CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

Wordsworth's greatest and most original poetry, written after his apprenticeship to poetry was over and before he gravitated to more orthodox postures, is best understood as that of a poet philosopher. His poems of nature have not merely aesthetic value as an expression of an artist's vision, but have great ethical content.

In the introduction to his selection of Wordsworth's poetry, Matthew Arnold warns the readers against Wordsworthians who wish to find in Wordsworth a philosopher rather than a poet. Arnold further adds that his poetry is the reality and his philosophy an illusion.

That critics praise or depreciate a poet or a writer for the wrong things is undeniable, as Arnold's own act of calling Wordsworth's philosophy an "illusion" testifies. The dancer cannot be separated from the dance or the song from the melodious voice, and so cannot poetry be excluded from its philosophy. Hence, attributing reality to his poetry and illusion to his philosophy as Arnold does, is a wrong approach to an understanding of Wordsworth's poetry. All his major poems and quite a number of his minor poems anatomise the creative aspects of nature and project its practical relevance to humanity. For instance, in one of his shorter poems, addressing a traveller he asks him to rest, so that he would tell him the story of a
"lonely yew tree" which "stands far from all human dwelling". In the poem, there is also a young man who shuns company, whether human or natural and spends his time aloof under the tree. The tree and the young man become symbols of solitude and unsociability. Wordsworth describes the young man thus in the poem "Lines left upon a Seat in a Yew-Tree":

... —Stranger 'tis these gloomy boughs
Had Charms for him; and here he loved to sit,
... he many an hour
A morbid pleasure nourished, tracing here
An emblem of his own unfruitful life....

Nevertheless, Wordsworth believes that nature has the healing touch to make the most unnatural and perverted of human minds remorseful, relieved and humble. For, the beauty and loneliness of the spot makes him realise the benediction of God to a benevolent and compassionate mind, which the poet is conscious of his lacking:

And lifting up his head, he then would gaze
On the more distant scene; how lovely 'tis
Thou seest, and he would gaze till it became
Far lovelier, and his heart could not sustain
The beauty still more beauteous.  

The poet had two distinct attitudes towards nature. The initial one was to receive her majestic influence and the second one was to derive sheer joy out of the felt experiences. His compositions in Lyrical Ballads, with the exception of "Tintern Abbey", poems like "An Evening Walk", "Salisbury Plain", "Old Man


2Ibid., p. 30, ll. 30-34.
Travelling", "The Ruined Cottage", "The Old Cumberland Beggar", "The Thorn", "The Idiot Boy", "Lines written in Early Spring", "Peter Bell", "Expostulation and Reply", etc., project the initial attitude of the poet. The Prelude and The Excursion reflect his subsequent attitude towards nature. But it should be remembered that whatever the poem, whether it expresses one attitude or the other, the underlying philosophy is inescapable and specific. For instance, a simple poem like "Expostulation and Reply" dramatically is a dialogue between a friend Matthew and the poet. The poet used to sit on an old gray stone by Erthwaite lake and stare upon the earth and look around dreamily. Matthew asks him the reason for such a meaningless, worthless, and wasted act to which the poet answers:

The eye it cannot chuse but see,
We cannot bid the ear be still;
Our bodies feel, where'er they be,
Against, or with our will.

Thus by presenting the involuntary sensory motions of man, Wordsworth expresses his conviction of the unique nature of man's mind. He also believes that nothing comes to man without effortless seeking. So the poet has been all along sitting on the old stone by the lake to give full play and liberty to his perceptions and to seek to practise "passiveness".

[The preoccupation with "passiveness", "stillness" or "motionlessness" is a strong element of the philosophic mind.

Gill, p. 130, ll. 17-20.
Most of the poems in *Lyrical Ballads* and *The Prelude* refer to stillness. For instance, Wordsworth describes the wretched wandering woman of "The Ruined Cottage" thus:

> ... In every act  
> Pertaining to her house-affairs appeared  
> The careless stillness which a thinking mind  
> Gives to an idle matter — ...4  
>

Stillness is an aspect of the speculative mind and the poet's characters exhibit this trait, irrespective of their social and intellectual background, for the reason that they have been close to nature. Intense suffering and loss are two other aspects known to the characters the poet chooses to portray. Suffering finally affects a triumphant calmness of the mind. One can trace in his poems a switch from the initial presentation of man's reception of nature's majestic influence to the new state of joy, experienced both in body and spirit. Most of his poems have their genesis in a visit, travel or journey, and most of them are reminiscences too. During his travels, he comes across the most delightful, thoughtful, and speculative moments of his life. Their recollection is a precious source of joy and tranquility to him. His poem "The Last of the Flock" begins by a claim that he had been to many countries, but till that day he had not witnessed a healthy, full grown man, crying in the public roads alone. Seeing a sturdy man with cheeks wet with tears and a lamb in his arms, the poet asks him the cause of his

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ailment. The man explains to him, how he had raised several lambs out of one lamb, reared a rich stock of sheep until one day he found it difficult to make both ends meet. One after another he had to sell all his lambs. Finally he was left with one, the lamb he most remembered, for it was the one out of which he had gradually raised the others. His rustic attachment and sense of justice is very touching in Wordsworth's portrait:

—This lusty lamb of all my store
Is all that is alive:
And now I care not if we die,
And perish all of poverty.5

His is a heart-rending conclusion:

'Alas! and I have none;
To-day I fetched it from the rock;
It is the last of all my flock'.6

Thus Wordsworth shifts our attention from the anxiety for the man's source of income with the selling of the last lamb to our concern with the disappearance of the fifty lambs, which were reared by the man with affection and care. We identify ourselves with the sorrowful man whose health was gradually getting deteriorated, as he could not relish the bread bought out of the sale of a lamb each day. We are bound to speculate, that when a mere reading of the tale makes us go through the pain of loss, how much more would be the anguish for the sturdy man. Proximity to nature is shown as being

6Ibid., p. 91, ll. 98-100.
helpful in complementing our sense of self-preservation with compassion and love for fellowmen and creatures.

Wordsworth believes that the influence of nature on human mind is something more than what the human mind offers in return. He makes it clear that we receive more than what we give. No development is possible without a reciprocal attitude between man and nature. There is an unsparing truthfulness in his painting of human pain and wrongs. It is undeniable that Wordsworth carried a peculiar poetic burden. In his early poems Wordsworth was consciously breaking new ground in subject matter and style. "She Dwelt Among the Untrodden Ways" is, apart from any deeper considerations, an example of several works in which the spectacle of lonely existence and suffering in solitude compels his attention and his sympathy.

The poet's work explores the relation of his imaginative development to the contemplation of human misery. He had profound interest in the wretched of the earth. Margaret's husband Robert, the Idiot Boy and his mother, or Martha are pointers to the poet's concern for the poor, the neglected and the wronged. Talking of Margaret's husband in "The Ruined Cottage", the old man tells the poet traveller:

... but ere the second autumn
A fever seized her husband. In disease
He lingered long, and when his strength returned
He found the little he had stored to meet
The hour of accident or crippling age
Was all consumed....
... his good-humour soon
Became a weight in which no pleasure was,
And poverty brought on a petted mood
And a sore temper: day by day he drooped....7

Similarly, the description of the woebegone mother Betty Foy
searching for her imbecile boy, Johnny, is quite moving:

'O woe is me! O woe is me!
Here will I die; here will I die;
I thought to find my Johnny here,
But he is neither far nor near,
Oh! what a wretched mother I!'8

After frantic cries and searches, when she finds him in the
distant wood, she is shocked:

She looks again—her arms are up—
She screams—she cannot move for joy;
She darts as with a torrent's force,
She almost has o'erturned the horse,
And fast she holds her idiot boy.9

The perennially observable shadow in Wordsworth's
analysis of tragic response brings out the possibility that
there is only momentary pleasure in the contemplation of a
Margaret, a Betty Foy, a Michael or a Martha Ray. The sequential imaginative growth fathomed in "The Pedlar", "Tintern
Abbey", "The Ode on the Intimations of Immortality", and finally
The Prelude goes a long way to prove that the poet had a
fascination with tragic material. In "The Pedlar", he endeavours to determine the degree of suffering that can be

7 Gill, p. 35, ll. 148-153, 172-175.
8 Ibid., p. 75, ll. 272-276. 9 Ibid., p. 78, ll. 382-386.
shouldered by a person. "Tintern Abbey" is primarily concerned with the problems of loss and alienation, and thus a philosophical treatment of human suffering is offered:

... and in after years,
When these wild ecstasies shall be matured
Into a sober pleasure, when they mind
Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms,
Thy memory be as a dwelling-place
For all sweet sounds and harmonies; Oh ! then,
If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief,
Should be thy portion, with what healing thoughts
Of tender joy wilt thou remember me,
And these my exhortations! Nor, perchance,
If I should be, where I no more can hear
Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild eyes these gleams
Of past existence, wilt thou then forget
That on the banks of this delightful stream
We stood together; and that I, so long
A worshipper of Nature...

[The poet delves deep into the real aspects of nature not for mere nature-propaganda but for exploring possibilities of building human associations with his rural surrounding. Nature is seldom valued for what she is. The poet values her more for what she does, and he values her the more for the feelings she evokes in one's mind and being, rather than as food for the eyes. Thus the virtue of aesthetic appeal is subordinated to the value of imaginative and spiritual ministry.] However, any attempt to understand a poet of Wordsworth's stature necessitates a historical perspective. Any analysis of his poetry that excludes the socio-political background will not provide us with a correct picture of his poetry. Hence, it is essential to probe into eighteenth century England and France to trace the influence

\[\text{Gill, p. 135, ll. 138-153.}\]
of Rousseau, Locke, Hartley and Godwin on Wordsworth; to discern in them the intellectual backbone of the poet's moral being. We will also have to look into the poet's early training, his growing up in an atmosphere of real piety, affection and liberty, and his association with men, women and boys of character. The poet had the privilege of being born in the land which was the mother of democracy and liberty. In his most innocent days he shared with some of his countrymen the pride of conviction that England would pave the way for politically repressed nations like France. But the way his land had turned bitter to the French Revolution and her own repressive measures upon her colonies, sowed seeds of disillusion in him. Yet, his politics were in the grand English tradition: the politics of Milton, Sidney, and Fox; the politics of an advancing style but of an ordered democracy. This strengthened Wordsworth's own innate love of liberty, equality, and fraternity. Danby says: "here it had its inner sanction, its transcendent source, its compulsion towards social responsibility. The specific experiences from which Wordsworth took his continuing assurance do not seem to have recurred very frequently after 1799. But by then he had been shaped by them.” While The Prelude recalls and reaffirms his political and social thought, "The Immortality Ode" assumes the form of its elegy. If an extract from each is placed beside the other, the contrast becomes evident. For instance, lines

like these:

... Tremblings of the heart
It gives, to think that our immortal being
No more shall need such garments; and yet Man,
As long as he shall be the Child of Earth,
Might almost 'weep to have' what he may lose,
Nor be himself extinguished, but survive,
Abject, depressed, forlorn, disconsolate.
A thought is with me sometimes, and I say,
'Should earth by inward throes be wrenched throughout
Or fire be sent from fow to wither all
Her pleasant habitations, and dry up
Old Ocean in his bed left singed and bare,
Yet would the living Presence still subsist
Victorious; and composure would ensue,
And kindlings like the morning; presage sure,
Though slow, perhaps, of a returning day'.

are sufficient proof of the poet's identity even at a later stage in life with his initial political and social optimistic stance.

[Wordsworth's sonnets on Liberty and Independence are the poetic reincarnation of the personal and political ideals of Rousseau.] The second chapter attempts to trace a possible link, if any, with Rousseau's political philosophy contained in his crowning work The Social Contract. [Like Rousseau's writings, Wordsworth's poems strike a new note of defiant independence. His sonnets, "Go back to antique ages" and "Not 'mid the Word's vain", remind us of the past when rash spirits prompted by audacious vanities fought wars and satisfied their whims by building the "Tower of Babel" and the pyramids in the hope of

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immortalizing their names. Wordsworth flays them for acting as brutes and enslaving free souls. The sonnets "'O'er the wide earth,..." and "The martial courage..." are products of the poet's fear and anxiety on seeing lawless violence compelling empires to unjust treaties. He felt that the uprising of Madrid on May 2, 1808 against the French occupation was as encouraging as the outbreak of the French Revolution. Both were equally popular, spontaneous and passionate. Like many of his countrymen, the poet was bitterly disappointed when, after a victory over the French, the generals of the British force sent to aid the Spaniards, signed a convention to repatriate the defeated forces and the British ships. As an expression of national resistance, it became the cynosure of a new hope for millions under Napoleon's despotism. At this time, "his first and last thought", wrote Dorothy Wordsworth, "are Spain and Portugal".

The poet writes of the situation as if with a mission, to express the inarticulate hope of freedom-loving people throughout Europe, bidding them to look to heaven and their own hearts, for the only strength mightier than Napoleon's battalions. Events proved his extollation right. He was overthrown as he had prophesied. Nationalism was to play a glorious part in effecting the liberation of the oppressed people.

The poet is evidently sympathetic with the Spaniards fighting Napoleon. In his sonnet on the French and Spanish Guerillas, he presents their advance in realistic terms for they were no match for Napoleon's organised army. Yet he draws our attention to their skill in ambush and warfare, when he describes
the way the French army is pressed backward:

So these,—and, heard of once again, are chased
With combinations of long practised art
And newly kindled hope; but they are fled—
Gone are they....
And thus from year to year his walk they thwart,
And hang like dreams round his guilty bed.13

The poet is eloquent in praise of the strength, the might
and the fortitude of the Spaniards in fighting and baffling 'the
imperial slave'. Seldom in his life was Wordsworth's mind sus-
tained at a higher pitch of enthusiasm than in the composition
of these sonnets. Both Rousseau and Wordsworth tried to expose
how the growth of civilization corrupted natural goodness and
increased inequality between men. Though the poet did not go to
the extreme step of the nonconformist, yet in attributing great
powers to nature and pointing to the susceptibility of man to
fall easy prey to pride and power, he, like Rousseau, subtly
invoked the inviolability of personal ideals against the powers
of the dictatorial state and the pressures of urban society.

—>Being essentially a naturalist like Locke, the poet bases
his whole theory on the assumption, that thought originates in
experience, and that out of the product of sensation or experience,
ideas and the more complex forms of mentality are developed.
Wordsworth also inherits from Locke an intense concern with the
visible universe; although Locke tries to explain all kinds of

13John O. Hayden (ed.), William Wordsworth: The Poems,
(Hereafter Hayden).
sensory experiences, he is most at home with the sense of sight, which could most easily be related to Newton's optical discoveries. From Locke's description of the nature of mind, a new poetry of a highly visual quality could be expected. This is because of his treatment of sight in an enviably monopolised position — for the faculty of sight came to dominate the analysis of intellectual activity. Hence, even in a passage like the following, which is undeniably moving away from Locke's philosophic teaching, Locke's influence is apparent.

There is creation in the eye,
Nor less in all the other senses; powers
They are that colour, model, and combine
The things perceived with such an absolute
Essential energy that we may say
That those most godlike faculties of ours
At one and the same moment are the mind
And the mind's minister.  

Wordsworth's autobiographical and ruminatory habit at this time indicates the influence of the eighteenth century psychology, and especially that of Hartley. In the Hartleian psychology, the mind is viewed as a developing organism marked by three principal stages of progress: 1) Sensations derived directly from objects; 2) simple ideas, derived from sensations; and 3) complex ideas, or intellectual ideas, derived from simpler ideas, under the power of association. Wordsworth's acceptance of this analysis of the mind's history is evident in his poems like "Tintern Abbey", "Intimations of Immortality",  

The Prelude and many other poems. Arthur Beatty gives an admirable judgement upon the final stage: "Yet, so much greater is the perception of the philosophic mind to see into the significance and life of things, than the mind in either of the earlier stages, that the resulting mood is not melancholy, but optimism." The doctrine of the three ages is presented as an integral part of associationism. However, it would be hazardous to conclude that Wordsworth must have derived his conception from this source. His view of the growth of his own mind is so decidedly autobiographical in its application, so deeply based upon his own experience, that any search for bookish sources seems nearly superfluous. Also the doctrine of the ages, as Havens has remarked, "would naturally occur to anybody, and it is one often made in tracing the development of painters and writers."

Wordsworth's association with Godwinianism is a short-lived one. Godwin had an ideal view of human nature and maintained that by virtue of rational argument men should learn to live together. Reason alone could remove the laws and institutions that made men evil. No doubt Godwin contributed largely to the anarchist tradition. Wordsworth felt most drawn to Godwin, when he was a believer in the French Revolution.

Godwin's teaching on crime and punishment is years ahead.

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of its time. If our actions are necessary, that is the result of all the preceding circumstances, then the criminal is not guilty; he is the inevitable product of an unenlightened social system. Wordsworth rewrote guilt and sorrow to conform to this teaching, and in Lyrical Ballads, there is an invitation to contemplate the Dungeon and the Convict from a Godwinian viewpoint; criminals are to be re-educated and placed in surroundings conducive to this end. It is interesting to note that Wordsworth was soon disenchanted with most of Godwin's ideas. They did not seem to square with his experience of real people: there was something inhuman about Godwin's conclusion that the virtuous man, in proportion to his improvement will be under the constant influence of mixed and invariable principles. Wordsworth's tragedy, The Borderers, indicates what happens, when one trusts reason more than feelings. Godwin thought that one should ignore even the most obvious emotions, such as filial piety and gratitude: "Gratitude — a principle which has so often been the theme of the moralist and the poet, is no part of either justice or virtue". Wordsworth later countered by writing "Simon Lee, the Old Huntsman", of which the theme is gratitude, "Alas! the gratitude of men/ Has oftner left me mourning." But in 1795 and 1796, after seeking the answers to his problems from Godwin's book and finding none, Wordsworth had come to a full stop; he had become, "Sick, wearied out

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17 Gill, p. 88, ll. 103-04.
It was about this time that he met Coleridge, a philosopher in his own right, who became his close associate.

Chapter III deals with the treatment of nature by major Romantics like Blake, Coleridge, Shelley and Byron. My study here attempts to delineate the similarities and dissimilarities between Wordsworth and the rest of the major romantic poets. For instance, Wordsworth believed that he was almost himself when he most admitted the impressions of nature and his bold imagination jealously preserved the framework of the elementary fact. Shelley, too, shared Wordsworth’s theory of imagination, but the world of rainbows and caverns which filled his own had no such intimate kinship with the actual ones. Thus David Perkins says: “In Shelley, for example, rivers and streams become metaphors of constant sinuously rippled alteration; but in Wordsworth’s poetry streams flow in lasting current and suggest the permanent qualities of nature.”

In Keats the worship of beauty became supreme. With a great poet the sense of beauty overcomes every other consideration and he significantly blamed Coleridge’s "irritable reaching


after fact and reason".

And Byron, though not born or bred Greek, did more than any other single man to create the passion for Greek and Greece. While Shelley's is a fiery protest against tyranny, of a deep yearning for emancipation, Byron's verse exhibits much of the restlessness and tumult of the age. His subjectivism makes him the most egotistic of the brilliant band of poets of that age of socio-historical crisis. Whereas Byron's personages are mirrors in which he sees himself, Wordsworth's are mirrors which reflect the universal grief of a mother looking for her idiot boy, of an ass leading Peter Bell to where its master lies dead and cold, or of a woman hopefully waiting for her husband long dead in war to return.

Coleridge's worship of liberty was from the first far more a passion of the speculative, than of the practical intellect. Added to this he took to metaphysical studies at Cambridge. However, the poems of Coleridge have at once the voluptuous quality of Keats and the mystic quality of Shelley. Wordsworth's is a more humane, down-to-earth and naturalistic approach. In the works of Coleridge supernaturalism finds relief with exquisite instinct by scenes full of babbling innocence of nature. The inwardness in the poems of Coleridge has a depth. When abstracted from the outer world, it, like Wordsworth's, pours forth richly worded invention and floods of imaginative thought. One of the most intimate critics of Wordsworth, Coleridge recognized and appreciated 'the gift of
imagination in the highest and strictest sense of the word', in
the poet. Coleridge was himself one of the most original of
men and poets. As John Beer has rightly pointed out, "in his
mind there was a light so individual and strong that on human
conditions and relations it cost fresh illumination."20 His
writings and talks make the problems of life less enigmatic.
Instead they make life's spiritual capabilities more apparent
and its hopes more assured and elevated. Coleridge's idealism
encompasses a stream of genius which must ultimately return to
its foundation. It effects an Abyssinian paradise which
replaces the abyss. For instance, the poet and his genius
are deified in the sun-like figure at the conclusion of "Kubla
Khan" who exerts a compulsive fascination on all who hear and
see him:

That with music loud and long,
I would build that dome in air,
That sunny dome! those caves of ice!
And all who heard should see them there,
And all should cry Beware! Beware!
His flashing eyes, his floating hair!

→ For Wordsworth, on the other hand, the divine element in the
human being is more like a half-passive moon-god, at once
brooding over the darkness, like a dove or creative Spirit. It
draws sustenance from an unseen fountain of light and power
which it transmits into a still stream of radiance. It shows

20 John Beer, Wordsworth and the Human Heart (London: Faber

21 Ernest Hartley Coleridge (ed.), Coleridge: Poetical
too the poet's acquaintance with the final aloneness, in which one ceases to be egocentric, at the same time as one discovers that one is an Absolute Self.

The poet's style of extracting food from an unseen fountain of light and power which it changes into a radiant stream of tranquility may be observed markedly in the following lines from The Prelude:

...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.

... in Nature still
Glorying, I found a counterpoise in her,
Which, when the spirit of evil reached its height,
Maintained for me a secret happiness.22

Yet despite this striking difference, he pays tribute to Coleridge, for having given him a sense of "pathetic truth" and for relaxing the grasp of fear, giving more rational proportions to thoughts and things in the self-haunting spirit. Like Spinoza who was drunk with God, Wordsworth was drunk with nature.

Chapter IV attempts to explore the treatment of nature in the works of Wordsworth. It has the twin function of showing how in nature's "eternal silence", "awful solitudes" and "dark terrors" the poet had learnt to see the reflection

22Maxwell, Book XII, p. 467, ll. 63-69, 72-75.
of "permanence" and "infinity" and of exposing certain distinctions that mark him out from his contemporaries. David Perkin's view that "often in Wordsworth's poetry the permanence of nature is felt most strongly by contrast with the brevity of human life" holds good in this context. One of Wordsworth's most obsessive themes is "love of nature" leading to "love of man". He gained a lofty conception of man through coming to know him in surroundings of grandeur and beauty, that is, by "love of nature". The poet found it hard to believe that a man could love nature and still be cruel, selfish or foolish. Nature, landscape or scenery, has functional value. It leads man to compassion and the love of fellow beings. The belief that nature was endowed with the power to develop or inculcate in man certain positive values, is not a new one. It is a dominant faith of the later eighteenth and early nineteenth century writing as well as art. But no poet or artist went to the extent Wordsworth did in seeking the existence of a direct and congruent power in nature, which affects the heart of a responsive observer. It adds fullness to his personality and grants him equilibrium. Wordsworth always looked for Universal things and in this quest, he felt that nature could assist him. A vacation ramble in the Alps with a friend, Robert Jones, sent his imagination soaring to such heights that the highest life flashed and spread over

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his consciousness:

... The immeasurable height
Of woods decaying, never to be decayed,
The stationary blasts of waterfalls,
And everywhere along the hollow rent
Winds thwarting winds, bewildered and forlorn,
The torrent 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,
The unfettered clouds and region of the Heavens,
Tumult and peace, the darkness and the light—
Were all like workings of one mind, the features
Of the same face, blossoms upon one tree;
Characters of the great Apocalypse,
The types and symbols of Eternity,
Of first, and last, and midst, and without end. 24

The passage is often quoted, but is so magnificent that it can
be read anew with pleasure. And the experience recorded here
is in the very language of monistic idealism, and a discerning
mind can immediately detect the philosophy as being the same
upon which transcendentalism is usually based. The last line
defines the timelessness and infinity of the Absolute Mind.

Wordsworth's consummate work consists of different phases. They
range from excesses of fancy, sensationism, analytical reason-
ing, and mysticism to humanism and naturalism. Each phase is
rooted out, but not before new values have been sown by the
passing phase. The higher faculties of imagination and
synthetic reasoning control the lower, but they do not substi-
tute themselves in place of the inferior powers. There is no

annihilation of the lesser faculties, no swamping out of fancy, analysis, and sensuousness. Had this taken place, the suppression would have derived the greater functions of their support, dissipating them in a vacuous idealism. (Man is at the centre of Wordsworth's later works. He continues to be "wedded to this goodly universe in love and holy passion". The several aspects of his personality — sense, emotion, reason and spirit — find abundant representations in poems like "Tintern Abbey", "The Intimations of Immortality" and The Prelude. The poet turns to the simple gifts of nature, the Sun and the Sky, the elements and seasons, and connects them with the working of the human heart. Avoiding the profane and superficial, he celebrates the union between internal and external as one which leads to beauty and grace, and to the benevolent organic community. He associates childhood with paradise. In the poem about his French daughter, written at Calais in 1802, the poet walks with her on a beautiful evening:

Dear Child, dear Girl! that walkest with me here, If thou appear untouched by seldom thought, Thy nature is not therefore less divine: Thou lies in Abraham's bosom all the year; And worshipp'st at the Temple's inner shrine God being with thee when we knew it not.

There is an element of piety in the imagery here. Unlike the treatment of childhood, innocence and purity in The Prelude, where the predominant force is "natural piety", the poet's

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reverence for the child here assumes a divine piety. The obsession with paradise is equal in both.

As already mentioned, the poet does not worship nature for nature's sake. Some of the lyrics like, "The Tables Turned", "Simon Lee" and "The Thorn" are examples of the poet's conviction that nature teaches the wisdom of real living and also bestows on us the courage to emerge an integrated whole in the face of tragedies or misfortunes.

Everything suggests a new beginning: the trees and mountains are bare, as if first created, and the poet records the grass as a simple, original property of nature — "grass in the green field". A new lyrical fervour underlies these poems. It is caused by the dominance of circumstantial subjective elements. The poet's gaze is no longer fixed on the outward reality of the world. There is an innate desire for the reconstruction of individual and social life in harmony with nature.

This chapter examines both the subjective and objective basis of Wordsworth's poetry of nature. It attempts to reveal how the poet's work is founded objectively, on a large and ever growing intimacy with the earth, air and sky, and with the plants and animal life of the rural areas where he dwelt. Subjectively, his nature poetry is based on the psychological discovery formulated by Coleridge, "We receive but what we give,/ And in our life alone does Nature live". Though these
lines occur in "Dejection: an Ode", for Wordsworth, this truth was chiefly associated with the joyously creative life at Alfoxden and his first years at Grasmere. The poet profoundly honours the human heart in the first edition of Lyrical Ballads. Bernard Groom pointing to a historic moment in the poet's life says, "but there was a time at Alfoxden when his enthusiasm soared higher and he envisaged the attainment of a truly Christian Charity (though not so called) by natural means." 26

The additions to the Lyrical Ballads, in the reissue of 1802, were entitled pastoral and other poems. In calling poems like "Michael" pastoral, Wordsworth evidently meant to give the type itself a higher rank in poetry, just as he had enlarged the scope and raised the status of the ballad. The best of his pastorals belong to poetry considered as "the most philosophic of all writing". They were in no sense "juvenilia" or "virtuoso" pieces like the pastorals of Pope. They were to be genuine panoramas of rural life and manners, and yet, in their total effect meditations, "on man, the heart of man, and human life".

The most remarkable pastoral in the whole of Wordsworth's poetry is "Michael", written towards the end of 1800, which is almost equalled by "The Brothers", which belongs to the earlier part of the same year. In "Michael", the poet traces the disappointment of a great affection. In "The Brothers",

the irony of the situation, in which one speaker in the dialogue knows his interlocutor, but the other does not, produces a growing tension, that captures and sustains the reader's interest. Leonard has returned from the sea to his native Ennerdale, wishing to settle with his younger brother whom he has not seen for years, but the sight of a new grave in the Churchyard (where head-stones are not used) arouses in him the fear that he may have come too late. The two brothers, as children, had learned the force of human affection from the kindness of their grandfather, but apart from him, had been alone in the world. In conversation with "the homely priest of Ennerdale", who does not recognize the newcomer, Leonard is torn between desire and fear to know the truth about the grave and dares not break the suspense. At length, the news that James, the younger of the two, had after his brother's departure developed the habit of sleep-walking in which he seemed to be searching for an absent person, produces so strong an emotion that Leonard no longer resists the truth which he already knows by instinct, and simply asks the question: "But this youth, / How did he die at last?" It is the priest's task to tell how James had evidently fallen in his sleep from the surface of the Pillar Rock (that "aery summit crowned with heath") where he had remained alone after climbing thither with some companions. It is one of the exceptional poems that depicts convincingly the strength to

which affection may grow in a sparse population where life is hardy and simple, and memories are long. "The Brothers" is, undeniably, as Wordsworth classified it, a poem of the affections. It is a masterly poem of the mountains in their two-fold power to deepen the domestic emotions and to tranquilize the mind. The first influence prevails in Leonard; the second in the Priest:

We have no need of names and epitaphs,
We talk about the dead by our fire-sides.
And then, for our immortal part, we want
No symbols, Sir, to tell us that plain tale:
The thought of death sits easy on the man
Who has been born and dies among the mountains. 28

In "Michael", on the other hand, there is no dramatic situation to heighten the interest, nothing to correspond to the narrative value of James' sleep-walking and fall. The story "homely and rude" is offered to the "few natural hearts" to whom it may appeal and who will be the poet's "second self" when he is gone. Of all Wordsworth's long narrative poems it is the one most completely impregnated with his spirit. His "thought and love" penetrate everywhere. He also grasps the social sources of the equality and dignity in the life he describes.

Michael's "consciousness of the land" and his sense therein of the "pleasure which there is in life itself" are conveyed to us through Wordsworth's minute knowledge of pastoral manners which enables him to give us a living picture of the

Shepherd's life on the hills, by the fireside, at table — a life "of hardship, skill or courage, joy or fear!" Thus Michael is the human centre on whom the poet's love of the region is focused, and from whom it is reflected over the whole range of pastoral life. Though full of homely realism, the poem is kept above the level of prose by the vitalizing presence of its rhythm itself, the living expression of the author's love of his theme.

Chapter V deals with Wordsworth's changing attitude to nature. At one time, the poet believed that the great questions about the human soul are answered by man's deeper communion with nature. But this position had been gradually undermined by the temporal changes which are the precursors of death. The glowing terms in which he apostrophizes the feelings of immortality in the child, reflect the intensity with which his imagination was impregnated by the life of nature.

To Wordsworth and to most eighteenth century readers and now, equally to the twentieth century readers, nature is always more interesting when it is involved with man. Do not all perceptive readers receive peculiar pleasure from those little tales or episodes with which Wordsworth's descriptive poems are here and there enlivened?

Chapter VI makes an attempt to bring out the pragmatic relevance of Wordsworth's philosophy. Human affairs and human feelings are closely related with nature. Hence they are universally interesting. But as we move far away from rustic
environment to city life, we tend to forget that a traveller's journey in this world is closely linked or associated with the background of a great cosmic machine. It may be deduced from Wordsworth's poetry that life and death are inseparable twin aspects of man's terrestrial existence.