the body of the text.

¹⁰ Although Geoffrey Durrant (William Wordsworth [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969], pp. 114-116) rightly suggests that when Wordsworth describes the natural landscape at the beginning of the poem, he alludes more to the landscapes of the imagination than to the English countryside, the "wild water," "green herbs," and "fruits fresh from their native bough" (ll. 37-38) of the 1805 text detract slightly from the serious tone of the opening and suggest that the poet is more interested in a life of ease and irresponsibility than he is in a life of dedication and application to his art.

¹¹This revision is the one of which Darbishire speaks when she complains that "Majesty, dignity, sovereignty, freedom, give place to a studious humility of mind" (Intro., p. 20). But there is no "Majesty, dignity," or "sovereignty" in the 1805 passage to "give place" to anything, and the freedom of which Wordsworth speaks in that version is non-existent in man's experience.

¹²Stokes (Quest, p. 40) insists that "Wordsworth turns within himself to survey and to analyze the illumination of the 'light divine'-- the Imagination itself." However, I agree with Bennett When when he suggests that "Unless we are willing to accept this noble page of Wordsworth and to acknowledge his right to these lofty claims, we must miss the essential thing he has to tell us. As did Plato and Plotinus, as do Emerson and Shelley, Wordsworth accepts the interpenetration of the artist's mind by the Creative Intelligence. Man-the-worker creates in virtue of the spirit of God-the-worker which is in him, "Wordsworth's 'Prelude': The Shaping Spirit," Wordsworth: Poet of the Unconquerable Mind, p. 68. It is of interest to this study that the "light divine" that both of these critics are discussing is the one in the concluding segment of Book V. It appears at line six hundred and two of the 1850 text and at line six hundred and twenty-six of the 1805 text.

¹³William Wordsworth, "Upon Epitaphs," Part (b), Grosart, II, 54. In the "Appendix" to Essays upon Epitaphs, W. J. B. Owen explains that the paragraph containing this quotation does not appear in Essay II itself, but appears "On a loose sheet of the manuscript . . . which Wordsworth had evidently considered inserting before E. E. II, 472 (see ll. 471, textual n.). It is, however, impossible to insert it (as Grosart attempted to do), since lines 50-60 repeat approximately E. E. ll. 445-54, and lines 62-3 repeat E. E. ll. 467-8" (Prose Works, II, 97).

¹⁴M. H. Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953), p. 113. For the full explication of Wordsworth's spontaneity, as Leavis defines it; see Introduction, pp. 30-31 above.

¹⁵For example, K. E. Smith ("A Note on The Prelude, Book VI, 1-331, 1805," Wordsworth Circle, 9 [Autumn, 1978]), comments that "If [Wordsworth] was in many ways remarkable he was in many ways ordinary too, and it is important to him that we should be reminded of this unromantic truth" (p. 374), while Carlos Baker ("Sensation and Vision in Wordsworth") reminds us that "the giant Wordsworth is one of us: the epitome of the normal man" (p. 109).

¹⁶William Wordsworth, The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth, ed. E. de Selincourt, The Early Years, 1787-1805, rev. Chester L. Shaver (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), p. 586. Hereafter cited parenthetically as EY.

¹⁷ De Selincourt's note on this passage is interesting:

He tells us here that he retired to his native mountains with the hope of constructing a work that might live, but then decided that, in preparation for this, he must investigate his qualifications, and thus was led on to write a poem recording the origin and progress of his powers (The Prelude): and the result was the resolve to compose a philosophical poem to be called The Recluse. As a statement of fact this will not stand. His retirement to his native mountains dates from December 20, 1799, when he and his sister moved into Dove Cottage, Grasmere; but as MSS. and letters show, the idea of the great philosophical poem was already fully fledged in March 1798,¹ and the first tentative beginnings of The Prelude itself date from the winter of 1798-9 in Germany. (p. xxxiii)

The footnote in this discussion alludes to a letter that Wordsworth wrote to James Losh on March 11, 1798, in which he says: "'I have written 1300 lines of a poem which I hope to make of considerable utility. Its title will be The Recluse; or Views of Nature, Man and Society.'" (p. xxxiii)

¹⁸ De Selincourt points out that "In the Wordsworth household it had from the first been called 'the poem to Coleridge'. Only on its publication after his death did it receive from Mrs. Wordsworth its title of The Prelude" (p. xxxvii).

¹⁹ Beer convincingly argues that there are "occasional but persistent fears of madness" haunting Wordsworth throughout his lifetime (p. 127). He also suggests that the "condition of [Wordsworth's] nightmare seems to have been twofold--exhibiting, in the negative form, the polarities of his positive vision. In one mode, it was a total torpor of the mind, relapse into a sense of dreariness, where the external world was totally deadened and inert; in the other it was an inner and violent wilderness, seizing and whirling him towards an endless abyss. Between the Scylla of rocky blankness and the Charybdis of manic possession, Wordsworth was sometimes forced to steer a delicate course. His feelings were, perhaps, like those of Samuel Johnson, related to an eighteenth-century belief that if human beings indulged imagination too far they might topple into insanity. Hence the statement, repeated several times, that the power of his imagination in childhood had sometimes been so overwhelming that he was forced to push against something that resisted, so as to be sure that there was anything outside him--to take hold of a wall or tree in order to recall himself from the 'abyss of idealism.' The word 'abyss,' a telling one, suggests a vertigo, a spinning out of control to destruction" (pp. 127-28). In the 1804-05 addition that we are discussing, Wordsworth admits that he is writing The Prelude as a form of personal therapy. When he enlarges the work to thirteen books in 1805, however, he clearly hopes that the work will also serve as a form of help for Coleridge. See text, p. 81, for a discussion of this point.

²⁰ For discussions of the two-part Prelude, see "The Growth of the Two-Part Prelude," Parrish, pp. 3-38 and passim; "Composition and Texts: The Two-Part Prelude of 1799," Gill, pp. 512-15; and J. R. MacGillivray, "The Three Forms of The Prelude," Essays in English Literature from the Renaissance to the Victorian Age, ed. Millar MacLure and F. W. Watt (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1964), pp. 229-44. MacGillivray argues for the unity of the two-part work, claiming that "In this proto-Prelude of 1798-1800 one observes a much more unified theme and a much stronger sense of formal structure than in the poem completed first in 1805 and published in 1850" (p. 236). He insists that "The first building was a well-proportioned structure of moderate size, varied yet congruous in its parts. But the owner, as so often happens, came to think that it lacked some essential features for his satisfaction and decided to extend the edifice, changing its design and more than doubling its size" (pp. 243-44). The Norton editors, however, argue that Wordsworth never intended the two-part Prelude to be a complete poem in itself.

²¹ See Gill, pp. 516-17. See also Jonathan Wordsworth, "The Five-Book Prelude of Early Spring 1804," Journal of English and Germanic Philology, 76 (1977), 1-25.

²² The Norton editors do not list the deletion of the Matron's Tale (cut in 1816/19) or the 1838/39 removal of ll. 64-119 from Book VIII as structural changes. Nor do they consider Wordsworth's shifting of the passages describing the father with the sick infant from Book VIII to Book VII to be in this category. But the deletions tighten the narrative structure, in the first instance, by shortening the Book by one hundred lines and allowing Wordsworth to juxtapose more precisely the pastoral scenes from his boyhood with the pastoral scenes of earlier literature, and in the second instance, by deleting a long discussion on shepherds that Wordsworth, for the most part, repeats later (ll. 234-75) in Book VIII. The shifting of the passage of the father with the sick babe (1805, VIII, 837-59) to Book VII of the 1850 text (ll. 594-618), and the lines that Wordsworth subsequently adds to this passage, allow him to juxtapose it much more successfully with the passages describing the un-caring mother and the healthy child (VII, 333-412) of the 1850 text.

²³ Thomas A. Vogler, Preludes to Vision: The Epic Venture in Blake, Wordsworth, Keats, and Hart Crane (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), p. 69. Hereafter cited as Preludes to Vision.

²⁴ Ross Woodman, "Imagination as the Theme of The Prelude," English Studies in Canada, I (1975), 413. Woodman disagrees with Harold Bloom's argument that "running through The Prelude is a 'hidden tragedy' residing in Wordsworth's 'resistance to his own imaginative emancipation'" (p. 412). Woodman argues that "A 'hidden tragedy' does exist in The Prelude. It belongs, however, to Coleridge (and Coleridge's failure to bind) rather than to Wordsworth, becoming Wordsworth's only through his close identification with Coleridge as co-author and joint labourer."

Nothing in The Prelude is more moving than Wordsworth's shift from 'I' to 'we' in the closing lines of his poem, when he must have already suspected, and at any rate would soon know, that Coleridge could no longer directly share with him in the work of man's 'deliverance, surely yet to come' (XIV, 444)" (pp. 413-14). Wordsworth leaves these lines unchanged in the final version, and they are even more moving in the 1850 text because Coleridge dies in 1834, five years before the final revision of the poem.

²⁵ These added lines once again describe the world of romance literature. Neither Havens nor de Selincourt approves of them. This is, to Havens, "A late addition, as might be surmised from the smoothness and the lack of freshness in the style" (Mind, p. 296) and de Selincourt cautions us to "Notice the manner in which Wordsworth develops the passage later, giving it a definite moral turn, of which, when he wrote in 1798, he was quite innocent" (p. 513). But, in truth, this passage differs very little in style from any number of passages that one could cite in the A text, and, as Mary Burton points out, the subject of morality is not absent from the earlier version:

Professor de Selincourt here has quoted only one of eleven added lines giving several new themes for poetry. . . .

It is important to avoid accepting such isolated lines as proof of a tendency in the whole revision. We might as well say of the above addition that Wordsworth included tales of warlike feats to avoid being called a pacifist as to offer the last line alone as an example of a new interest in Christianity. In fact, in the 1805-6 text, the lines following this one are filled with allusions that would be dear to the heart of a true Christian, however dogmatic he may be. For instance, the lines:

How in tyrannic times some unknown man,
Unheard of in the Chronicle of Kings,
Suffered in silence for the love of truth;

(I 202-4 (1805-6))

The Frenchman who went 'single into his ministry' (208) and 'natural sanctuaries' (218), all either in phraseology or in thought might be offered as proof that in 1805-6 Wordsworth was steeped in religious terminology. (One Wordsworth, pp. 27-28)

But the crucial point that both de Selincourt and Burton miss is that while the final Prelude often alludes to these ideas in passing, this passage incorporates themes that Wordsworth is rejecting as major subjects for his epic.

Chapter II: From "Vulgar Joy" to "Calm Delight": Childhood and Early Education

¹Peter Coveney, Poor Monkey: The Child in Literature (Suffolk: Richard Clay and Company, Ltd., 1957), p. 30.

²Alan Grob, The Philosophic Mind: A Study of Wordsworth's Poetry and Thought, 1797-1805 (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1973), p. 123.

³I am not insinuating here that Wordsworth does not believe in "the eternal spirit," because he does. What I am suggesting is that this "eternal spirit" is not "apparent" in "our first sympathies" (my italics), and Wordsworth obviously realizes this and deletes the passage from the poem. He replaces it, incidentally, with the passage from which part of the title of this chapter is derived:

Nor, sedulous as I have been to trace
 How Nature by extrinsic passion first
 Peopled my mind with beauteous forms or grand
 And made me love them, may I well forget
 How other pleasures have been mine, and joys
 Of subtler origin--how I have felt,
 Not seldom, even in that tempestuous time,
 Those hallowed 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 the dawn of our being, constitute
 The bond of union betwixt life and joy.

(1805, I, 571-85)

⁴Wordsworth only makes this subtle link between himself and the infant in the 1850 text.

⁵Bennett Weaver, "Wordsworth: The Growth of a Poet's Mind," Wordsworth: Poet of the Unconquerable Mind, p. 44. In this same study, Weaver, who generally favours the 1805 version, acknowledges the important point that "It is right to say that Wordsworth has learned from Hartley; but it is not right to leave unsaid that the most vital thing he learned from him is the inadequacy of his system" (p. 46).

⁶Barbara Everett ("The Prelude," The Critical Quarterly, 1 [Winter, 1959]) defends the 1805 line. She claims that "When, in the 1850 text, 'hurrying on . . . hurrying onward' is omitted, we are given a small, distant picture of a child in a landscape, a touching memory of the past; but the scrambling and loose phrases had conveyed an intense

sense of present feeling--the frantic aimlessness of the child's movements as contrasted with the serenity of the rebuking moon and stars" (p. 348). But aimlessness and hurry are not what Wordsworth finally wishes to stress in this passage. The child's movements are not aimless: they are directed specifically, and, at a dubious goal. The 1805 lines convey nothing but a sense of hurried composition and associationalist rambling that distracts us from the true comparison that Wordsworth wishes to make in this passage, a comparison between the "anxious visitation" and the serenity of Nature, between the wrongness of the act and the harmony of the scene in which the child commits the act. All further quotations from Everett will be from this study and will be acknowledged parenthetically by page numbers in the text.

⁷ One critic, Laurence Lerner ("What Did Wordsworth Mean by Nature?" Critical Quarterly, 17 [Winter, 1975]) fails to see the point of this passage, especially its moral lesson. He claims that "Nature is an agent of conscience. Nothing strange in that, and indeed it seems near to the very centre of Wordsworthian doctrine. But what is Nature reproaching him for? For stealing the bird that someone else had trapped. We would surely expect Nature to respond to the original trapping-- capturing a bird, especially capturing it with a machine, can certainly be seen as against Nature, but once the bird is caught why should Nature care who eats it? Nature suddenly seems more interested in the protection of property than in the sanctity of life" (p. 292). But the most important point to notice about this passage is not Nature's reaction to the boy, but the boy's reaction to Nature. The boy knows that he is doing wrong and his imagination and conscience are punishing him, not Nature. Nature, in reality, does nothing to him. If we compare this passage and the forthcoming "stolen boat" passage with ll. 184-90 of the revised Book IV, we note that, even as a young adult, Wordsworth still hears ominous sounds when alone at night in a natural setting. On the latter occasion, however, his conscience is clear and his more mature imagination reacts to the sounds not in a fearful, but in a calmly accepting way.

⁸ John F. Danby, William Wordsworth: The Prelude and Other Poems (London: Edward Arnold Publishers Ltd., 1963), p. 10. Subsequent references to Danby will be from this edition and will be acknowledged parenthetically by page numbers in the body of the text.

⁹ Geoffrey Hartman, The Unmediated Vision: An Interpretation of Wordsworth, Hopkins, Rilke and Valéry (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1954), p. 23. Hereafter cited as Unmediated Vision. Hartman explains that "in Wordsworth understanding, though mystical, is never 'divine rape' or annihilation of the mind' but the revelation of the sustaining spirit, an innate power that works on us, and in our most common perceptions" (Unmediated Vision, p. 23).

¹⁰ Christopher Ricks, "Wordsworth: 'A Pure Organic Pleasure from the Lines,'" Essays in Criticism, 21 (January, 1971), 7. All further quotations from Ricks will be from this study and will be acknowledged

parenthetically by page numbers in the text.

¹¹ Mrs. Moorman records that on September 15, 1797, "Tom Wedgwood, the brilliant, delicate brother of John and Josiah Wedgwood," came to Alfoxden, "and stayed for five days" (Moorman, I, 332-33). Although he had never before met either Coleridge or Wordsworth, it was his plan to include the two poets in a scheme he had devised for the education of young geniuses. According to Wedgwood, as quoted by Mrs. Moorman, "The child must never go out of doors or leave his own apartment," and "'idleness of mind was to be resisted; no time was to be allowed for solitary musing'" (Moorman, I, 334). It would seem that of all the English poets not to suggest such a scheme to--that poet would be Wordsworth--for any reader of The Prelude and of Wordsworth's biography would agree that freedom to explore and to enjoy Nature during childhood and youth were essential to this poet and contributed greatly to the fostering of his genius and creativity. We know precisely how he would have responded to Wedgwood's question, as quoted by Mrs. Moorman, "'Should not the nursery, then, have plain, grey walls with one or two vivid objects for sight and touch?'" (Moorman, I, 334).

¹² In her discussion of this passage, Burton suggests that this "fiery delineation" is "almost pure Rousseau" (One Wordsworth, p. 87). But this is not entirely true as those acquainted with Rousseau's writings would know. Joel Morkan ("Structure and Meaning in The Prelude, Book V," PMLA, 87 [March, 1972], 246-54), makes this point after discussing the philosophies of Locke, Richard Edgeworth and Kant and their influence on Wordsworth:

Among the major philosophers, however, Rousseau's educational theory, camouflaging an elaborate set of controls beneath a surface appearance of freedom and spontaneity, would have appeared to Wordsworth the most subtle and insidious of plans. There is an illusion of liberty, but it merely hides the most rigid of limitations. Everything is calculated, for Rousseau leaves nothing to chance. His highly devised system harnesses all of the child's mental and physical energies from the earliest stages of his growth. (p. 251)

¹³ I have not here discussed the Boy of Winander passage, because it remains virtually unchanged from its 1805 form in the final version.

¹⁴ In his "Speech at the laying of the foundation stone of the new school in the village of Bowness, Winderemere, 1836," Wordsworth suggests that "it is a tempting thing for teachers unduly to exercise the understanding and memory, inasmuch as progress in the departments in which these faculties are employed, is most obviously proved to the teacher himself, and most flatteringly exhibited to the inspectors of schools and casual lookers on." In the same speech, he castigates "an overstrained application to mental processes of arithmetic and mathematics; and too minute attention to departments of natural and civil history." He further adds: "And here I must direct your attention to a

fundamental mistake, by which this age, so distinguished for its marvellous progress in arts and sciences, in unhappily characterized--a mistake, manifested in the use of the word education, which is habitually confounded with tuition or school instruction; this is indeed a very important part of education, but when it is taken for the whole, we are deceived and betrayed." (Prose Works, III, 294-95; his italics)

¹⁵ Wordsworth makes two significant additions to the 1850 version of these lines. He adds "Not unresentful where self-justified" (l. 414), and he includes "doubt," along with "pain" and "fear" (l. 419) as one of the conditions of "Our life's mysterious weight" (l. 418). The first addition signifies that the more mature Wordsworth understands clearly and appreciates the acute sense of justice felt by children, while the second implies his stronger awareness of the human condition itself.

Chapter III: Shaking "The Mind's Simplicity": Cambridge, Summer Vacation, and Books

¹ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "Letter to Southey 14 August 1803," The Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, ed. E. L. Griggs, 6 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956-71), II, 977.

² Burton asks: "Is there not some humor in the mental images that prompted Wordsworth to change a moving tree to a waving tree (IV, 82:91), and a long-backed chapel to long-roofed (III, 4:4)?" (One Wordsworth, p. 133). Wordsworth makes four revisions of the passage before he is satisfied with it. Even as late as the second correction of the D MS., he has still not included the "Turrets and pinnacles in answering files" of the final version:

No sunshine cheered the morning and the way
Was dull and wearisome till Cambridge shew'd
The long-roof'd chapel of King's College rearing
Its pinnacles above a boundary line
Of dusky groves broken by low hung clouds.

(D³ de Sel., app. crit., p. 70)

³ Two minor revisions in Book III support this claim. When he changes the 1805 version's "gloomy courts" (l. 45) to the 1850 "Gothic courts" (l. 47) Wordsworth seems to be suggesting more precisely both the dark, depressing nature of the courts of St. John's College and their timeless, romantic, medieval quality. Also, the revision of "Near me was

Trinity's loquacious clock" (1805, III, 51) to "Near me hung Trinity's loquacious clock" (1850, III, 53) again suggests that time itself seemed suspended at Cambridge and that the university functioned independently of the mundane affairs of the outside world.

⁴Burton suggests that "The passage has little to do with the growth of the poet's mind, for it is entirely negative. He did not enjoy books, people, pastimes, work, his own thoughts; he was as yet unconscious of the great soul that stirred within him" (One Wordsworth, pp. 89-90).

⁵In both texts, Wordsworth tells us that, as a schoolboy, he had imagined that Cambridge would be an ideal university. His revision of the 1805 lines,

I had raised a pile
Upon the basis of the coming time
Which now before me melted fast away,
Which could not live, scarcely had life enough
To mock the builder,

(1805, III, 435-39)

to

I had raised a pile
Upon the basis of the coming time,
That fell in ruins round me,

(1850, III, 428-30)

both removes an awkward, mixed metaphor and more precisely and much less melodramatically expresses Wordsworth's disappointment in Cambridge. It also illustrates more pointedly the danger inherent in placing too much faith in imaginative constructs and in things or facts that have not been established or investigated first hand.

⁶Graff makes this statement in his discussion of "Hillcrest" (Poetic Statement, p. 124), but I think that it is applicable to these lines in the final Prelude as well.

⁷Carl Woodring (Wordsworth [Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1965], p. 121) makes many of these points in his discussion of the structural links in The Prelude. Since Woodring's primary concern is not, however, with the revisions, he does not mention that Wordsworth uses these imagistic links, not only structurally, but to further delineate the growth of his mind as well. For example, the poet at the conclusion of the poem has progressed to the point where he no longer depends on Nature in the same way that he does at the beginning. Here, he does not need a breeze to bring him joy, nor does he need a "wandering cloud" as a guide. In fact, he defies the natural elements in order to arrive at his destination, both physical and spiritual.

⁸ See, as well, footnote 5 above and pp. 143-44 for a discussion of the added metaphor of the displaced plant.

⁹ Geoffrey Durrant (Wordsworth and the Great System: A Study of Wordsworth's Poetic Universe [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970], pp. 6-8) discusses this passage and defends the 1805 lines:

Though less striking as poetry, these lines convey more of the intensely personal feeling with which Wordsworth contemplated Newton. The insistence on the personal relationship in space to the statue 'right opposite, a few yards off', is offered with unselfconscious enthusiasm. The very lack of elaboration when Newton is mentioned conveys a sense of his immense significance. (footnote 1, p. 7)

Durrant is certainly right to direct our attention to the precise and intentional opposition ("right opposite, a few yards off") between the college kitchens, the "noisy human involvement in immediate tasks" "in which no clear pattern can be discerned" and "the figure of Newton, whose grand synthesis of space and time is illustrated by the images of ordered time and of ordered space in the clock and prism" (p. 7), but the loss is more than compensated for in the 1850 lines in which Wordsworth introduces a more effectual opposition, that of his mind in repose ("from my pillow") contemplating not merely the "silent face" of Newton, but his "mind," a mind that is forever active in its contemplation of the intricate relationship between time and space. Contrary to what Durrant asserts, the 1850 lines "convey more of the intensely personal feeling with which Wordsworth contemplated Newton." Hereafter cited as Great System.

¹⁰ Ben Ross Sneider Jr. (Wordsworth's Cambridge Education [London: Cambridge University Press, 1957]), makes the point that "At the core of nearly everything that was thought, said, and done at Cambridge lay the discoveries of Sir Isaac Newton of Trinity College. Newton's influence was strong in England--in the whole civilized world--but he dominated Cambridge nearly to the exclusion of all other influences. Learning and applying his discoveries was the chief occupation of graduates and undergraduates alike. Moral philosophy and the classics were also given some attention, but even these were coloured by Newton's work. Newton's discoveries, in spite of his attempts in his writings to mitigate their materialistic implications, had thoroughly convinced the Cambridge mind, to state it bluntly, that reality was a manifestation of matter acting according to mechanical laws" (p. 10).

¹¹ Christine Avery, "Notes on Wordsworth's Diction," English Studies: A Journal of English Letters and Philology, Anthology Volume (August, 1968), 40-41. The footnotes in the quoted material refer to the following: (16), Hero and Leander, II, 129; (17), The Prelude, p. 509, III, 62; (18), The Prelude, p. 550, VIII, 279. Avery does not point out the interesting similarity between the last two lines of this passage and a late addition to Book VII, in which Wordsworth mentions the "carved maniacs at the gates, / Perpetually recumbent" (ll. 132-33) while describing

Bedlam Hospital, nor does she allude to Wordsworth's incorporation of another architectural image, the "rocks/ Immutable and overflowing streams" that were "speaking monuments" (1850, VIII, 170-72), into the final version.

¹² John R. Nabholz, "The Journeys Homeward: Drama and Rhetoric in Book IV of The Prelude," Studies in Romanticism, 10 (Spring, 1971), 82. All other references to Nabholz will be from this study and will be acknowledged parenthetically by page numbers in the text.

¹³ All quotations from the variants are from the de Selincourt app. crit., p. 108.

¹⁴ Mary Lynn Wooley, "Wordsworth's Symbolic Vale as it Functions in The Prelude," Studies in Romanticism, 7 (Spring, 1968), 178. All further quotations from Wooley will be from this study, and will be acknowledged parenthetically by page numbers in the text.

¹⁵ De Selincourt is certainly right when he complains about the passive constructions in the final Prelude (Intro., p. 7 above). We find most of these in the first Book of the poem in which Wordsworth is attempting to establish his authority as a poet. Examples of these are "measured strains/ That would not be forgotten" (ll. 48-49), "A renovated spirit singled out" (l. 53) without the 1805 qualification of "as it might seem" (l. 62), "Many were the thoughts/ Encouraged and dismissed, till choice was made/ Of a known Vale" (ll. 70-72), etc. To his credit, however, Wordsworth deletes the most offensive passive construction "I was a chosen son" (III, 82) from the final version. Although we still hear the passive voice periodically throughout the final version, we hear it less and less as the poem progresses and Wordsworth establishes a closer relationship to his reader.

¹⁶ Wordsworth tells us that it would have been far better for him to have upheld "Intense desire by thought and quietness" (l. 313) in the A text. He emends this to the more mature and poised "through meditative peace" (l. 306) in the final version. "And yet, in chastisement of these regrets" (1805, IV, 314) becomes the more precise and clear "And yet, for chastisement of these regrets" (l. 307; my italics) in the final text. "In a throng,/ A festal company of maids and youths,/ Old men, and matrons, staid, promiscuous rout" (1805, IV, 316-18) becomes the clearer and less cluttered "'Mid a throng/ Of maids and youths, old men, and matrons staid" (ll. 309-10) in the 1850 version. Finally, "Slight shocks of young love-liking interspersed/ That mounted up like joy into the head" (1805, IV, 325-26) adopts the much smoother and clearer form "Slight shocks of young love-liking interspersed,/ Whose transient pleasure mounted to the head" (ll. 317-18) in the final text.

¹⁷ These lines, in their 1805 form, constitute the basis of Richard Stang's article, "The False Dawn: A Study of Wordsworth's The Prelude," English Literary History, 33 (March, 1966), 53-65. All

quotations from Stang will be from this study and will be acknowledged by page numbers in the body of the text. Stang explains that the reason that Wordsworth had so much trouble beginning his poem was that there was a "lack of correspondence . . . between self and the world" (p. 55). Stang alludes only to the 1805 text, however, and does not point out, as I attempt to, how the revised version illustrates that the problem at the beginning of the poem is, indeed, "a lack of correspondence between the self and the world," or that this lack of correspondence is not only disharmony between the self and Nature, but also points to a lack of correspondence within the self and with other men.

When comparing the lines themselves in their 1805 and 1850 forms respectively, Christopher Ricks ("Wordsworth: A Pure Organic Pleasure") asks: "In what does the superiority of the 1850 over the 1805 consist in the following example?"

1805 But I have been discouraged, gleams of light
Flash often from the East, then disappear.

(I, 134-5)

1850 That hope hath been discouraged, welcome light
Dawns from the east, but dawns to disappear.

(I, 124-5)

The second line itself dawns: the silent self-referring metaphor then tautens the whole line" (pp. 9-10).

¹⁸ OED, v, 700.

¹⁹ William Empson, "Basic English and Wordsworth: A Radio Talk," Kenyon Review, 2 (1940), 455-56. All citations from Empson in this chapter will be from this study and will be acknowledged parenthetically by page numbers in the text.

²⁰ Roger Murray, Wordsworth's Style: Figures and Themes in the Lyrical Ballads of 1800 (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1967), p. 112.

²¹ One must qualify this statement precisely. Although Wordsworth revises the 1805 Book I Preamble and other sections of the A text with a view to indicating his more mature artistic philosophy, he does not revise out of that version of the poem his personal weaknesses and limitations. In fact, by describing himself, at the beginning of the 1850 text, as "Keen as a Truant or a Fugitive" (I, 90), he even more emphatically directs our attention to them. Wordsworth does not remove from the Preamble his painstaking quest for a theme, not because he is being dishonest, but in order to demonstrate that The Prelude is a poem in which, as Richard Stang points out in "The False Dawn," the theme finds the poet (p. 59), instead of the other way around. In this study Stang also argues that the poet must "reascend to the point where he was still

in perfect harmony with the world around him" (p. 59). In other words, the end of Book I must "reascend" to the phase of his life that we are now examining, the phase in which he dedicates himself to poetry with no thought of the rewards or distinction that poetry might bring him.

²² Edward Bostetter, The Romantic Ventriloquists: Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats, Shelley, Byron (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1963), p. 59. Hereafter cited as Romantic Ventriloquists.

²³ Beth Darlington, "Two Early Texts: A Night-Piece and The Discharged Soldier," Chapter 18 of Bicentenary Wordsworth Studies, ed. Jonathan Wordsworth (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1970), pp. 433-37. All subsequent references to Darlington will be from this study and will be acknowledged parenthetically in the text.

²⁴ The Norton editors comment that "It is odd that Wordsworth could ever have preferred these two empty lines [ll. 402-03] to the beautiful reading of 1805, 'That seemed akin to solitude'" (Gill, p. 147). And Hobsbaum complains that the 1850 revision is "an awkward dispersion of one faculty Wordsworth excelled in, the sense of place" (Tradition and Experiment, p. 190). But surely we gain a keen "sense of place" from lines 369-83 of the final version (see text, p. 184), and the moving soliloquy to solitude in that version renders the 1805 reference to solitude trite and redundant.

²⁵ Philip Hobsbaum, A Theory of Communication (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1970), p. 215.

²⁶ In the 1798 version, Wordsworth mentions "the village mastiff" (l. 131) that howls "to the murmur of the stream" (l. 136) and the "village . . . whose silent doors/ Were visible among the scattered trees" (ll. 74-75), and whose "every silent window to the moon/ Shone with a yellow glitter" (ll. 108-09). In the A text, Wordsworth still mentions the village, but he deletes any allusions to the supernatural. Finally, in the 1850 text, he removes all allusions to the town as well. He seems to have realized that these allusions work at mixed purposes with the central narrative, since they introduce connotations that are unwarranted in the situation that Wordsworth is describing, and they add superfluous detail that impedes, rather than aids, narrative flow.

²⁷ Richard J. Onorato, The Character of the Poet: Wordsworth in The Prelude (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1971), footnote 18, p. 249.

²⁸ Preludes to Vision, p. 86. Vogler suggests that "Wordsworth's seeming complacent optimism is often misleading as he moves from the relatively secure confidence of the beginning, through the many present-tense comments on his progress, to the final claim that 'all is gratulant if rightly understood.' . . . But The Prelude is not a record of bright

spots only. It is a record of repeated attempts to push forward from the period of youth and outward from the pastoral realm described in Book 8 without losing the sense of relationship with nature that Wordsworth remembers having felt so strongly as a child" (pp. 85-86).

²⁹ Michael C. Jaye, "The Artifice of Disjunction: Book V, The Prelude," Papers on Language and Literature, 14 (Winter, 1978), 32-50, argues that, "Ironically, modern preference for sustained lyric intensity and 'unity' derive from the success of the Romantic lyric, but seem to have doomed the Romantic or any other long poem. These preferences certainly explain both those readings that damn book 5 for disunity and those that praise it after too subtle discoveries of 'underlying' coherence (p. 32). Both Joel Morkan, "Structure and Meaning in The Prelude, Book V," PMLA, 87 (March, 1972), 246-54 and J. Robert Barth, "The Poet, Death, and Immortality: The Unity of The Prelude, Book V," Wordsworth Circle, 10 (Winter, 1979), 69-75, argue for the Book's thematic integrity by asserting that the underlying theme of the Book is death and last things. W. G. Stobie, "A Reading of The Prelude, Book V," Modern Language Quarterly, 24 (1963), 365-73, Evelyn Shakir, "Books, Death, and Immortality: A Study of Book V of The Prelude," Studies in Romanticism, 7 (Spring, 1969), 156-67, and David Wiener, "Wordsworth, Books, and the Growth of a Poet's Mind," Journal of English and Germanic Philology, 74 (1975), 209-21, all argue that books are, indeed, the central thematic concern of Book V. All of these critics must, however, concede, at one point or another in their arguments, that certain segments of Book V do not fit into their respective theses.

³⁰ Both Hartman, Wordsworth's Poetry (pp. 225-33) and Havens, Mind (p. 376) argue that Book V degenerates into a discussion of fairy tales that has no connection with the central narrative of The Prelude. Havens claims that the Book is "not unified or homogeneous and an important element [books] in the discipline of a poet's mind is slighted" (Mind, p. 376). Hartman claims that the theme of the Book is, indeed, books, and that this theme is loosely sustained throughout; however, he believes that the Boy of Winander and the Drowned Man segments are out of place there. Karl Kroeber (The Artifice of Reality: Poetic Style in Wordsworth, Foscolo, Keats, and Leopardi [Madison and Milwaukee: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1964]) agrees with these critics. Although he only summarizes Book V in this work, he asserts that its purpose "seems to be to defend children's fairy tales" (p. 27).

Chapter IV: "Copying the Impression of the Memory": The Alps, London, and Retrospect

¹For example, Karl R. Johnson, Jr. (The Written Spirit: Thematic and Rhetorical Structure in Wordsworth's "The Prelude" [Salzburg, Austria: Institut für Englische Sprache und Literatur, 1978], pp. 224-26) directs our attention to light and to the color yellow and its symbolic value in The Prelude. Johnson maintains that "it is worth noticing that the golden light recurs a number of times in Book VI itself, especially in the later versions, and always as a sign of plenty" (p. 225). Johnson also points out the significance of the "grove" in The Prelude. He suggests that "It is familiar to us from the glad preamble and other parts of Book I, where the free choice of a grove was a sign that the poet was finding his home" (p. 223). But what he does not point out is that Wordsworth's revision of "in the sheltered grove" (1805, I, 78) to "in the sheltered and the sheltering grove" (1850, I, 69) makes this symbolic value more precise and explicit from the beginning of the poem. Nor does Johnson mention that the addition of "stately" (1850, I, 82) to Wordsworth's first description of the grove links it more emphatically to the second of the three unrevised descriptions of the grove that he uses in Book VI (ll. 73-76; 360-62; 665-69). Hereafter, this work will be cited parenthetically as The Written Spirit.

²De Selincourt objects to the revision of the ending of this section. He refers to the 1850 ending as a "fine but somewhat mannered description," whereas he insists that "the voice of the authentic Wordsworth is more distinctly heard in the delicate simplicity of the rejected lines" (pp. lx-lxi). But Wordsworth is not interested primarily in delicacy here, nor is he interested in adding realistic detail for the sake of the detail itself. He is implying, in the revised lines, that there is a harmony and unity within Nature during all seasons, and that Nature, man, and the works of man's mind are subject to the passing of time and seasons.

³Edmund Burke, Reflections on the Revolution in France, ed. Conor Cruise O'Brien (Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1969), pp. 270-71; his italics). All further quotations from Burke will be from this edition, hereafter cited as Reflections.

⁴See Johnson (The Written Spirit [pp. 238-40]) for an excellent discussion of these points.

⁵The Norton editors' note on this passage is instructive. They tell us:

Wordsworth switches abruptly from past disappointment (August 1790) to a celebration of present creative power (March 1804). MS WW shows, however, that the impressive juxtaposition of 1805, 524 and 525 (1850, 591 and 592) is a second thought. In the original draft the lines are separated by the simile of the

cave (finally 1805, VIII, 711-27; 1850, VIII, 560-76) in which Wordsworth sought to define his sense of anticlimax at having unknowingly crossed the Alps. (Gill, p. 216)

The Norton editors also point out that "Wordsworth's revisions of 1805, 532-37--

especially his elimination of 'such visitings,' the plural 'flashes,' and 'shewn to us' (1805, 533-35)--make an important difference. In 1805 the experience described is recurrent, and available to others; in 1850, the lines can be read as referring to a single apocalyptic event. (Gill, p. 217).

⁶In the Fenwick Note to the "Intimations Ode," Wordsworth speaks of his childhood:

I was often unable to think of external things as having external existence, and I communed with all that I saw as something not apart from, but inherent in, my own immaterial nature. Many times while going to school have I grasped at a wall or tree to recall myself from this abyss of idealism to the reality. (Grosart, III, 194)

⁷There is, of course, an important difference between the child's imaginative conceptions of London and the mature poet's description of these, between poetic representation and the child's imagination. Here, however, Wordsworth seems to be trying to show the child's initial ability to order and differentiate between objects. This ability in the child, however, is not fully developed, because in the listing of London architectural and sculptural edifices, the Bedlam statues are not singled out in any way. Had he been listing the sights he actually saw in London during his visit, the more mature Wordsworth would surely have singled these out as not belonging with the others, and tell us precisely why this is the case.

⁸For example, the mature Wordsworth singles out the statue of Newton as a symbol of refinement and learning. He juxtaposes to this statue, the "College kitchens [that] made/ A humming sound, less tuneable than bees" (1805, III, 47-48; 1850, III, 49-50) and "the Lecturer's room/ All studded round, as thick as chairs could stand,/ With loyal students faithful to their books/ Half-and-half idlers, hardy recusants,/ And honest dunces" (1805, III, 60-64; 1850, III, 64-68). In the midst of all this mundane and fruitless activity, the statue of Newton stands out as a symbol of harmony, meaningful learning, and man's highest achievements.

⁹Johnson rightly comments that "a mark and also a condition of strength in The Prelude is the ability to single out adequate symbols" (The Written Spirit, p. 228). Johnson mentions the great ash and geometry as the two symbols that Wordsworth singled out at Cambridge (pp. 228-29), but he does not suggest that it is mainly in the urban

centers that Wordsworth learns to differentiate specific symbols from his general surroundings (see above, p. 212). In this added passage, Wordsworth seems to be giving us, not only a further illumination into the growth of his mind, but an appraisal of precisely the conditions that he finds necessary in order that he might successfully select specific symbols for his poetry. In essence, what he is suggesting here is that, in order to do this, he must have "a solemn back-ground, or relief/° To single forms and objects" (ll. 622-23). It is mainly at Cambridge, in London, and in the urban centres of France during the revolution that he finds this requisite, "solemn back-ground."

¹⁰The lines from the A text,

Attention comes,
And comprehensiveness and memory,
From early converse with the works of God
Among all regions, chiefly where appear
Most obviously simplicity and power.
By influence habitual to the mind
The mountain's outline and its steady form
Gives a pure grandeur, and its presence shapes
The measure and the prospect of the soul
To majesty: such virtue have the forms
Perennial of the ancient hills--nor less
The changeful language of their countenances
Give movement to the thoughts, and multitude,
With order and relation

, VII, 717-30)

demonstrate none of the influence of London that the 1850 lines plainly show, and seem to allude back, primarily, to the English Lake District in what appears to be yet another copied impression of a youthful memory.

¹¹Woodring, Wordsworth, p. 101. Here, Woodring gives us one of the best summaries of Book VIII:

In anticipation of the man-centered Book IX to follow, Book VIII reviews the poet's life to this point, in order to show that what may appear in Books I-VII as a deepening communion with Nature in antagonism to man was more truly a developing love of man founded on love of Nature. Almost unconsciously, he discovered the dignity of man by coming upon shepherds enshrouded in mountain mists or blending at a distance with noble promontories. Without achieving coherent structure, Wordsworth explores in Book VIII various relationships among three factors: the shepherd's life that surrounded his boyhood, conventional literary pastoralism, and the fanciful sentimentality of his own early verses, wherein he traced 'all the sad Etcetera' of solitary woe. Amplifying a motif of Book VII, he points out that his respect for man could survive the crowded meanness of London because he had earlier looked at man from a distance, 'through objects that were great and fair.' (p. 101)

¹² W. B. Gallie, "Is The Prelude a Philosophical Poem?" Philosophy, 22 (1947); 124-38, rpt. in Gill, pp. 663-78. In this study, Gallie suggests that while The Prelude "does not offer a coherent system of philosophy" (p. 663), it, nevertheless, "achieves philosophical poetry, because in it Wordsworth grapples with philosophical problems . . . and because he tries to answer these problems in a way which would be possible only in poetry" (p. 664). As Gallie interprets it, Wordsworth's philosophy consists of two important and interacting factors--his reliance upon the imagination "as a revealing power, rather than a shaping and creative power" and his "cultivation of the habit of gratitude and the habitual re-living in memory of such spots of time . . . which energize 'recollection in tranquillity'" (pp. 668-69; his italics). As Wordsworth reviews his progress as he has related it in the first seven Books, especially as he reviews it in the 1850 text, we notice, in his discussions of the imagination and in his recountings of his London experiences, a clearly defined pattern of thought emerging with regards to the past and with regards to his imaginative development. His more generous attitude towards both of these subjects delineates, in more precise fashion than do his discussions in the A text, the philosophical outlook that will be such an integral part of the final half of the 1850 Prelude.

¹³ In this chapter, I have not included a discussion of one important revision in the first half of Book VIII. This revision, the change in Wordsworth's description of the shepherd (1805, VIII, 381; 1850, 241-44), gains significance only when we compare Wordsworth's description of the shepherd with his description of Michel Beupuy, and I have, therefore, reserved my examination of the Book VIII passage for the chapter to follow this one. See Chapter V, pp. 278-79.

¹⁴ The Norton editors tell us that "Lines 45-55 were added in Wordsworth's final revisions, in 1839 or later; he and his wife--the 'ancient wedded pair' of line 46--were both born in 1770. Lines 48-52 are quoted from Malvern Hills, 952-56 (1798) by Joseph Cottle. . . . Writing to Cottle in 1829, Wordsworth said that the poem had always been a favorite of his, and singled out the last of the quoted lines as 'super-excellent' (LY, I, 349)" (Gill, p. 271).

¹⁵ Lindenberger makes this point:

In its original place in Book VIII the tale has something of a doctrinal purpose, for it demonstrates the nature of 'true' pastoral in contrast to the artifice of literary pastoral. Yet in the lines directly following those above [Lindenberger has quoted 1805, VIII, 301-11] we are aware of a sharp break in style, as Wordsworth, recounting the shepherds of the classical past, takes up the Miltonic sublime. (On Wordsworth's Prelude, p. 30)

¹⁶ Gallie, "Is The Prelude a Philosophical Poem?" p. 675. The other examples that Gallie cites as "masterpieces of argument" in The Prelude, besides 1850, VIII, 293-339, are "The posing of its initial

problem in Bk. I," and "the conclusion of Bk. XII" (p. 675). All references in this study are to the 1850 edition. Hereafter subsequent references to Gallie will be from this study.

Chapter V: "This Sorrowful Reverse": Politics and the French Revolution

¹Wordsworth, "A Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff on the extraordinary avowal of his Political Principles Contained in the Appendix to his late Sermon by a Republican," Prose Works, I, 33. In this letter (referred to by Grosart as an "Apology for the French Revolution," Grosart, I, 3), Wordsworth castigates Richard Watson, Bishop of Llandaff, who, in January, 1793, protested the execution of the French king in an Appendix attached to a sermon. As Owen explains in the "General Introduction":

In January 1793 Richard Watson, Bishop of Llandaff, unknowingly furnished Wordsworth, who was now living with an occasion for speaking out in defence of republicanism. Announcements of the execution of Louis XVI had appeared in the London papers on 24 January 1793; news of the execution began appearing in the papers the following day. Thoroughly shocked at the course of events, Watson hurriedly composed an indignant protest, laden with fervent praise of the British Constitution. Dating his composition 25 January, Watson attached it as an Appendix to a Sermon he had preached years before; on 30 January the Sermon with its Appendix was advertised in The Morning Herald as 'This day . . . published'; it was similarly advertised in The Times a week later (7 February). (Prose Works, I, 19)

²For the first draft of this passage, written into the A text, see de Selincourt, app. crit., p. 250. In his note on this passage, de Selincourt tells us:

This passage, which does not occur in C, and was therefore not written before 1820, records an impression of Burke which certainly would not have been true of Wordsworth's earlier attitude to politics. It is interesting also to notice, as a sign of the growing conservatism of Wordsworth's later years, that the allusion to Fox was removed from the text somewhere between 1828 and 1832. Haydon in his Autobiography notes (Journal, May 23, 1815): 'Wordsworth speaking of Burke, Fox and Pitt, said: You always went from Burke with your mind filled; from Fox with your feelings excited: and from Pitt with wonder at his having had the power to make the worse appear the better reason.' (p. 565)

Burton argues that it was not "growing conservatism" that caused Wordsworth to delete the reference to Fox that he had inserted in the earliest version of this passage. She claims that "The omission in the later version . . . is simple enough to explain. He has written a separate poem on Fox. Inserted as the passage is, it destroys the unity of the praise of Burke, with whom Fox may not properly be linked in these late years" (One Wordsworth, p. 62). I shall discuss the 1850 eulogy to Burke at the end of this chapter, see pp. 313-14.

³Karl Kroeber, Romantic Narrative Art (Madison, Wisc.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1960), p. 88. Kroeber makes the important point that "The Prelude is, in part, a history of the French Revolution, but Wordsworth subordinates that history to his autobiography. The mighty events of contemporary history are presented only as they appear to, and exert influence upon, the life of a private individual" (p. 88).

⁴James Scoggins, Imagination and Fancy: Complementary Modes in the Poetry of Wordsworth (Lincoln, Nebraska: The University of Nebraska Press, 1966), p. 221.

⁵Thomas De Quincey, "Recollections of the Lakes and the Lake Poets, Coleridge, Wordsworth and Southey," De Quincey's Works, 18 volumes (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1863), I, 176.

⁶Ross Woodman, "Child and Patriot: Shifting Perspectives in The Prelude," The Wordsworth Circle, 11 (Spring, 1980), 84. In this study, Woodman makes an important point about Wordsworth and the revolution:

He saw the revolution through the eyes of the puer aeternus; he remained blind to its horrors until 'despondency and madness' forced him, with the help of Dorothy, to wake up. The triumph of The Prelude is the triumph of consciousness itself. Wordsworth, it would appear, attempted to perpetuate what he calls 'the glory of his youth' well beyond his seventeenth year, to remain upon the 'eminence' constructed by his apocalyptic imagination long after it had dissolved into the air. That attempt to perpetuate glory manifested the delusion inherent in that ascent 'up to an eminence' when viewed as anything other than the secret 'ministry' by which God awakens the soul to awareness of His presence. Wordsworth's account of himself as a patriot is a brilliant and ultimately nightmarish study in delusion, though a delusion that contained within it the working of grace. (p. 87)

In the present study, I shall attempt to demonstrate that the 1850 treatment of the revolution and its effects on the poet's life is even more brilliant than the treatment in the A text, mainly because Wordsworth, in his maturity, is more fully aware of the delusion that he suffered during this period with regards to the revolution and the excessive hopes that he had for its results.

⁷F. M. Todd, Politics and the Poet: A Study of Wordsworth (London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1957), p. 38. Hereafter cited as Politics.

⁸George L. Nesbitt, Wordsworth: The Biographical Background of His Poetry (New York: Pegasus, 1970), p. 72.

⁹Carl Woodring, Politics in English Romantic Poetry (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970), p. 107. For valuable discussions of the conditions at Cambridge during Wordsworth's day, see Schneider, Wordsworth's Cambridge Education, pp. 11-57 and Politics, pp. 18-22. In the latter study, Todd sums up what were possibly Wordsworth's opinions about the republicanism of Cambridge:

The truth is not that he was predisposed to accept political republicanism because of his introduction to its academic shape at Cambridge, but rather, I believe, that it was at Cambridge that he first turned in anger against a system of privilege and prescription, a system of bigotry; what was stimulated there was not the zeal for the principle of equality which he said the 'statesmen' had implanted in him, so much as a discontent with privilege and authority which he had already learned from the Crackanthes and the Lowthers. (Politics, p. 21)

The "statesmen" to whom Wordsworth is here referring, as Todd explains in a footnote, are the "freeholders of the Lake District" (Politics, p. 21).

¹⁰De Selincourt, quoting only line 238 of the A text (Oxford, l. 237) and lines 234-35 of the 1850 version, objects to this revision. He insists that Wordsworth makes this and similar changes "to cover up the traces of his early pantheism" (p. lxxii). Burton, on the other hand, strongly defends Wordsworth's revision of this section:

As the lines stand, thus isolated, it does look as if that is their purpose, but an examination of the context gives them a different hue, for it reveals that the two lines in the 1850 edition are substituted not for the one line quoted, but for two. . . . This revision seems merely an attempt to clarify incoherent lines. Nature alone is sovereign. The awful power is mysterious, and the difficult idea of single sovereignty is explained, not, as one would expect, as God's alone, but still as Nature's. The change, save for this strengthening of the power of Nature, is chiefly rhetorical. (One Wordsworth, p. 29; her italics)

¹¹In "Appendix A: Wordsworth and Helen Maria Williams," Todd explains that it was from Miss Williams, and not from Michel Beaupuy, that Wordsworth first heard this saga. See Politics, pp. 217-28.

¹²This is not to say that the tale does not have some merit. Harold Bloom, in The Visionary Company, moves from the "tradition," and partially defends this narrative by arguing that "The 1850 Prelude omits the tragic story of Wordsworth's love affair with Annette Vallon, told under the disguise of the names Vaudracour [sic] and Julia in the 1805 Prelude. It is not likely that Wordsworth excluded the affair for aesthetic reasons, though much of it makes rather painful reading. Yet parts of it have a rich, almost passionate tone of excited recollection, and all of it, even as disguised, is vital for the growth of the poet's soul, little as he seems to have thought so. Nowhere else in his poetry does Wordsworth say of himself,

his present mind
Was under fascination; he beheld
A vision, and he lov'd the thing he saw.

Nor does one want to surrender the charm of the prophet of Nature accomplishing a stolen interview at night 'with a ladder's help'" (Visionary Company, pp. 152-53). Although Bloom seems unfamiliar with the phrase "emotion recollected in tranquillity," and although he changes Vaudracour's name in the process, he does make a valid point about the somewhat unromantic Wordsworth of the 1850 Prelude.

¹³In her comment on this passage, Burton asserts that "Those who wish to show [Wordsworth's] growing nationalism have mentioned that he later adds a tribute to England; but they neglect to notice that this is in reality not a tribute at all, but a statement that having been so long away he could not adjust himself to the quiet life of her sylvan shades" (One Wordsworth, p. 70). The problem, it would seem, is not so much a matter of adjustment as of guilt at the inability to do anything for the revolutionary cause. Burton neglects to quote enough of the passage to demonstrate that, in the final lines, Wordsworth is offering a very negative evaluation of England that has nothing whatsoever to do with his ability or inability to reside in the country. Here, he insinuates that it is quite a novel thing for Britons to have virtuous feelings about their fellow man.

¹⁴The Norton editors' note on this change is instructive. They claim that "The initial British response to the Revolution had been mistaken, but not in fact 'ungracious'--see 1805, VI, 352n, above. Publication of Burke's Reflections in November 1790 was followed by a stiffening of attitudes in the Establishment, but serious repression of left-wing opinion did not begin until 1793" (Gill, p. 372).

¹⁵Burton makes much the same points in her analysis of this passage. See One Wordsworth, pp. 71-72.

¹⁶A. V. Dicey, The Statesmanship of Wordsworth (London: Oxford University Press, 1917), p. 43. Dicey further explains, "In the first place, the men who wished to overthrow the Jacobins could not, as long as

the war lasted, attack the tyrants at Paris without weakening the arms of France and laying the country open to the armies of Prussia, of Austria, and of England" (p. 44). And Dicey makes the valid point that "From an historical point of view one of Wordsworth's great merits is that he forces us to see that these causes were complicated" (p. 43). (All subsequent references to Dicey will be from this edition and will be acknowledged parenthetically by page numbers in the body of the text.) But astute as Wordsworth may have been about the outcome of the English invasion, he seems, even as a more mature man, not to have been aware of the situation that faced Pitt at the end of 1792. Dicey dodges this point conveniently when he says, "But it is needless here to determine whether the English advocates or the opponents, such as Wordsworth, of the war, were on the whole in the right. My immediate object is to show the immense effect which the declaration of war by England produced upon Wordsworth's convictions" (pp. 55-56). Georges Lefebvre (The French Revolution from Its Origins to 1793, 2 vols. [London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962]) explains that the situation facing Pitt at the time almost necessitated his declaration of war:

Yet, as it happened, Pitt decided to break with France only to safeguard Britain's particular interests. As late as November 6 Grenville told Auckland, ambassador to The Hague, that he could see no advantage in abandoning neutrality. Although Pitt had written on October 16 that if France kept Savoy the face of things might change, it can legitimately be asked if annexation of Alpine or even of Rhineland regions would have provoked him to take up arms. That Dumouriez and the Convention imagined Pitt would let them annex or control Belgium, however, was an extraordinary misjudgment. At most England might have permitted them to carry the war into Belgian territory under condition of a formal promise not to take any measures concerning its status without British consent. In vain did Lebrun send Maret to assure Pitt that the Republic would not keep Belgium: opening up the Scheldt flatly contradicted his reassurances and signified to Pitt what could be expected from France. The decree of December 15 confirmed his suspicions. In addition, England was allied with Holland, which had a direct interest in keeping the Scheldt closed. When a French squadron forced its way into the harbour channels and pushed out the Dutch, the Stadholder concluded that invasion threatened and called for English aid. Pitt promptly answered in the affirmative. (I, 281-82)

¹⁷ Edward Bostetter (Romantic Ventriloquists, pp. 5-6) and Douglas Bush ("Wordsworth: A Minority Report," in Wordsworth Centenary Studies, ed. G. T. Dunklin [Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1951], pp. 3-22) both hold this view. This revision once more also negates Hamilton's charge that Wordsworth is content, in The Prelude, with "bringing us back to the eighteenth-century best of all possible worlds" (See Intro., pp. 24-25).

¹⁸ "Military success made the French less willing to put up with the dictatorial rule and economic regimentation of the Terror. Robespierre and the Committee of Public Safety had antagonized all significant parties. The working-class radicals of Paris would no longer support him, and after the death of Danton the National Convention was afraid of its own ruling committee. A group in the Convention obtained the 'outlawing' of Robespierre on 9 Thermidor (July 27, 1794); he was guillotined with some of his associates on the following day. Many who turned against Robespierre believed they were pushing the Revolution farther forward, as in destroying the Girondins the year before. Others thought, or said, that they were stopping a dictator and a tyrant. All agreed, to absolve themselves, in heaping all blame upon Robespierre. The idea that Robespierre was an ogre originated more with his former colleagues than with conservatives of the time," R. R. Palmer and Joel Colton, A History of the Modern World, 5th ed. (1950; rev. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978), p. 370.

¹⁹ Wordsworth makes two minor changes in this passage. He replaces the semicolon after "for," line 794, with a colon, and he changes "Openly in the view of earth and heaven" (l. 795) to "Openly in the eye of earth and heaven" (l. 210; my italics) in the final version.

²⁰ Although Havens argues that Wordsworth is here referring more to "rationalism or Jacobinism, in general including Godwinism" (Mind, p. 543) rather than to Godwinism alone, the Norton editors suggest that the reference is to Godwin's theories:

The reference is to Godwin's Enquiry Concerning Political Justice. By chance, the book came out just after the execution of Louis XVI and the declaration of war with France and its appeal to British radicals was that it offered the hope for optimism at a moment when things were going wrong. Godwin's philosophy undertakes to free ('abstract') man's hope--for a future condition of absolute happiness and benevolence--from reliance on his emotional nature, and to ground that hope instead on his reason ('a purer element'). (Gill, p. 402)

²¹ Wordsworth again makes two minor revisions in this passage. The first is the change from "rivet up" (1805, X, 932) to "rivet down" (l. 358), and the second is the revision of "In exultation among living clouds" (1805, X, 937) to "In exultation with a living pomp" (1850, XI, 365), a revision, incidentally, which draws a sharper parallel to the lines describing Wordsworth's dedication to poetry in Book IV.

²² Alfred Cobban (Edmund Burke and the Revolt against the Eighteenth Century [London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1929], Chapter V, "Wordsworth and Nationality") points out that "It is perhaps unfair to blame Burke's contemporaries too harshly for their blindness to the growing force of nationality. The period was one of rapid transition, when some men were bound to be in advance of their time and some behind

it. The age of Nationality was not yet born, and though it was evident that Europe was in sore travail it was not equally evident what would be the event. . . . Burke alone of the elder statesmen had shown a true apprehension of the realities of nationalism. Younger minds, held back by the Revolution and even by the Romantic movement itself, turned first towards the 'philosophic' principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity. It was only when the ideas of the Revolution failed them that some at least took refuge in nationalism. Thus, whereas Burke approached the theory of nationality as a result of his meditation on political realities and in direct opposition to revolutionary ideas, his successors in England first met it as disciples of the Revolution" (pp. 133-34).

Chapter VI: "More Rational Proportions": Recovery and Release

¹More than the 1805 lines, this statement corresponds to Wordsworth's earlier statement in Book X:

When a taunt
Was taken up by scoffers in their pride,
Saying, 'Behold the harvest that we reap
From popular government and equality',
I clearly saw that neither these nor aught
Of wild belief engrafted on their names
By false philosophy had caused the woe,
But a terrific reservoir of guilt
And ignorance filled up from age to age,
That could no longer hold its loathsome charge,
But burst and spread in deluge through the land.

(1850, X, 470-80; my italics)

²John Milton, Paradise Lost, in John Milton: Complete Poems and Major Prose, ed. Merrett Y. Hughes (Indianapolis & New York: Odyssey Press, 1957), II, 621.

³This assertion also corresponds more closely to a revised statement in Book X, in which Wordsworth defends his assertion that, during the revolution, he gained a power much like the power gained by the ancient Prophets who witnessed war:

So, with devout humility be it said,
So, did a portion of that spirit fall
On me uplifted from the vantage-ground
Of pity and sorrow to a state of being
That through the time's exceeding fierceness saw

Glimpses of retribution, terrible,
 And in the order of sublime behests:
 But, even if that were not, amid the awe
 Of unintelligible chastisement,
 Not only acquiescences of faith
 Survived, but daring sympathies with power,
 Motions not treacherous or profane, else why
 Within the folds of no ungentle breast
 Their dread vibration to this hour prolonged?

(1850, X, 447-60; my italics)

⁴Karl Kroeber (Romantic Narrative Art [p. 89]), suggests that "The subject of The Prelude is power." He explains that "Wordsworth is first of all interested in the power of the imagination, an individual power and one peculiarly the attribute of the poet" (p. 89). He further suggests that

. . . in The Prelude the power of imagination is defined, dramatized, and evaluated according to its relationship to other kinds of power, most notably, on the one hand, the power of Nature, . . . and, on the other hand, the contrasting power of social action, heroic service to one's fellow men, a power which Wordsworth tasted in the fervid days of revolutionary ardor. (p. 89)

Kroeber's assessment is right as far as it goes, and he is correct when he insists that "Imagination, as Wordsworth conceives it, is not restricted to aesthetic matters" (p. 90). But the point Kroeber fails to make is that "the contrasting power of social action" of which he speaks need not be "heroic." According to Wordsworth, this power can (and should) be exerted by both the poet and the historian in their writings. In other words while the imagination "is not restricted to aesthetic matters," what Wordsworth seems to be suggesting here is that "aesthetic matters" must not be entirely devoid of the power to point out social errors and to encourage social change.

⁵These lines seem to be directed primarily at Thomas Carlyle whose French Revolution, Moorman explains, "had appeared in 1837":

Wordsworth could not understand Carlyle's grim detachment as he consigned the 'fire-ship' that was Old France to its ineluctable doom. He thought he wrote with a "sneer born of Conceit", and a cruel mockery of good men's distress, and said so in a sonnet called In Allusion to various Recent Histories and Notices of the French Revolution. (Moorman, II, 539)

⁶Philip Hobsbaum criticizes this revision. He claims that "There is a frankly tactile description of the evening--

It was a summer's night, a close warm night,
 Wan, dull and glaring, with a dripping mist

but the older Wordsworth mashes up the rhythm up into an unrelieved chain of adjectives: 'It was a close, warm, breezeless summer night . . .'. No wonder Wordsworth has a reputation for failure in sensuous detail" (Tradition and Experiment, p. 188). In reality, there is no mashing up of the rhythm here. It is perfectly regular. And as I explain, the reason that Wordsworth makes the revision is to direct our attention back to the beginning of the poem, so that we can see that a growth of mind has taken place, not only in the young Wordsworth about whom the poem is being written, but also in the older poet who is writing the poem.

⁷ Burton's comment on this revision is as follows:

Here we have both mind and soul, the majestic intellect with which we are now familiar, divided into sense and soul. And we realize that Wordsworth in the use of this term, intellect, is indeed thinking not of the ordinary human mind, but of the majestic intellect, which we have identified with grand Reason and which now we find infinite, eternal, transcendent, immortal, a truly pantheistic concept. We recognize it as the soul of Plato, divided by him into reason, spirit, and appetite; the soul, likewise, of Plotinus, not subject to reason, but itself pure reason, perhaps the nous. Certainly it is the universal reason of Coleridge, and, therefore, Emerson's over-soul. Whatever its ancestry, this idea is not orthodox High-church, and its revision marks no attempt to cover or alter Wordsworth's pantheism. Quite the contrary, it is clearly an effort to intensify and enlarge upon this most unorthodox conception. The 'watchful eye of the heresy hunter' concerns him not at all. (One Wordsworth, p. 40; her italics)

⁸ Wordsworth makes two slight revisions in these lines. The 1805 "By reason and by truth" (l. 444) becomes, in 1850, "By reason, blest by faith" (l. 448), and, in the final line, "Of substance and of fabric more divine" becomes "Of quality and fabric more divine" (ll. 452; 456).

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