Since 1800 A.D. critics have been eloquent in their praise of Wordsworth's poetic doctrine. John Beer's reaction to Blake's view of Wordsworth is an instance of it. Blake was critical of his poems which he thought were an outcome of trance-like states. But what Beer finds in Wordsworth is "the Natural Man rising up against the Spiritual Man continually."¹ Blake went so far as to wonder whether some of his prose had not been written by someone else. "What he did not perceive, perhaps" says John Beer, "was the acutely penetrative power of Wordsworth's sensibility — that he could not write of humanity piping 'solitary anguish'."²

Dorothy Wordsworth spoke of her brother as "kindling" when the verse-writing fit came upon him. According to Dorothy, "He writes with so much feeling and agitation that it brings on a sense of pain and internal weakness about his left side and stomach."³ It is undeniable, as Beer points out, that Blake's puzzlement was no doubt intensified by his recognition that Wordsworth, whom he regarded as the foremost poet of the age, was, with his declared belief in the vision and the faculty divine

²Ibid., p. 782.
closest to himself.  

Like Blake, for Wordsworth too, nature wonderfully enriches herself as she concentrates in the human mind, a centre of universal community. In the works of Wordsworth, nature is an object of experience. It encompasses every particular thing of which the poet may be aware and this is equally true of Blake.

Nature is regarded as divine. It seems to occupy a place of paramount importance in the mind. It is recognised as the all inclusive unity of the world. Nature signifies the unity of poet's environment. It embraces and includes his own living and his own thinking.

The poet feels that man and nature are essentially united to each other. In the opinion of Stalknecht, the poet considers, man and nature as essentially adapted to each other and the mind of man as naturally the mirror of the fairest and most interesting properties of nature.

Southerland believes that Wordsworth's poetic doctrine and example had wakened the minds of man and given a fresh impulse to art. There are plenty of simplifications, dramatizations and imaginings to be resolved into something fairly more complex and less exciting terms if the real nature of Wordsworth's

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perception of nature is to be understood. "First of all, Wordsworth's was not a conflict with harsh and illiberal reviews, against the Quarterly, The Edinburgh and Blackwood's." His problem had nothing in common with the assault faced by Keats. During the whole of the essentially creative decade of his life, from about 1797 to 1807, Wordsworth suffered more than hostility and ridicule in the dull remorseless weight of sheer neglect.

One or two extracts will suffice to prove this.

Of these experimental poems the most important is "The Idiot boy". Upon this subject the author has written nearly 500 lines... No tale less deserved the labour that appears to have been bestowed upon this. It resembles a Flemish picture in the worthlessness of its design and the excellence of its execution...

The other ballads are not so highly embellished in narration. With that which is entitled "The Thorn", we were altogether displeased. The advertisement says, it is not told in the person of the author, but in that of some loquacious narrator. The author should have recollected that he who personates tiresome loquacity, becomes tiresome himself... With pleasure we turn to the serious pieces, the better part of the volume... the author seems to discover still superior powers in the "Lines written near Tintern Abbey". On reading this production, it is impossible not to lament that he should have condescended to write such pieces as "The Last of the Flock", "The Convict", and most of the ballads. In the whole range of English poetry, we scarcely recollect anything superior to a part of the following passage:

And so I dare to hope, though changed, no doubt, from what I was when I came among these hills... first.

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The experiment, we think has failed, not because the language of conversation is little adapted to 'the purposes of poetic pleasures', but because it has been tried upon uninteresting subjects. Yet every piece discovers genius; and, as the author has frequently employed his talents, they certainly rank him with the best of living poets.  

Owen and Sonyser state:

All the rest is eminently good, and your own. I will just add that it appears to me a fault in the beggar, that the instructions conveyed in it are too direct, and like a lecture; they don't slide into the mind of the reader while he is imagining no such matter. An intelligent reader finds a sort of insult in being told, 'I will teach you how to think upon this subject'. This fault, if I am right is in a ten thousandth worse degree to be found in Sterne and in many novelists and modern poets, who put up a sign post to show you where you are to feel.

De Quincey writes—

On this anecdote I do not mean to dwell; but I cannot allow the reader to overlook the circumstances of the case. At this (1835) it is true, no journal can be taken up which does not habitually speak of Mr. Wordsworth as of a great, if not the great poet of the age... Such is the opinion held of this great poet in 1835, but what were those of 1805-15 May, of 1825? ... In short, up to 1820, the name of Wordsworth was trampled under foot; from 1820-1830, it was militant; from 1830 to 1835, it has been triumphant...

It is not surprising that such reviews and comments should have produced in Wordsworth the frame of mind no less...  

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clearly implied in that great and centrally Wordsworthian poem "Resolution and Independence" in 1807. The long series of reproofs and attacks from "The Edinburgh" and "Francis Jeffrey" were open recognition — though of a hostile nature — that Wordsworth's poetry had become a force to reckon with in the world. At the very moment of this recognition, strangely, the force itself had reached the point of being almost spent and exhausted. From this point onwards Wordsworth hardly wrote any poems. Thus Davies says, "The younger Romantics could effortlessly see and acknowledge the greatness of what he had done to make an opening for them, now that he was no long in active competition. Keats and Shelley could afford to pay them the more generously because their own achievement, with Byron's, caught the public ear so much more completely than Wordsworth's had ever done." 9

Nearly twenty years later, in the essays of Pater, Arnold, Stephen and probably, Swinburne, too, is found the reassessment of Wordsworth. Biography indeed made some progress in the understanding of the personal background of his poetry, but criticism had made but slight progress. Though the greatness of the poetry is unquestioned, it has not been sufficiently explored. When there is ground for misgiving about its future recognition, because of the total absence of Wordsworth's

influence upon the most characteristic trends of feelings and expressions in modern poetry, it is a humble attempt to approach the poet and his poetry with renewed interest. Poetry of deeper and loftier feeling may not deliver one's distracted mind and provide happiness, peace or pleasure, than the simpler one which addresses itself to the love of rural objects and natural scenery. Wordsworth's sonnets and short poems and parts of his longer poems have the power to hold readers spell bound.

In Wordsworth's own letter to Lady Beaumont, the objectives and aspirations of the poet are clear: "Trouble not yourself upon their present reception; of what moment is that compared with what I trust is their destiny? ... to console the afflicted; to add sunshine to day-light, by making the happy happier; to teach the young and the gracious of every age to see, to think, and feel, and therefore, to become more actively and securely virtuous; this is their office, which I trust they will faithfully perform, long after we (that is, all that is mortal of us) are mouldered in our graves."¹⁰ His simple poems in the style of the "Lyrical Ballads" by virtue of their concern with the Lake country and with rustic emotion, helped the young and the old "to see, to think, and feel, and therefore, to become more actively and securely virtuous". His "To the Cuckoo" is an apt illustration of the poetic power to mitigate material

yearnings.

O blithe New-comer! I have heard,
I hear thee and rejoice:
O Cuckoo! Shall I call thee Bird,
Or but a wandering Voice?

To seek thee did I often rove
Through woods and on the green;
And thou wept still a hope, a love;
Still longed for, never seen.

His poems, "The robin redbreast", "The daffodils" and "The Green Linnet" etc. throb with love and beauty. One cannot help receiving love and warmth from the poems and experiencing an energised need to love and to recognize the oneness in these objects of nature. Wordsworth's locale lies mostly among mountains which would not have had any noteworthy effect on us, had it merely replaced beautiful pictures of natural scenery. Scott does this still better than Wordsworth, and a very second-rate landscape painter does it more effectively than any poet. More than exposing outward beauty, his poems express states of feeling, and of thought coloured by feeling, under the excitement of beauty. Here is an excerpt from "The Green Linnet":

While Birds, and Butterflies, and Flowers
Make all one Band of Paramours
Thou, ranging up and down the bowers,
Art sole in thy employment;
A life, a presence like the Air,
Scattering thy gladness without care,
Too blessed with any one to pair,
Thyself thy own enjoyment.
Wordsworth's poems lead us to believe in the real permanent happiness in tranquil contemplation. It is achieved not in seclusions or moving away from humanity, but in man's interest in the common feelings and common destiny of human beings. It is undeniably the poet's identity with the conditions and destinies of his fellow-beings that he is grieved to think "What man has made of man".

It is directly stressed that there are abundant ways to take inspiration, and experience tranquility amidst nature. Man's segregation from the rural landscape and his voluntary submission to a daily routine impregnated with commerce and machines land him in frustration, and total discontentment. The profound anxiety of the poet makes him lament the folly of man and his being led astray—

Through primrose-tufts, in that sweet bower,  
The periwinkle trailed its wreathes;  
And 'tis my faith that every flower  
Enjoys the air it breathes.

The birds around me hopped and played;  
Their thoughts I cannot measure,  
But the least motion which they made,  
It seemed a thrill of pleasure.

The budding twigs spread out their fan,  
To catch the breezy air;  
And I must think, do all I can,  
That there was pleasure there.

If I these thoughts may not prevent,  
If such be of my creed the plan,  
Have I not reason to lament  
What man has made of man?

14 Gill, p. 80, ll. 9-24.
It may be emphasized that Wordsworth's use of scenery and landscape is highly functional. They are carriers of highly cultivated feelings and expressions of pleasures and tranquility bestowed by nature upon man, if only he cares to receive them. In this respect his poems are in keeping with the later eighteenth and early nineteenth century trends. For instance, Gilpin mentions the tranquility obtainable in nature, "Sequestered from the commerce of life." As said earlier, the tradition of going into such places in order to indulge in moral reflections was well-established at the time. But no poet or artist went so far as Wordsworth did in proposing the existence of a direct and congruent power in nature, able to affect the heart of a responsive observer, to add fullness to this personality and grant him equilibrium.

Wordsworth began by preaching, both by precept and by example, the duty of throwing aside the so called dignity and the so called language of poetry. One must appeal in the speech of real life to the primary emotions of unsophisticated men. In his preface to "Lyrical Ballads", Wordsworth describes poets in general and himself in particular as "A man speaking to men". Wordsworth states that a poet is also an aristocrat of responsiveness, a man "endured with more lively more enthusiasm and tenderness, who has a greater knowledge of human nature, and a more comprehensive soul, than are supposed to be common among

man-kind; a man pleased with his own passion and volitions, and who rejoices more than other men in the spirit of life that is in him."\(^\text{16}\)

Wordsworth's desire to be a true poet has been achieved in his ballads. There is an accuracy of expression in every poem, made possible by, "an austere purity of language both grammatically and logically."\(^\text{17}\) One of the rarest and the most unteachable of all artistical gifts, is the gift of poetical melody — "the charm of words, a charm no words can say". Simplicity of aim does not make it any easier. Few men have breathed into phrases of absolute naivete that touch of haunting joy. More than Wordsworth's sonnets, his "Matthew", "Lucy", "The Cuckoo", "The Solitary Reaper", and the like, seem more marvellous and more exceptional as a tour de force. These lines mark the general division of Wordsworth's early days:

\begin{quote}
And, turning from her grave, I met
Beside the Church-yard yew,
A blooming Girl, whose hair was wet
With points of morning dew.

A basket on her head she bare,
Her brow was smooth and white,
To see a child so very fair,
It was a pure delight!

No fountain from its rocky cave
E'er tripped with foot so free,
\end{quote}


She seemed as happy as a wave
That dances on the sea.  

Though a part of the poem is imitable, there is much here beyond imitation. The lines lead up to a pathetic attitude of mind: that of the bereaved father, who would not, if he could, renew the past joy at the risk of renewing the past sorrow. Anybody might have chosen this theme, anyone might have adorned the given stanzas into "simplicity". But the couplet that closes each of the three stanzas is unique of only Wordsworth's mind. Can anyone imitate or reproduce the exquisite truth of the look of the child's hair in the dew, the innocent intensity of Matthew's gaze; the springing buoyancy of that last smile — fresh and vivid as a old was "Ocean's many twinkling smile"? Can any poet recreate the magical melody, which with its few rustic notes, translates the scene and transfigures it into the ideal world of poetry?

Wordsworth's simpler poems are largely concerned with the English Lake country; with the race and the environment. It was his mission both to represent and consecrate. His lakes and hills form an unchallenged sanctuary, and a central memory of peace. A poem written as early as 1786, when he was hardly a lad of sixteen, points to his passion for his native locale:

Dear native Brooks your ways I have pursued
How fondly! whether you delight in screen

18 Gill, pp. 141-42, ll. 41-52.
Of shady woods to rest yourselves unseen,
Or from your lofty dwellings scarcely viewed
But by the mountain eagle, your bold brood
Pure as the morning, angry, boisterous, keen,
Green as sea water, foaming white and green,
Comes roaring like a joyous multitude.\textsuperscript{19}

Certain single lines taken out of Wordsworth's poetry equal quotations from the classicist Homer or Dante and from Shakespeare. In a poem like "Resolution and Independence", there is more besides thoughts in its melody and lyricism. Wordsworth is as lyrical a thinker as Sophocles or Pindar. Only in such works as theirs is one likely to find a verse as this, "The sleepless Soul that perished in its pride."\textsuperscript{20}

The central drama of Wordsworthian poetry lies in reflection, the mind turning from external environment to the exciting things happening within. This may be called an extreme case of self-involution. The volume of an "European Magazine" published in March 1779, contains Wordsworth's first published sonnet, "On seeing Miss Helen Marta Williams weep at a Tale of Distress". This poem reveals much about the nature of Wordsworth's early relationship with contemporary popular literature. The language is interesting for more than one reason:

She wept — life purple stream began to flow;
In languid streams through every thrilling vein
Dim were my swimming eyes — my pulse best slow

\textsuperscript{19} Gill, p. 275, ll. 1-8.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., p. 262, l. 44.
And my full heart was swell'd to dear delicious pain. 
Life left my loaded heart, and closing eye; 
A sigh recalled the wonderer to my breast; 
Dear was the pause of life and dear the sigh 
That called the wonderer home, and home to rest.

That tear proclaims — in thee each virtue dwells 
And bright will shine in misery's midnight hour 
As the soft hour star of dewy evening tells 
What radiant fires were drown'd by day's malignant power.

That only wait the darkness of the night
To cheer the wond'ring wretch with hospitable light'
Signed Axiologus.

The language is conventional and derivative here. The objectives are used excessively here, implying the poet's unwillingness to allow nouns and verbs to function as descriptive words. Helen Maria Williams was herself a poetess and had published her own "poems, in two volumes". Her's was a rampage through the day's poetically fashionable subjects. Her collection included an "Ode to Sensibility", "Two stories of Star-Crossed Lovers", "Paraphrases from Scriptures", etc. Miss Williams is a true Romantic because her quest was for poetic objects which were "unparalleled", "most afflicting" and "totally unlike our own". "At this time Wordsworth was already tasting success as 'the poet of the School'." The predominant response of reviewers to Helen Maria Williams' poems was "Polite apathy", while the School boy, Wordsworth's, was tempered with "less

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The certainty of the contribution of this poem has been re-established by Mark Read who quotes a note in which William Wordsworth says that this first publication was a sonnet printed in the European Magazine ... Signed Axiologus, Read E.M., p. 71.

enthusiasm". It is natural for a School-boy poet to echo much of Miss William's "vocabulary". "Purple flood" and "delicious teachers" are her favourite epithets for "blood" and response to "aching pleasure" respectively. Wordsworth's sonnet "On Seeing..." is a demonstration of a complex and involuted structure which in turn reveals a sensitive mind watching an emotionally sensitive woman respond to some pathetic stimulus. It would be possible to compile an anthology of the Lake District entirely from the work of Wordsworth. Even at his second-best, his powers of description are usually more accurate, more perceptive and far more felicitous in expression than those of almost anyone who has succeeded him. Some of his poems are comparatively pedestrian, but topographically extremely interesting. It was William Gilpin who supplied to Englishmen the convention of teaching and orienting through poetry and taught the people of his time, how to look at and appreciate the world around them. The term "picturesque" is his legacy to posterity. But despite his acute visual sense, as more and more people came to the Lakes, the "picturesque" hardened into a habit. Though Gilpin and his successors record, sometimes very vividly, what the Lake Districts looked like to the man of the late eighteen century, they sound artificial and exaggerated. The fields, the dales and the hills may not have changed since then, but the way we look at them has undeniably changed. The main reason for that change is the poetry of Wordsworth. The Lake District can never be the same again, once we have read his poems.
It is no exaggeration that with Wordsworth's Lake poems the mountains of Cumberland passed into World Literature. Like the music of Beethoven and the paintings of Turner they have become symbols of the power, the vitality, the force of nature and super-nature which haunted and compelled the imagination of the nineteenth century. His precise sketching of the Lake topography is illustrated in the following extracts:

Midway on long Winander's eastern shore,
Within the crescent of a pleasant bay,
A tavern stood...23

... The garden lay
Upon a slope surmounted by the plain
Of a small bowling-green; beneath us stood
A grove, with gleams of water through the trees
And over the tree-tops.24

Lines from the same work describe the valley of Hawkshead where Wordsworth began to attend the Grammar School in 1778, "One of those open fields, which shaped like ears/ Make green peninsulas on Earthwaite's Lake" and regarding the passage of time and the fall of dusk a few lines later read thus, "meanwhile the calm lake/ Grew dark with all the shadows on its breast."25 The smooth continuity of breathless description in "Skating on Earthwaite water" is excellent workmanship in simplicity and precision of detail. At the same time, it rings with poetic

23Maxwell, Book II, p. 81, ll. 138-40.
25Ibid., Book No.II, p. 87, ll. 374-75.
... with the din
Smitten, the precipices rang aloud;
The leafless trees and every icy crag
Tinkled like iron; while far distant hills
Into the tumult sent an alien sound
Of melancholy not unnoticed, while the stars
Eastward were sparkling clear, and in the west
The orange sky of evening died away.  

It is expressions like "The orange sky of evening died away" that raise Wordsworth to classic heights. No poet has succeeded in achieving mass appeal through such simplicity of language and sharpness of detail. Any stanza taken at random from Wordsworth's poetry would point to his perception of detail. In the following lines from "A Flower Garden at Coleorton Hall" many specifications can be observed:

And hither throngs of birds resort;
Some, inmates lodged in shady nests,
Some, perched on stems of stately port
That nod to welcome transient guests;
While here and leveret seen at play,
Appear not more shut out than they.

The stanza is delightful for its delineation of the perching of the birds. Wordsworth is distinguished from his contemporaries for the very style and approach to minute details. A contrast between "Gray's Elegy" and Wordsworth's "The Last of the Flock" provides a good example of the difference in approach and

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26 Maxwell, Book I, p. 61, ll. 439-46.

treatment of the elements of nature. Gray's lines,

The Curfew tolls the knell of parting day
The louring herd wind slowly O'er the Lea,
The ploughman homeward plods his weary way
And leaves the world to darkness and to me. 28

are evidence of Gray's general view of nature, whereas

Wordsworth's lines,

In distant countries I have been,
And yet I have not often seen
A healthy man, a man full grown,
Weep in the public roads alone.
But such a one, on English ground,
And in the broad high-way, I met;
Along the broad high-way he came,
His cheeks with tears were wet:
Sturdy he seemed, though he was sad;
And in his arms, a lamb he had. 29

reveal scrupulous attention to detail. In these lines and in
the rest of the poem, the Shepherd is sharply individualised
as a real person suffering real pain as he sees his flock of
sheep dwindling one by one until the lamb he now carries is all
that is left. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, poets
asserted the rugged and wild aspects of nature as they expressed
simultaneously their belief in an ordered and controllable
universe. Wordsworth's account in The Prelude of his vision of
the Alps throws light on this kind of assertion:

The immeasurable height
Of woods decaying, never to be decayed,

29 Gill, pp. 88-89, ll. 1-10.
The stationary blasts of water falls,
And everywhere along the hollow rent,
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,
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.

Wordsworth obviously attempts to place the wilderness of nature in its unbridled mood alongside a sense of order and of purpose and design. The contraries referred to in these lines; the tumult and peace, the darkness and the light may be understood as "workings of one mind", i.e., expression of the spirit of nature. Wordsworth turned to nature to express the sublime which was no other than the harsher manifestations of nature that would provide "a voluntary experience of the fearful, a sense of horror made 'aesthetic' by a recognition of security." Sir Joshua Reynolds speaks of him as combining separate scenes of nature into one idealised whole; like some of the gardners of the period he took from nature but to improve upon it. It should never be forgotten that though Wordsworth sings of joy and love, he does not avert his eyes from anguish or evil, but

30 Maxwell, Book VI, p. 238, ll. 559-60.

often represents "a dark world". From his childhood, the poet seems to have learnt how fearful nature could be. The oft-quoted, famous stolen boat passage in *The Prelude* records this:

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, nor without the voice
Of mountain-echoes did my boat move on.

When, from behind that craggy steep till then
The horizon's bound a huge peak, black and huge
As if with voluntary power instinct
Upreared its head.
For so it seemed, with purpose of its own
And measured motion like a living thing,
Strode after me.  

It also records how Wordsworth came to learn that if one was faithful to nature; it would essentially, heal, comfort and form a beneficial force. The task was mainly one of learning to co-operate with the handiwork of God to "let nature be your teacher", literally and metaphorically. This then is one of the Wordsworth's objectives to use nature in his poetry. In other words, he wishes to advocate a truth experienced by him that nature is benign to her refugees.

It is relevant at this juncture to allude to the poet's sister, Dorothy Wordsworth. She has maintained a record of her long walks with the poet. Many of Wordsworth's works are

indebted, for their source and many of their images, to Dorothy herself. This is evident in her Journals. One can surely understand Wordsworth better by reading the journals of Dorothy. Though she describes a hard life, it was blessed with contentment. Besides descriptions of their simple living amidst physical ill-health, she presents a detailed observation of nature around her. It is undeniable that many of her observations were soon to diffuse into the compositions of the poet. An oft-quoted piece is her account of the scene of daffodils at Ullswater and the poet's rendering of the landscape in "Daffodils". In April 1802, she wrote, "Thursday 15th when we were in the woods beyond Gowbarrow Park we saw a few daffodils close to the waterside". Dorothy's keen observation of every detail of nature proves beyond all doubt the importance of her influence over Wordsworth. One would be not far from truth if one were to say, "that it was she who taught him Wordsworth to look at nature with a new eye and 'soften down' his 'over sternness'." "Daffodils" is an instance where Wordsworth reveals a process of the creation of loneliness. The mood of loneliness is not a rare item in his poems. In "Daffodils" the mood is declared in the very beginning: "I wandered lonely as a cloud" whereas from the journals of Dorothy it is clear that it was an experience


shared by the two of them. The poet chooses to express it exclusively in first person, to create the mood of loneliness which is recreated at the end of the poem: "in vacant or in pensive mood". This exposes Wordsworth's process of embellishment of art improving upon nature. It is also characteristic of the picturesque as practised and excelled throughout by Wordsworth. In the "Borderer — A Tragedy", he expresses it indirectly, "Like a mendicant,/ Her whom no one comes to meet, I stood alone."\textsuperscript{36} In one of the miscellaneous sonnets he makes direct expressions: "If these brief Records, by the Muses art/ Produced as lonely Nature or the strife."\textsuperscript{37}

Coleridge was one of the first critics to recognize and appreciate "the gift of imagination in the highest and strictest sense of the word", in Wordsworth. Coleridge says, "in imaginative power, he stands nearest of all modern writers to Shakespeare and Milton; and yet in a kind perfectly unborrowed and his own."\textsuperscript{38} It can be inferred that the objects of nature propel imagination on potential wings. An ordinary experience may undergo poetic transformation in him. It can be observed in the lines quoted from "The Daffodils":

\begin{quote}
I gazed and gazed — but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought;
For oft, when on my couch I lie
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{36}Hayden, Vol. I, p. 163.
\textsuperscript{37}Ibid., p. 634.
\textsuperscript{38}J. Shawcross (ed.), Biographia Literaria, 1817 (Oxford University Press, 1907), p. 89.
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon the inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude.
And then my heart with pleasure fills
And dances with the daffodils. 39

The poet himself valued the poem greatly and spoke of it as having that "Property and right which love and knowledge confer". The word knowledge "has a connotation because it is the same knowledge that is seen and felt and understood in 'Tintern Abbey'". This is essentially the knowledge of the imagination. Thus the whole logic of the mode of nature's influence on the poet and in turn the poet's own objective in using nature in his works may be explained in this way. First of all nature has the power to infuse love, admiration, compassion and even fear in the mind of a man of acute sensibilities like Wordsworth. The poet's sensibilities furnish these emotions. Nature inspires the poet's imagination so as to enable him to combine extraordinary, accurate and intimate observation of details with a sense of something different from the mundane. The perfect truth of nature in his images and descriptions is taken immediately from nature and proves a long and genial intimacy with the very spirit which gives the physiognomic expression to all the works.

Certain poems like, "Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle", The Excursion, "Laodamia", extracts from The Prelude, his sonnets, "To a Skylark", "Why Ministrel, these untuneful

murmurings", "In the woods of Rydal", "The Triad", etc. stand midway between Wordsworth's simple style and the grand style. Some of them rise from rustic naivete into chivalric order, and from chivalric order into the benign tranquility of the external world. Here for instance are some lines from "Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle":

And both the underlying fish that swim
Though Bowscole Tarn did wait on him,
The pair were servants to his eye
In their immortality;
And glancing, gleaning dark or bright,
Moved to and fro for his delight. 40

In the lines that follow, the ministrel passes swiftly from a high note to his chivalric cry!

Armor rusting in his halls,
On the blood of Clifford calls;
Quell the Scot! exclaims the lame,
'Bear me to the heart of France',
Is the longing of the shield... 41

At last the poet himself resumes the strain, and in its simplicity is the return and uprising from the wild tale of war and tumult to the true victory and the imperishable peace:

Alas, the impassioned ministrel did not know
That for a tranquil soul the lay was framed,
Who long compelled in humble walks to go,
Was softened into feeling, soothed and tamed
Love had he found in huts where poor men lie
His daily teachers had been woods and rills
The silence that is in the starry sky,
The sleep that is among the lonely hills. 42

41 Ibid., p. 727.
42 Ibid., p. 729.
The Russian Fugitive" is an example of Wordsworth's smooth narration in incomparable simplicity:

Through Moscow's gates with gold unbarred
Stepped One at dead of night,
Whom such high beauty could not guard
From mediated blight,
By stealth she passed, and fled as fast
As doth the hunted fawn,
Nor stopped till in the appling east
Appeared unwelcome dawn

The poem narrates the plight of a Russian maid who is on the run. She runs away from her father for fear of the Tsar whose wrath she has earned. She has rejected his amorous advances and knows the consequences. She longs for fearless freedom and stealthily leaves her parents. After running for seven days and seven nights she reaches her foster mother's hut. She explains to her:

The blossom you so fondly praised
Is come to bitter fruit,
A mighty one upon me gazed
I spurned his lawless suit

Her foster father prepares a natural abode "marked" by nature's bower. Into that solitary isle he leads her. She has everything she wants in that secluded home and she feels proud and happy at living in a place of her choice:

No queen, before a shouting crowd
Led on in bridal state,
E'er struggled with a heart so proud,


44 Ibid., p. 434.
Entering her palace gate;
Rejoiced to bid the world farewell,
No saintly anchoress
E'er took possession of her cell
With deeper thankfulness  

The poetic narrative is so lucid in the common man's tongue and so sincere in tone that reading through the four parts of it as delightfully compelling. Most of Wordsworth's poems remind us of his preaching both by precept, and by example.

There are passages in The Prelude too as mentioned earlier, remarkable for simplicity as well as sublimity. As its very sub-title "The Growth of a Poet's Mind", suggests, the voluminous poem is a record of the author's life from childhood to early middle age. Some of the greatest works of literature are only fragments of an original design and so is the case with The Prelude.

One of Wordsworth's peculiar achievements was to raise poetic autobiography into a region of universal interest. Keeping in view his definition or function of a poet, his poems never lose sight of the human significance of his poetic progress. Mark these lines:

The Child is father of the man
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each in natural piety.

46 Maxwell, p. 121.
Wordsworth would say that the birth of the poet begins in early childhood. This is evident in the above lines in particular and in *The Prelude* in general. How nature moulded the poet's mind in childhood; how disappointments being not selfish and personal, but general and political, unsettled his mind; and how nature acting through more kindly influences reawakened the creative impulse and made the poet master of his fate — such in brief, is the story of *The Prelude*. In the above quoted lines, there is a distinct departure from established thought.

Wordsworth does not believe in the traditional notions of the poet as a heaven-sent genius, who owes nothing to birth, circumstances and condition; who lives apart from other boys and astonishes the world by his brilliance and precocity. His immortal observation: "The Child is father of the man" is the very antithesis of the traditional notion.

Where, then, it may be asked, are the signs of the poetic genius? The discerning reader of *The Prelude* will not miss them. Ordinary as many of the incidents may seem, and characteristic of boyhood in general, they are at the same time extraordinary in the telling and characteristic of Wordsworth in particular.

The genius of the poet can be traced in the emotions arising from his abnormal experiences felt on his return from the trapping birds:

> 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. 47

Certain amount of inspiration must have aroused from the awed
wonder felt from the adventure on the lakes:

When, from behind that craggy steep till then
The horizon's bound, a huge peak, black and huge,
As if with voluntary power instinct
Upreared its head. 48

The following lines serve to express the aesthetic capa-
bilities of the poet during the period of excitement:

The leafless trees and every icy crag
Tinkled like iron; while far distant hills
Into the tumult sent an alien sound
Of melancholy not unnoticed, while the stars
Eastward were sparkling clear, and in the west
The orange sky of evening died away. 49

These and similar descriptions reveal that while Wordsworth's
experiences were such as might have befallen anyone, his genius
lay in quickened sensibility and in deeper apprehension. The
poet had been through many depressions. His disappointed hopes
had created a bareness and morbidity which is described in The
Prelude, Book XI:

... till, demanding formal proof,
And seeking it in everything, I lost
All feeling of conviction, and in fine,
Sick, wearied out with contrarieties
Yielded up moral questions in despair. 50

48 Ibid., p. 57, ll. 377-80. 49 Ibid., p. 61, ll. 441-46.
50 Ibid., Book XI, p. 453, ll. 301-05.
This period of desparation was soon followed by imaginative health where expressions like "We cannot bid the ear be still", vouchsafe the poet's senses now in a healthy receptivity, of the inward ear attentive to the voice of nature; in one word, of the poet's creative mood. How this recovery had come about is traced in the earlier chapter. Coleridge sometimes criticised Wordsworth for treating simple things as great subjects. Poems like "Gypsies" and "I wandered lonely as a Cloud" are criticised for defects of employing "thoughts and images too great for the Subject."\(^1\) He criticised both these poems for Wordsworth's overlooking of "Obvious truths" in treating a band of gypsies like "the empire of China" and expressing an excessive response to the experience of looking at the daffodils: "a vivid image or visual spectrum". Both the poems are criticised for failure to treat the objects as existing "with relation to a fixed time and place". That daffodils are too trivial for the attentions of the "inward eye" which might better be reserved for a moral experience of a much higher order, however, is not a valid observation. Coleridge says that "the joy of retrospection, when the images and virtuous actions of a whole well-spent life, pass before that conscience which is indeed the bless of solitude."\(^2\) Even if Coleridge's assumptions in the case of the poem "Gypsies" are granted, we cannot agree with his strictures on the poem "Daffodils" or other poems like: "A Morning Exercise",

\(^{1}\)J. Shawcross, Biographia Literaria, II, p. 91.

\(^{2}\)Ibid., p. 109.
"To May", "Ere with Cold Beads of Midnight Dew", "In the words of "Rydal", "The Triad", etc. Undeniably, there are considerable emotional possibilities in such a scene as, "The daisy sleeps upon the dewy law,/ Not lifting yet the head that evening bowed" or in lines like:

How delicate the leafy veil
Through which Yon house of God
Gleams 'mid the peace of this deep dale.

Mesmeric and thereapeutic effects in the lines appeal to our heart:

The humblest rivulet will take
Its own wild liberties:
And, every day, the imprisoned lake
Is flowing in the breeze.

When a little river, itself a mere "mindless" waterbody, exercises its freedom, man must love and cherish liberty more. A lesser moving body like the lake achieves its free will when it utilises the opportunity in another freer form, the breeze, lines from "The Triad" form examples of Wordsworth's style of sharing his experience of sublimity through descriptions of small things in simple language; a style which has risks of being misunderstood as his very intimate friend, Coleridge had done.

Glad moment is it when the throng
Of Warblers in full concert strong
Strive, and not vainly strive, to rout

55 Ibid., p. 621.
The lagging shower and force Coy Phoebus out,
Met by the rainbow's form divine,
Issuing from the cloudy shrine. 56

Though Wordsworth's ideal was simplicity, his poetry largely contained emotions like fears, faith, love, anxieties, longings of a sublime nature. Simplicity of form and thought does not imply absence of sublimity. And in deft hands like Wordsworth's, the greatest and the loftiest experiences find expression in simple, loud thinking:

... how little can a moment show
Of an eye where feeling plays
In ten thousand dewy rays;
A face o'er which a thousand shadows go 57

Surely the poet's attempt to arrest the inimitable, eternal and infinite in nature in his poetry, is evident here. Also, evident are his own doubts, and resignation to the truth that the efforts of a finite form to express the infinite have their own limitations.

It is the poet's experience of total ecstasy and delight from the scenes and sounds in nature which motivate and create poems which attempt to go beyond "the limited sensible world". Though the poetry of Wordsworth is natural everything is apocalyptic. Many of Wordsworth's poems contain lines that instantly remind one of Biblical Revelations. Lines like —

57 Ibid., p. 643.
Nor could I let one thought — one motion — slip
That might the sylvan confidence betray.
For are we not all His without whose care
Vouchsafed no sparrow falleth to the ground?

Who gives His Angels wings to speed through air,
And rolls the planets through the blue profound:

Or

Where Christian Martyrs stand in hues portrayed
There too, behold the lamb and guileless dove,
Prest in the tenderness of virgin love
To saintly bosoms!
Like those good Angels whom a dream of might
Gave, in the field of Luz, to Jacob's sight —
All, while he slept...

are clear instances of the apocalyptic. Thus the poet's reaction to trivialities in nature is identical with his joy in the processes of the Universe. Dand Ferry aptly says that "a more profound and moral subject matter may perhaps seem captious, too solemn for the charming occasion." And so, be it daffodils or daisies, dale or desert, rivulet or lake, parrot or wren, lamb or dove, in their respective movements, appearances, colour and content, in other words, in their existence, they represent the divine organisation. And Wordsworth's poetic composition is admirable for its very quality and skill to show that such flowers, birds, and rivulets, so humble and modest in the great scheme of things, represent such grandeur.

Looking into another aspect of Wordsworth's poetry, one


cannot miss the effect of incidents set in a rural background (whether important or trifling) upon the human mind. The study of this aspect follows the formation of impressions and thoughts in the mind, their changes and movement, when agitated by the great and simple affections of our nature. This mechanism of the mind may be broadly named as sentimentalism. It should be remembered that the late eighteenth century literature is lachrymose in its attempt to represent the response of the mind to tragic circumstances. Tragic characters are meant as models for the readers. Born in such an era, Wordsworth is a highly self-conscious user of pathos. The poem "September, 1819" is an illustration of intense pathos, in its sense of sadness and sharp reaction to objects and scenes in nature:

Departing Summer hath assumed  
An aspect tenderly illumed,  
The gentlest look of spring;  
That calls from yonder leafy shade  
Unfaded, yet prepared to fade,  
A timely carolling.60

Tragic characters are innumerable in Wordsworth's work. In "I know an aged Man constrained to dwell", the poet narrates briefly the story of friendship and compassion that developed between a lonely old man and a little bird, a robin. There is pathos in the narration, which reveals for a while the change in the oldman's life — almost bordering on the mirthful and blissful only too soon to find their unavoidable separation.

The old man was alone because he had lost his wife and children. Yet, his continued love for the bird inspired him with a rare optimism, a solace "for all that he had lost".

The old man befriended the bird by sharing his bread with it when he used to stay in a public charity house. Their friendship was lived away from the doors of the charity house:

There, at the roof of one particular tree,
And easy seat this worn-out labourer found
While Robin picked the Crumbs upon his knee,
Laid one by one, or scattered on the ground. 61

Everyday their parting was not without a pang of regret. This went on for months; seasons changed, yet their love continued with the same fervor, "Thus in the chosen spot a tie so strong/ Was formed between the solitary pair," 62 until the tragedy, "That when his fate had housed him mid a throng/ The Captive shunned all converse proffered there." 63 The poem ends on a note of optimistic pathos or rather the unique kind of energy in grief brought about by faith and hope. "That still he loves the Bird, and still must love;/ That friendship lasts though fellowship is broken!" 64 If one looks twice at the concluding lines, one cannot miss the sharp semantic difference Wordsworth spontaneously strikes between the words: "friendship" and "fellowship".

61 Gill, p. 372, ll. 9-12.
62 Ibid., p. 372, ll. 21-22.
64 Ibid., p. 373, ll. 31-32.
If passion were to disappear along with the removal of the object of its source, can man ever experience joy; can he continue his faith in anything; can he hope for relief? Friendship is more than fellowship. Friendship is what is given out and taken into the deep heart while fellowship is the physical companionship or presence of an object or person. Friendship is one form of experience of pure passion, the very recollection of which invigorates the depressed mind and has the power to remove "solitude".

Wordsworth treats the state of "solitude" in various contexts — "solitude" of orphans, as in the case of Ruth who is lonely because of an unfeeling stepmother, or "solitude" of desertion by love, as in the same poem when Ruth is deserted by the young boy, solitude of orphans out of poverty, a different kind from that of Ruth as in "alice Fell". The poem is essentially a child crying for the loss of her cloak. Her grief is intense; when endowed with imagination she sees the tattered remnants of her cloak whirling in the wheel-spokes of a post-chaise fiercely driven by strangers on lonesome roads through a night of storm in which the moon is drowned. She weeps bitterly despite the stranger's attempt to console her, as if her grief could never have an end. She checks her sobs for a moment to answer a question and then renew her wails as if she had lost her only friend and the thought would choke her very heart. This is not merely because she is orphaned but because she is poor. It is this poverty and this grief that Wordsworth
describes with his reiterated hammering blows. To the poet, grief like this is sublime. Agony of a soul from which something is turned away that was made one with its very being is "sublime". What does it matter whether the thing is a woman, or a kingdom, or a tattered cloak?

Wordsworth convinces us that it is the passion that counts. What does a girl like Alice Fell have to lose or agonise for except her old tattered coat? There is no exaggeration here, no romanticising of the girl's grief. Schiller's definition of the "Sentimental poet" suggests the characteristic the eighteenth century brought to tragic art, "He reflects upon the impression that objects make upon him and only in that reflection is the emotion grounded which he himself experiences and which he excites in us."\(^{65}\)

Wordsworth's early poetry began in the manner of sentimentalising an extreme emotional experience, and finally developed in an experience which showed an arrest of sense or the pause of life in his later poetry. Wordsworth belongs to that category of poets who are haunted with the desire of bringing human suffering into their poetry. But his style and perception of "human suffering" and expression largely differ from that of his contemporary poets, whether young or old.

Wordsworth's "To Melpomene" and the fourth stanza of

Keats "Ode to a Nightingale" have points of difference and identity. While Wordsworth addresses the tragic muse, "Come then in role of darkest blue" to help him write poems, Keats, after trying one or two methods to reach the nightingale, finally decides to travel on the "viewless wings of Poesy". His desire is to invigorate, through imagination, "the dull brain" that "perplexes and retards", while Wordsworth believes that the Muse would make his silence eloquent, "At whose soft touch Whate'er is mute/ Talks with a voice like Pity's Lute."66

Keats overcomes his sick and weak body, his confounded mind by composing the beautiful "Ode to a Nightingale", and in the process of composition undergoes the bliss of the nightingale's melody. Both the poets as sensitive artists had silent ambitions and both the poems present their poetic wishfulness. While Wordsworth was suffering from the dismal outlook of his early work, the young Keats was burdened with the knowledge of pre-mature extinction. Hence, instead of reaching up to the source of the poetic inspiration like Keats, Wordsworth wants the Muse to descend from "the regions of Terror and Pity". Keats' attempt is to experience pure happiness as the carefree Nightingale and equal its song of "Summer in full-throated ease". It is an unconscious attempt to defy death and identify oneself with the elements of nature that symbolise eternity. Wordsworth makes no effort to hide his sentiments. He once

66 Hayden, Vol. I, p. 44.
wrote to Lady Beaumont, "There is scarcely one of my poems, which does not aim to direct the attention to some moral sentiment or to some general principle or law of thought, of our intellectual constitution." At this juncture, one may analyse a few psychological aspects of his poetry especially the recurring theme of the poet's conviction in the bond between man and nature. Wordsworth's "Creative sensibility" seems to have taught him that he was alone with an "active universe". It also taught him the strength of loneliness if once he recognized his own camaraderie in particular and man's in general, with the forces of nature. Thus, in spite of the recurring expression of "solitude" in his poems, they make us conscious of a power in it, capable of moulding and modifying this active Universe. The poet exerts this power upon the "Vulgar forms of everyday life" but in such a way, that there is no departure from "Nature's living images". Wordsworth has his own style of intensifying these vulgar and harsher forms without distortion: the description of a traveller's travel in "Descriptive Sketches" takes us over distant wanderings where the traveller, and with him the reader, is exposed to the harsher and gentler manifestations of nature. The traveller's description of the desert is highly symbolic. The desert is a metaphor for joint suffering of men and beasts, "where beasts and men together O'er the plain/ Move
Here one is likely to find a gypsy wandering by choice or destiny with "A nursing babe her only comforter".

The stanza that follows is a faithful rendering of the fearful forms of nature:

When lightning among clouds and mountain snows,  
Predominates, and darkness comes and goes,  
And the fierce torrent, at the flashes broad  
Starts like a horse, beside the glaring road—  
She (gypsy) seeks a covert from the battering shower.

In the roofed bridge; the bridge, in that dread hour,  
Itself all trembling at the torrent's power.

The midnight storm may grow darker in the presence of the poet's eye, and the visionary dreariness may be spread over sea or land. The awe-striking manifestations of nature are an obsession of most of the Romantic poets. In "Written in the Euganean Hills North Italy", Shelley refers to them poignantly:

Drifting on his dreary way,  
With the solid darkness black  
Closing round his vessel's track;  
Whilst above, the sunless sky  
Big with clouds, hangs hearily,  
And behind, the tempest fleet  
Hurries on with Lightning feet,  
Riving sail, and cord and plank,  
Till the ship has almost drank  
Death from the O'er brimming deep.

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It was written, says Shelley "after a day's excursion among those lovely mountains which surround what was once the retreat and where is now the sepulchre of Petrach." Shelley had lost his infant-daughter, Clara, and hence, the poem is not without sadness. The bleaker aspects of nature at the first contact relieved him of his grief, and in another way, increased it by contrast. However, like Wordsworth, he has believed and experienced the the healing touch of nature over sore minds and aching bodies. when Wordsworth observes nature and modifies it with his imaginative faculty he combines fact and value in a fine balance of truth. Poetry is "the most philosophical of all writing and its object is truth," and this is achieved when the poet blends powerfully the world and the mind in his art.

Wordsworth's obsession with "change", the temporariness of life and "death", has gifted literature with some of the finest sentimental poems. The summer flowers, to the poet, are symbolic of "transitoriness". Keats, too, is aware of the same destiny of animate and inanimate objects. Hence, in his "Ode on a Grecian Urn", he does not hide the triumph of art when he says that moments arrested in art never change, never die, "Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave/ Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare." Since the painting is of

72 Ibid., p. 8.
lush green trees (winter landscape), their leaves remain full and green for ever. Wordsworth often refers to changing flowers. In the long poem "Ruth: On the Influences of Nature" a young man tells Ruth, the motherless girl, growing amidst nature, all that he had observed in nature. He speaks of plants that hourly change:

Their blossoms, through a boundless range
Of intermingling hues;
With budding, fading, faded flower,
They stand the wonder of the bowers
From more to evening dews.  

Here indeed, one's attention is drawn more to an uncoloured, nevertheless aesthetic statement of reality than any pessimistic thought. Nowhere is reality distorted in Wordsworth's poems. It is unique for its treatment of nature because the descriptions do not fall under the class of mere theoretic facts in spite of presenting them as they are. They owe this uniqueness to the poet's imaginative portraiture of objects. The poet uses imagination only to highlight the effect of the scene and not to romanticise or idealise reality. This does not mean that he is unromantic. The passion is of that of the Romantic, for in the same poem we may find the youth thus proposing to Ruth:

Sweet Ruth! and could you go with me
My help nate in the woods to be
Or run, my own adopted bridge,
A Sylvan huntress at my side,
And drive the flying deer.

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75 Ibid., p. 313.
Even here the youth's reference to "Sylvan huntress" is a clear effect of the beautiful and awe-inspiring "Nature scape" where feelings of love and beauty become irresistible. The passion of the young suitor seems to be a realistic presentation. It harmonises with the state of freedom and movement in nature, that is the external environment, as the youth's breed is soon exposed:

The Wind, the tempest roaring high,
The tumult of a tropic sky
Might well be dangerous food
For him, a youth to whom was given
So much of earth — So much of heaven,
And such impetuous blood.\textsuperscript{76}

He is shown torn between the influence of the corrupt world and vicious ways he had been exposed to during war and his travels, and of law-abiding nature. However, the former takes the upper hand of him. Not used to a disciplined and responsible life, he deserts Ruth after living with her for a few months. With great economy of words the opening lines introduce the notion:

Look at the fate of Summer flowers,
Which blow at day break, droop ere even-song;
And grieved for their brief date confess that
Measured by what we are and ought to be,
Measured by all that, we foresee
Is not so long.\textsuperscript{77}

The verb "foresee" has potential meaning for it suggests the premonition felt by sensitive people of what is to come in this

\textsuperscript{76} Hayden, Vol. I, p. 374.
\textsuperscript{77} Ibid., p. 606.
context, i.e., old age and death. The poet takes this as an opportunity to caution the Maid, Mary, not to misplace her love and value passing things. She is asked to be as wise as the Greek lovers who did not choose separation or mutual desertion because of the fear of death and temporariness.

The deepest grove whose foliage hid
The happiest lovers Arcady might boast,
Could not the entrance of this thought forbid;
O be thou wise as they soul gifted maid!
Nor rate too high whatso quickly fade
So soon he lost.78

These lines are highly suggestive because of the word "Arcady" insinuates the innocent love of the Greek rustics. Knowledge of death does not deter them from profound love and loyalty.

Sometimes evoking one's own death puts the most complex of fears and longings at the poet's disposal. While Gray's "Elegy" ends with self-sentimentalized pathos, in conjuring up his own death, Wordsworth thus alludes to the earlier poem:

Ah! may my weary body sleep
In peace beneath a green grass heap
In Churchyard, such at death of day
As heard the pensive sighs of Gray.

And, what would even in death be dear,
Ah, pour upon the spot a tear
Friend of my soul! for whom I feel
What words can never half reveal.79

Like all sentimentalists, Wordsworth is liable to turn from

79 Ibid., pp. 456, 459.
self-pity to a kind of egoistic pathos:

Stay near me — do not take thy flight!
A little longer stay in sight!
Much converse do I find in thee,
Historian of my infancy!  

It may hover on the self-centred ego, as though the poet has only his feelings, his fancy and his pain to talk about:

... The work was done—
How soon my Lucy's race was run!
She died, and left to me
This health, this calm and quiet scene,
The memory of what has been
And never more will be.  

We find this self-pathos in plenty in Shelley, "Oh! lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud! / I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!"  

Shelley implies more than the mere capacities of the cloud. When we study it beyond its naturalistic meaning we understand Shelley's search for an emblem of permanence in a world of Change. Wordsworth too was ever conscious of the precarious footing of man between the immensity of a Universe above, which dwarfs him and the extraordinary minuteness and proliferation of life processes beneath, which can make their professed regard for life seem absurd. There are yet for man posed between such extremes the green earth and the blue sky which offer human appeal. Wordsworth, therefore, greets even

81 Ibid., p. 401.
the forbidding waste of time and space by a duly placed consciousness. He sees consciousness within itself. This is an indication to him that despite the essential inhumanity of the Universe, a principle of mercy is also at work. Awareness of those threats as in Shelley's case, though the nature of threats is different, helps to explain his constant search for a place of permanence. This quest can be traced throughout his career. When he first presented the public with an essay on the poetic sublime he began with a line, "where there, below, a spot of holy ground...", which expressed his youthful desire to find a place of civilization which might be adequate to human needs.

It is true that Shelley, too, sought in nature an analogous confirmation of his own highest hopes. His long poem "The Sensitive Plant" concludes in a rationalizing attempt:

... but in this life of error, ignorance, and strife, where nothing is, but all things seem, And we the shadows of the dream, To own that death itself must be Like all the rest, a mockery.83

Shelley argues with the self-criticism and discipline of an idealist:

That garden sweet, that lady fair
In truth have never passed away;
'Tis we, 'tis ours, are changed, not they
For love and beauty, and delight,
There is no death nor change.84

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84 Ibid., p. 261.
which means that the objects of nature symbolise love and beauty, and hence, eternity. Shelley almost echoes Wordsworth's conviction of our vulnerability and inconsistency to nature's stability.

Most of Wordsworth's poems that have the theme of nature's influence on the mind of man are examples of the poet's quest for dissolution and identification with nature. Nature has certain ugly manifestations which would draw the worst from one who has not been educated well, like the ill bred adventurer whose passion for lawlessness does not yield to his love for Ruth, upon whose uncivilized instincts, the harsher forces of nature only whispered wild inspirations:

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Whatever in those clives he found
Irregular in sight or sound
Did to his mind impart
A kindred impulse, seemed allied
To his own powers, and justified
The Workings of his heart. 85
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But his own mind fluctuated between bleak desires and noble passions, for one moment he would listen to the tempest and the wind, the next moment to the trees, bowers and flowers:

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Nor less to feed voluptuous thought,
The beauteous forms of Nature wrought,
Fair trees and gorgeous flowers,
That sometimes there did intervene
Pure hopes of high intent:
For passions, link at to forms to fair
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... needs must have their share
Of noble sentiment.86

In Wordsworth's poem addressed to G.H. Beaumont upon the death of his sister-in-law, the poet views her death as something "positive" because she is now peaceful and calm as the dewdrop:

But Nature to its in most part
Faith had refined; and to her heart
A peaceful cradle given;
Calm as the dew drops, free to rest
Within a breeze-fanned rose's breast
Till it exhales to Heaven.87

The poet sees her as an integral part of nature for he says that she now lives in total liberty in some sweet smelling flower like the rose. And she would continue there till the flower's fragrance went beyond the earth and reached heaven. Such views remind us again of his wishfulness and the concept of refinement. Purity, too, is another name for nature. In the same poem he describes her, "whose life was like the voilet,
Sweet as climbing jasmine pure".

Wordsworth's similies draw elaborately on nature. In order to talk of the effect of the death of Beaumont's sister-in-law, Wordsworth writes in the same poem:

As snowdrop on an infant's grave,
Or lily heaving with the wave
That feeds it and defends;
As Vesper, ere the star hath kissed
The mountain top, or breathed the mist
That from the vale ascends.88

87 Ibid., p. 605.
This is comparable with the similes used by Shelley. "To a Skylark" abounds in them and is characteristic for the poet's predominant choice of objects of nature for comparison: "Like a Cloud of fire", "Like a star of heaven", "As, when night is bare from me lonely cloud", "The moon rains out her beams", "Like a glow-worm golden", "Like a rose embowered", "In its own green leaves". Thus nature bestowed tranquility not only through physical contact but by one's very memory of the scene. Wordsworth was not only by nature introspective and self-dependent but he also had a amazing memory. He composed The Recluse, regaining his powers of creation largely through recollections of the past. While it could not satisfy Coleridge's desire for a masterpiece, Wordsworth's own ambition to write a poem of epic proportions, a poem in which the distinctive Wordsworthian vision is recaptured and unforgettably communicated, was accomplished. Wordsworth himself speaks of this vision as the "Visionary gleam", "gleams like the flashing of a shield", "spots of time", retaining "a renovating virtue"—phrases suggesting moments of intense awareness, in which he sees deeply into the "life of things" or imparts to things a life from within himself. Recollections or recallings, memory and tranquility, for Wordsworth, thus, are significant terms associated with the process of poetic creation. The passionate experience for the poet is overwhelming in the moment of occurrence. When the same experience subsequently flashes upon his "inward eye" it is softened by the passage of time.
At such moments, as he remarks in *The Prelude*, he can even recognize the co-existence within himself of something like too widely varying consciousness:

... who would not give,
If so he might, to duty and to truth
The eagerness for infantine desire?

A tranquilizing spirit presses now
On my corporeal frame, so wide appears
The vacancy between me and those days
Which yet have such self-presence in my mind,
That, sometimes, when I think of it, I seem
Two consciousnesses, conscious of myself
And of some other being.

Thus, in stressing tranquility, we glimpse something of the relationship between heart and memory for Wordsworth. Memory is a faithful adjunct to the organizing consciousness. It may be refractory in producing the part, but at least it knows its state. And through its workings it can produce something akin to a spatializing of the past, opening out into the places referred to as "Spots of time". In a typical experience of this kind, the past is restored with some experience of excitement; the heart, remembers and regularizes this onward movement. The spirit passes into a mood of unusual peace, and it is at that moment that the poet may hope to find release in composition.

He explains in the "Preface" to *Lyrical Ballads* that his aim was to depict "incidents and situations from common life" and at the "same time" to throw over them a certain colouring.

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89 Maxwell, Book II, pp. 72-74, ll. 24-33.
of the imagination, whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual aspect." And Coleridge, in the celebrated fourteenth chapter of the Biographia Literaria, recounting the origin of the Lyrical Ballads, said that while his own task was to make the supernatural convincing, Wordsworth's was "to give the charm of novelty to things of everyday, and to excite a feeling analogous to the supernatural, by awakening the mind's attention from the lethargy of custom and directing it to the loveliness and the wonders of the world before us." 

Wordsworth's belief in the tranquilizing powers of nature stand out in a number of his poems. He calls it variously, serenity, calm or tranquility:

From Nature doth emotion come, and moods of Calmness equally are Nature's gift, This is her glory...
... 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.

What Wordsworth meant by "recollection" is not merely remembrance of a scene visited a few days ago. More than this, it encompasses the experiences of his childhood and youth when

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92 Maxwell, Book XII, p. 466, ll. 1-3.
recollected in adulthood. He was intent upon finding whether these experiences corresponded to the inmost principle of human growth. He was naturally curious to investigate whether memories of the past assisted the human being (so favoured) to be educated into some kind of harmony with the deepest power in the Universe. Was it this harmony with Universal powers and its stately growth of form that was encouraged readily by the interplay of the poet's genial powers?

This was one of the questions which agitated Wordsworth's mind as he set to work on the autobiographical drafts which were eventually to be absorbed into The Prelude. The 1799 version of the poem begins with a sense of "lost occasion" — a feeling that he has been prepared by his upbringing in nature for a destiny greater than that offered by the world about him. The very form in which the question is posed, however, gives further indications of what is in his mind:

... was it for this
That one, the fairest of all rivers, loved
To blend his murmurs with my nurse's song
And from his alder shades and rocky falls
And from his fords and shallows sent a voice
To intertwine my dreams?

Nature is for the poet the mother who evokes in him emotions of love, fellowship, sad concern for humanity, who also calms him in his most complex thoughts and moments of

life: "A tranquilizing spirit presses now/ On my corporeal frame; or "The Calm existence that is mine when I/ Am worthy of myself." 95

The most famous moments of calm occur in "Tintern Abbey" as the poet recalls how the landscape has soothed him in periods of depression:

But oft in lonely rooms and mid the din
Of towns and cities, I have owed to them,
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart,
And passing even into my purer mind
With tranquil restoration. 96

De Quincey pertinently comments that "Scarcely has there been a poet with what could be called a learned eye or at all times an eye extensively learned before William Wordsworth." 97

94 Ford T. J. Suetman, Manuscripts and Parallel Lines: The Prelude, Book II, p. 64.
95 Ibid., p. 67.
96 Gill, p. 132, ll. 27-31.