SENSE IMPRESSIONS AND THE "PURER MIND" IN TINTERN ABBEY

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PREFACE

I first became aware of the significance of Wordsworth's descriptions of sensory experience in Tintern Abbey in a Romantic Poetry Seminar. While writing a paper for the Seminar I found that, although many critics stressed mystical experience in the poem, the poet's growth to moral character seemed to be a major aspect of the poem that the mystical interpretations overshadowed. On closer examination I was impressed by the psychological accuracy of Wordsworth's descriptions of his experiences in the poem. My purpose in this study is to show how the mental processes described in Tintern Abbey represent the way Wordsworth's sense impressions worked to shape his moral character.

I wish to thank Dr. John Milstead, not only for his valuable criticism and advice in directing this study, but also for his assistance and encouragement throughout my graduate study at Oklahoma State University. I wish also to thank Dr. Edward Lawry and Dr. D. Judson Milburn for their guidance and criticism. Finally, I would like to extend my appreciation to my wife, Donna, for her invaluable assistance in the preparation of this manuscript and for her remarkable patience and encouragement throughout its development.

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Arthur Beatty, Melvin Rader and Alan Grob all insist on the importance of sense impressions in Wordsworth's early poems.[1] Margaret Drabble reminds us that Wordsworth's poems in Lyrical Ballads should be read literally -- "when Wordsworth means blood, he says blood."[2] Drabble further points out that in Tintern Abbey the poet "is trying to describe the inner workings of his own mind" (p. 73) and that he makes the description in order to show how and why he came to value his sense impressions of nature. Other critics have remarked on the accuracy of the psychological process represented in Tintern Abbey.[3]

A number of recent critics, however, emphasize mystical experience as the important feature of the poem. These critics find that the "blessed mood" passage in the second verse paragraph[4] leads to an example of Wordsworth's mysticism and that the point where Wordsworth says "We see into the life of things" (l. 103) reflects a vision of mystic unity.

But Wordsworth says that the "blessed mood" is only one of three aspects of the experience he owes to the "beauteous forms" (l.22). He says the forms have given him "sensations" (l.27), "feelings too/Of unremembered

pleasure" (11.30-31) and "another gift/ . . . that blessed mood" (11.36-37).

In describing "The picture of the mind" (1.61) Wordsworth wants to show what influence the "beauteous forms" have had in shaping his mature view of nature. He bases this view throughout the poem on thought, not on transcendent revelations. He says the forms of nature have taken on "a remoter charm/By thought supplied" (11.81-82), and that contemplating them disturbs him with "elevated thoughts." Moreover, the interchange between his mind and nature has provided the basis for his "purest thoughts" (1.109). In effect, Wordsworth says he has learned to think about the way his mind interacts with the forms it creates from nature and that interaction, he says, has developed his moral character. Through a process of thought, rather than through mystical visions, Wordsworth says he has become conscious of the moral value of his sensations and feelings and moods.

Wordsworth's idea of moral consciousness in Tintern Abbey is a development of what he calls "natural piety" in "My Heart Leaps Up:"

> The Child is father of the Man;
> And I could wish my days to be
> Bound each to each by natural piety.
> (Poems, I. 226, 11.8-10)

But Tintern Abbey seems to be more a description of a vital process that it is the statement of a particular doctrine. He gives us a working description, in other words, of how

and why "The Child is father of the Man."

If we read literally Wordsworth's statements about the way his mind functions, the concept put forward in Tintern Abbey is remarkable similar to some of our modern theories of mind. Susanne Langer in Mind: An Essay on Human Feeling poses this theory: "Instead of accepting 'mind' as a metaphysically ultimate reality, distinct from the physical reality which subsumes the brain, and asking how the two can 'make liaison,' one may hope to describe 'mind' as a phenomenon in terms of the highest physiological process."[5] By "highest" Langer means that bodily functions become mental activity when they are felt, either consciously or unconsciously. One becomes "aware" of his feelings when they begin to form mental images. Emotions and thoughts, in this respect, are simply higher levels of feeling.

As Drabble says, Wordsworth's "picture of the mind" should be read as a description of the way his mind functions. The sensations, feelings and affections express physical activity. The "beauteous forms" that stimulate this activity do not equate with objects in nature. They are closer to what Langer calls "expressive forms" such as "may embody many old sensory impressions, but they enter into one apparition, [symbolizing] a quality made visible" (II. p. 278). If we can accept this idea, then the forms for Wordsworth may be said to exist only in the poet's mind. They are the product of past sensory impressions of the Sye valley from which the poet derives certain moral and

aesthetic qualities. In other words, we may see that Wordsworth creates what is for him the significant reality of the scene. We are reminded of Frye's description of Romanticism as "the effect of a profound change . . . in the spatial projection of reality."[6] Romantic reality, for Frye, is constructed in the interior of the mind.

Although mystical interpretations of Tintern Abbey also insist on the internalization of reality, it is only a first step toward the transcendence of the physical limits of the mind. In two early readings of Tintern Abbey William Empson and Bennett Weaver intimated some of the problems that mystical interpretations of the poem must ultimately encounter.

It should be possible, Empson said, "to extract from [the poem] definite opinions on the relations of God, man, and nature, and on the means by which such relations can be known."[7] But the relations Wordsworth gives, Empson says, are ambiguous. We are never sure whether Wordsworth wants to describe "God revealing himself in particular to the mystic," or whether he wants to describe an empirical mind revelling in its sensations (pp. 152-53). But in spite of the confusion Empson finds, he maintains that the dominant impression we get from the poem is that it represents a process of thought.

Bennett Weaver also remarks on the dominance of intellectual process in the poem. He says Wordsworth wanted to embrace a common spirit that united the mind of man with the objects of nature, but he failed since "a philosophical

concept hung like an interdict upon his spirit."[8] In "exercising itself in the joy of self-contemplation" Wordsworth's mind, Weaver says, turns back after the union to make "a reasoned statement" (p. 41).

Both Weaver and Empson find Wordsworth's attempts to define his experiences in terms of thought to be irreconcilable with the experiences themselves. Albert Gérard approaches the problem from another point of view. While maintaining that there is "an essential duality" in Wordsworth's poetry he says that the expression of that duality in Tintern Abbey is "complementary."[9] The transcendent passages represent Wordsworth's "mystical sense of the multifarious forms of the created world" and the rational passages represent the poet's "conviction that the source of man's moral and spiritual growth is to be found in all the external forms of nature" (p. 109). But Gérard's reading only restates the problem. Wordsworth attributes the relationships that define the "soul/Of all my moral being" (11.110-111) to his total experience, and Gérard must finally recognize that the tone of the poem is one of "perplexity" (p. 107). He finds that Wordsworth doubts the certainty of the "mystical truths" revealed and that he returns continually to the solid ground of his "sensory apprehension of nature" about which he can make positive statements of knowledge (p. 116).

Geoffrey Hartman's reading of Tintern Abbey in The Unmediated Vision represents an advance on the interpre-

tations of Empson, Weaver and Gérard in that Hartman finds Wordsworth to be moving away from a dualistic view of reality. He sees Wordsworth emphasizing "the psychological fact" of his experience.[10] But the poet's enveloping the natural scene at the beginning of the poem, Hartman says, marks his "striving toward the expression of a mystic feeling" (p. 7). Hartman finds all of Wordsworth's poetry to be "characterized by the general absense of the will to attain relational knowledge" (p. 5). "The ultimate referent of Wordsworth's poetry may be seen as a mystical principle" (p. 26) that reveals "absolute" understanding. Hartman reads the sensations, feelings and mood of the second verse paragraph as really the same things layered one upon the other to the point of transcendence (pp. 22-23).

Robert M. Maniquis, building directly on Hartman's interpretation, reads Tintern Abbey as not only the gathering together of all experience in a moment of transcendence, but ultimately as "Wordsworth's attempt to achieve a state of timelessness in the mind."[11]

Albert O. Wlecke in Wordsworth and the Sublime interprets Tintern Abbey as the poet's becoming reflexively aware of his own creative power.[12] The poem is explorative of the interior of the poetic mind, and the language of the exploration, Wlecke says, "suggests a movement of awareness from a purely sensory state . . . to a state of more diffused emotion . . . and finally to a state that seems to

transcend the physicality of sensation and emotion." (p. 33).

Significantly, Empson, Weaver and Gérard all agree that Wordsworth devotes a major portion of Tintern Abbey to describing the kind of opinions he has formed from his experiences in nature and they find those opinions to be grounded in thought. The problems they find in the poem, however, reflect problems in their approaches that are in part substantive. Their insistence that the forms Wordsworth describes represent an external nature distinct from the poet's mind restricts Wordsworth's genius to philosophical concepts grounded in eighteenth century empirical psychology.

Hartman, Maniquis and Wlecke rightly apprehend the inward movement and continuity of experience in Tintern Abbey. But they believe that the central focus of the poem is the transcendent experience and that mystic truth is the object of the description. But as Evelyn Underhill informs us, mystical experience is "wholly transcendental and spiritual. It is in no way concerned with adding to, exploring, re-arranging, or improving anything in the visible world."[13] Romantic mystical experience, Frye tells us, is a part of the "deep interior" and " is morally ambivalent."[14]

If we read the experiences represented in Tintern Abbey solely as an example of Wordsworth's mysticism we have trouble accounting for the way Wordsworth continually adds to, explores, re-arranges and improves his impressions from the visible world of the Wye valley. Further, the re-

sult of his re-ordering seems to be anything but "morally ambivalent."

I have noted that Wordsworth's moral consciousness seems to derive from his "natural piety." Havens tells us that whatever the empirical existence of natural objects may be, Wordsworth found his aesthetic experiences of the phenomenal world to be morally pure. These were not derivative ideas, but "beliefs which grew up almost unconsciously in Wordsworth during his boyhood and which in his maturity were as a rule assumed rather than enunciated."[15]

We can accept the idea that Wordsworth's vision "into the life of things" is a part of his aesthetic experiences derived from the "beauteous forms." But As William James remarks in The Varieties of Religious Experience mystical states are characterized by what he calls "ineffability" and a "noetic quality:" the mystic has an "insight into the depths of truth unplumbed by the discursive will" and "no adequate report of its contents can be given in words."[16] If a poetic description of the vision is Wordsworth's intention, as Hartman says (p. 5), then the poem should end on line 50.

It is more plausible to assume that Wordsworth's concern in the second verse paragraph is to describe the total effect of his interaction with the "beauteous forms." The description is characteristically Romantic, in Frye's use of the term, since it emphasizes the "constructive power of

the mind, where reality is brought into being by experience."[17] The "reality" Wordsworth's mind has created from his experience includes aesthetic qualities that have definite moral functions. I propose that in Tintern Abbey Wordsworth describes the way experiences generated by the memory of images created from his interaction with nature influenced the development of his mature moral character.

If we can understand Wordsworth's mind to be operating something like the model Langer gives us, we can see the poet transforming his sense impressions of the Wye valley into images that represent the qualities he has found in nature.

Wordsworth defines the transformation process in ll.103 ff. He says he is a lover of

> the meadows and the woods,
> And mountains; and of all that we behold
> From this green earth; of all the mighty world
> Of eye, and ear, both waht they half create,
> And what perceive. (ll.103-107)

The important words are "perceive" and "create." If we understand these words literally (which for Wordsworth would mean closer to the original)[18] the poet says he captures impressions through the senses and makes or produces images. "Meadows," "woods" and "mountains" are the apprehended scene, "the Mighty world/Of eye, and ear" is a world of images in the mind. This is Frye's constructive power of the mind, where reality (the image) is brought into being by experience (perception). Hartman remarks

that Wordsworth's personification of the towering rock in the "stolen boat" episode (Prelude, I. 11.377 ff.) represents a "carefully observed optical phenomenon."[19] Apart from theories of imagination, whether based in eighteenth, nineteenth or twentieth century philosophy, Wordsworth seems to give us an accurate physiological description of sensory activity. Langer's statements about imaging are very close to Wordsworths': "An image does not exemplify the same principles of construction as the object it symbolizes but abstracts it phenomenal character, its immediate effect on our sensibility or the way it presents itself as something of importance, magnitude, strength or fragility, permanence or transcience, etc. . . . . We apprehend everything which comes to us as impact from the world by imposing some image on it that stresses its salient features and shapes it for recognition and memory."[20]

Read in these terms, the images Wordsworth creates in Tintern Abbey become an active part of the poet's mind. But the point Wordsworth makes by the description is that as a mature man he has become aware of a difference between the way he recognizes images now and the way he recognized images in his youth.

Wordsworth characterizes the change in the "dying taper" passage from the "Reply to 'Mathetes'" (Coleridge's The Friend, December, 1809 - January, 1910). A "School-boy," Wordsworth says, may blow out the candle in his room but sustain the image in his mind with these effects:

> it is to him an intimation and an image of departing human life . . . the life of a venerated Parent, of a beloved Brother or Sister, or of an aged Domestic; who are gone to the grave, or whose destiny it soon may be thus to linger, thus to hang upon the last point of mortal existence. This is Nature teaching seriously and sweetly through the affections . . . Let us accompany this same Boy to that period between Youth and Manhood, when a solicitude may be awakened for the moral life of himself . . . The image of the dying taper may be recalled and contemplated, though with no sadness in the nerves, . . . yet with a melancholy in the sould, a sinking inward into ourselves from thought to thought, a steady remonstrance, and a high resolve . . . A world of fresh sensations will gradually open upon him as his mind puts off its infirmities . . . and precious feelings of disinterested, that is self-disregarding joy and love may be regenerated and restored -- and, in this sense he may be said to measure back the track of Life he trod.[21]

When the image was first formed in the boy's mind it took on personal associations ("Nature teaching . . . through the affections"). When the boy recalls the image in "that period between Youth and Manhood" it has softened and expanded to encompass a larger association. There is no "sadness in the nerves," rather the image causes "a sinking inward into ourselves from thought to thought." The transformed image will also generate a "world of fresh sensations" that will displace the minds' "infirmities" and restore feelings of "self-disregarding joy and love." The whole process, Wordsworth says, stems from the boy's awakened concern for "the moral life of himself."

Langer believes that the formation of images like the remembered candle flame (which has the power to lighten the mind's "infirmities") are part of mental events gen-

erated to counteract an overload of sensory perceptions. "This unique character," she says, "arose from the extreme receptiveness of the human brain, which consequently is overwhelmed with stimuli and overloaded with perceptions, so its possessor has to lighten his burden by finishing many impulses, not physically as direct responses, but in the brain, as mental acts . . . a started impulse is replaced by the formation of an image in the visual system."[22] In Tintern Abbey, Wordsworth's overloaded sensibility in the city might naturally have called up "old sensory impressions" in symbolic form[23] to put off "the heavy and the weary weight/Of all this unintelligible world" (11.39-40). Moreover, the experience seems to have made Wordsworth aware of the significance not only of the experience itself (which is to restore tranquility) but of the existence of the "beauteous forms" in his memory. His mature view of nature is tempered by that realization.

Wordsworth gives us a description of that tempered response in the first verse paragraph of the poem. After five years absence he returns to the scene that provided him with the images out of which the "beauteous forms" were created. But even though the scene appears unchanged the images the poet creates are subtly different -- they are supplemented by thought. The structure of the passage provides the sense of the change.

> Five years have past; five summers, with the length
> Of five long winters! and again I hear
> These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs

> With a soft inland murmur.--Once again
> Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,
> That on a wild secluded scene impress
> Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and connect
> The landscape with the quiet of the sky.
> The day is come when I again repose
> Here, under this dark sycamore, and view
> These plots of cottage-ground, these orchard-tufts,
> Which at this season, with their unripe fruits,
> Are clad in one green hue, and lose themselves
> 'Mid groves and copses. Once again I see
> These hedge-rows, hardly hedge-rows, little lines
> Of sportive wood run wild: these pastoral farms,
> Green to the very door; and wreaths of smoke
> Sent up, in silence, from among the trees!
> With some uncertain notice, as might seem
> Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods,
> Or of some Hermit's cave, where by his fire
> The Hermit sits alone. (11.1-22)

Each of the four sentences follows a general pattern of introductory clause or phrase, subject, verb, predicate object and participial phrase or relative clause modifying the object. In each case, the introductory statement suggests a time relationship, the poet is the center of action, the verb expresses his perceptual activity (seeing or hearing), the object represents the object of perception and the modifying statement makes the object into an image by attributing some type of activity to it.

The pattern of repetition in the adverbs ("again") and the adjectives ("these") qualifies each perception, conveying a sense of permanence and continuity in the perceived objects.[24] After five years the poet has returned to find "these waters," "these cliffs," "these plots of cottage-ground," and "these hedge-rows" seemingly unchanged. But as David Perkins points out "it often happens that the main business of Wordsworth's sentences is accomplished in

subordinate clauses following from predicate objects."[25] Although seeing and hearing the waters and the cliffs "again" creates a specific set of images in the poet's mind, the activity associated with those images reflects the change in Wordsworth's disposition toward nature. The main business in these sentences seems to be a developing chain of thought. Moreover, the intellectual activity becomes increasingly more complex, leading eventually to an aesthetic realization. Perkins describes the pattern as "a recurrence to key ideas or phrases, each return bearing an added freight of meaning and leading to a new amplification" (p. 209). Wordsworth starts the description with the image of waters murmuring softly -- a simple metaphor. When he returns to the key idea and phrasing (a time relationship coupled with a sensory perception), the resultant image is more complex. Cliffs take on the power to impress thought. The activity of the cliffs is significant in two ways: 1) While the image of the waters has started a movement toward silence, the cliff image moves toward isolation. 2) The two verbs that describe the cliff's action seem to be characteristic of the type of thought Wordsworth describes throughout the poem. Thoughts of seclusion are pressed in on the already secluded scene by the power to "connect/The landscape with the quiet of the sky" (italics mine). The connecting activity develops a relationship between the physical scene and an abstract quality ("quiet"). These lines might well be a model for

Wordsworth's thinking mind. Images press thoughts in on the mind, and as the thoughts press deeper the relationships they develop become more complex and more intense.

According to Langer, "the high intellectual value of images . . . lies in the fact that they usually, and perhaps always, fit more than one actual experience. We not only produce them by every act of memory, but we impose them on new perceptions, constantly, without intent or effort, as the normal process of formulating our sensory impressions and apprehended facts. Consequently we tend to see the form of one thing in another, which is the most essential factor in making the maelstrom of events and things pressed upon our sense organs a single world."[26] Wordsworth's feeling of solitude is the single world toward which the description of the Wye valley moves.

Havens finds that Wordsworth "filled the hidden springs of his being from lonely places, in solitude and in silence," and that "incidents that he dwells on as most delightful and the most significant usually occur in lonely places."[27] Speaking of the moral attributes of solitude, James Scoggins notes that "Wordsworth could ground his faith [in nature] on the efficacious transmutation of turbulence into calm."[28]

Wordsworth felt the turbulence of "the din/Of towns and cities" during his transition from youth to manhood, and the experiences he says he owed to the "beauteous forms" brought him a feeling of restoration and of calm.

The chain of thought begun in the first paragraph continues through the second, where Wordsworth attributes three different kinds of experience to the "beauteous forms." Sensations "Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart" pass into the "purer mind" (11.28-29). We might assume that "purer mind" represents the higher intellectual and emotional functions, since "purer" connotes a refined or unmixed quality. Once the sensations from the forms pass into this higher state, they restore tranquility.

This process, with its restorative power, is equated through the agency of the forms with the "feeling . . . / Of unremembered pleasure" derived from the "acts/Of kindness and of love" (11.34-35). There is a strong line of connection between the kind of settling, almost aesthetic experience of the "sensations" and the moral influence of the "unremembered pleasure." The connection is completed in the "blessed mood" passage.

> Nor less, I trust,
> To them I may have owed another gift,
> Of aspect more sublime; that blessed mood
> In which the burthen of the mystery,
> In which the heavy and the weary weight
> Of all this unintelligible world,
> Is lightened: -- that serene and blessed mood
> In which the affections gently lead us on, --
> Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
> And even the motion of our human blood
> Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
> In body, and become a living soul:
> While with an eye made quiet by the power
> Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
> We see into the life of things. (11.35-49)

The mood is one in which "the affections gently lead us

on." We can understand the feelings of the mood to be like the "obscure feelings representative/Of things forgotton" but "fastened to the affections" (Prelude I. ll. 606-607; l. 612). The experience creates emotional dispositions (affections) that recall the feelings inherent in the remembered forms. But the forms must represent abstracted qualities, like the purgatorial memory image of the candle flame, since the mood they create has the power both to relieve the "burthen of the mystery" and to lead into a suspension of the body in "self-disregarding joy."

The effect of each of the "gifts" from the forms is regenerative and Wordsworth pauses in the third verse paragraph to justify the experience.

> If this
> Be but a vain belief, yet, oh! how oft-
> In darkness and amid the many shapes
> Of joyless daylight; when the fretful stir
> Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,
> Have hung upon the beatings of my heart --
> How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee,
> O sylvan Wye! thou wanderer thro' the woods,
> How often has my spirit turned to thee! (ll.49-57)

We should remember that the experiences Wordsworth has described represent a set of mental events. The idea that moral and aesthetic feelings could be stimulated by the memory of natural forms might well have been called a "vain belief" by many of Wordsworth's contemporaries. The notion goes against most of the tenets of moral philosophy he had learned in school. But the fact of the experience proves the value of the activity for Wordsworth.

In the fourth verse paragraph Wordsworth's concern seems to be to distinguish between the way he apprehended nature as a boy and the way he views nature as a man. But the interaction, both before and now, takes place inside Wordsworth's mind. The basic difference between youth and manhood in Tintern Abbey lies in mental activity. When the poet returned to the Wye valley after five years absense, the seemingly permanent aspect started the thought process of the first three stanzas. The process led him finally to an experiential recognition of the implicit value that the images held for him. He is sadly perplexed (1.60) because the recognition tells him he can no longer experience the landscape as he did in youth. In the past he experienced immediate pleasure from his sensory apprehensions, but now he also experiences "pleasing thoughts" (1.63).

When he was a boy, Wordsworth says, the colors and the forms of nature (again these are images in his mind, and not the objects themselves) were

> An appetite: a feeling and a love
> That had no need of a remoter charm,
> By thought supplied, nor any interest
> Unborrowed from the eye. (11.80-83)

The boy's interaction with the images in his mind was instinctive and appetitive, both satisfying and being satisfied by the simple or "coarser pleasures" (1.73) of the activity. The change in attitude reflects the inevitable growth to mature responsibility. Wordsworth says he has learned to think about his sense impressions. And the

pattern of his thought has been tempered by his interaction with other men and by the development of a higher mental ability where the affections gently lead into a sense of harmony with the world. But all of his development has come directly from the "forms" of nature he has carried in his mind. Images of nature make up the "language of the sense." When he was a boy, the objects of nature spoke to him through their images.[29] As a man Wordsworth has learned to articulate those images in his relations with other men and in the aesthetic sense of his relationship to humanity. He does not mourn the loss of his more innocent, less complicated communication with the images. In the second paragraph Wordsworth described the gifts he received from the "beauteous forms" of the Wye valley. In the end of this fourth paragraph he defines the gifts his maturity has given him.

> For I have learned
> To look on nature, not as in the hour
> Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes
> The still, sad music of humanity,
> Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
> To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
> A presence that disturbs me with the joy
> Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean and the living air,
> And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
> A motion and a spirit, that impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
> And rolls through all things. (11.88-102)

The "music of humanity" that Wordsworth hears in nature is a reminder of the "din/Of towns and cities" and of

"the fretful stir/Unprofitable, and the fever of the world" hanging like a weight on his heart. In his youth his desire for nature's images was thoughtless. His isolation from nature and his interaction with other men has caused him to order his impressions so that they will create "sensations" leading to "tranquil restoration." These in turn provide a model for his "acts/Of kindness and of love." Now that the poet has returned to nature and isolation, he finds that the "music of humanity" tempers his impressions. His compassion for humanity, developed out of his memory of nature, "chastens and subdues" whatever passions might have haunted him as a boy, and channels his appetites into a pattern of thought.

But the ordering of his impressions into thought patterns has opened up higher functions of the intellect through a chain of "elevated thoughts." If I am correct in saying that this paragraph is an expansion of the specific events of the first three paragraphs, then the chastening power of the "still, sad music of humanity," with the implied compassion in "still, sad" is a larger application of the specific moral and aesthetic functions the poet derived from his memory images of the Wye valley and the "presence" is a state of mind similar to the "blessed mood." If we complete the elipsis after the semicolon in l. 95, we read "I have felt a sense sublime," which means heightened feeling. The presence or heightened feeling of Wordsworth's state of mind results in "elevated thoughts,"

which produce feelings of joy in contemplation. The "elevated thoughts" are personified in the "something," and Wordsworth's dealings with and recognition of humanity awaken a "far more deeply interfused" activity.

The contemplating intellect pours "elevated thoughts" between the fabric of the poet's mind. The logical dwelling place for "elevated thoughts" (that is, the place where they originate and operate) is in images transformed from nature, "the light of setting suns,/And the round ocean and the living air,/And the blue sky." And all of these images, as well as "elevated thoughts," dwell "in the mind of man."[30] The thought process reflects the activity and the essence (the "motion and the spirit") that impels, or drives in on "All thinking things" (humanity) and "all objects of all thought" (sense impressions transformed into images) and links the two together in a continuous movement. The state of joy that is the direct result of the process comes from the recognition of virtue and beauty in the relationship. Virtue is like a quiet "harmony," and the aesthetic experience of captured beauty is like "the deep power of joy." The higher thought process, which is what Wordsworth has learned to use, both creates the sense of unity and allows the mind to "see into the life of things."

The apprehension of unity between man and nature, as Havens says, is a function of moral consciousness and Wordsworth has represented the development of his own moral consciousness in the first four paragraphs of Tintern

Abbey. Like the school-boy in the dying taper episode, he can trace the origins of his moral character back to images of natural objects. Once the mature man has learned to articulately weave these "words" into patterns of unity, the "language of the sense" expresses his "purest thoughts," and these, in turn, through the ministry of nature's forms, direct the shaping of his "moral being."

C. S. Lewis, in The Allegory of Love, remarks that "there are few absolute beginnings in literary history, but there is endless transformation."[31] Tintern Abbey is a valuable record in both form and content of the kind of transformation Whitehead calls "a protest on behalf of value."[32] Seeking value and stability, Wordsworth turned from "The dreary intercourse of daily life" (1.131) to the interior world of his mind. The fact that he could find a base and a principle for moral development in the psychological workings of the mind documents a significant aspect of the Romantic revolution. The growth of Wordsworth's mind from youth to maturity is primarily one of growth to moral consciousness, a personal transformation that is in many ways emblematic of the destruction of the belief in the external ordering of reality. With the rhythms of its initial lines, Tintern Abbey evokes the abandonment of external inclinations, and through a most subjective search for peace and tranquility leads to the full arousal of moral integrity.

NOTES

[1]William Wordsworth: His Doctrine and Art, 2nd ed. (1922; rpt. Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1960), pp. 49-50; Wordsworth: A Philosophical Approach (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1967), pp. 47-48; The Philosophic Mind (Columbus: Ohio State Univ., 1973), p. 31.

[2]Wordsworth (London: Evans Brothers, Ltd., 1966), p. 41.

[3]See R. D. Havens, The Mind of a Poet (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1941), p. 129; see also Geoffrey Hartman, The Unmediated Vision (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1954), p. 15.

[4]Lines, Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey, On Revisiting the Banks of the Wye During a Tour. July 13, 1798, in The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth, ed. Ernest de Selincourt and Helen Darbeshire, 5 vols. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1940-49), II. pp. 259-263, ll. 29-37. Further references by line number to Tintern Abbey are to this edition. References to other of Wordsworth's poems except The Prelude are given by volume, page and line in the text, and are to this edition. References to The Prelude, given by book and line, are from The Prelude, ed. Ernest de Selincourt, rev. Helen Darbeshire (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1959).

[5]Mind: An Essay on Human Feeling (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1967), I. p. 29.

[6]"The Drunken Boat: The Revolutionary Element in Romanticism," Romanticism Reconsidered (New York: Columbis Univ. Press, 1963), rpt. in The Stubborn Structure, ed. Northrop Frye (New York: Cornell Univ. Press, 1970), p. 203; similarly, M. H. Abrams in The Mirror and the Lamp (1953; rpt., Oxford: Oxford Univ. Paperbacks, 1971), p.58 says that Wordsworth and Coleridge picture the "mind in perception as active rather than inertly receptive, and as contributing to the world in the very process of perceiving the world." Abrams discusses the "changing metaphors of mind" associated with the Romantic revolution in pp. 57 ff.

[7]Seven Types of Ambiguity, 2nd ed. (New York: New Directions, 1947), p. 152.

[8]"Wordsworth: The Growth of a Poet's Mind," in Wordsworth: Poet of the Unconquerable Mind, ed. Charles L. Proudfit (Ann Arbor: The George Wahr Pub. C., 1965) p. 41; see also F. W. Bateson, Wordsworth: A Re-Interpretation, 2nd ed. (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1963), pp. 141-142.

[9]English Romantic Poets (Berkeley: Univ. of Calif. Press, 1968), p. 109.

[10]Hartman, p. 15.

[11]"Comparison, Intensity, and Time in 'Tintern Abbey,'" Criticism II (1970), p. 379.

[12]Perspectives in Criticism, no. 23 (Berkeley: The Univ. of Calif. Press, 1973), p. 8.

[13]Mysticism (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1930), p. 81.

[14]Frye, p. 213.

[15]Havens, pp. 102-103; see also Rader, pp. 53 ff.

[16](London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1925), p. 381.

[17]Frye, p. 209.

[18]Both Havens and Wlecke support the etymological interpretation of Wordsworth's Latinate words. See esp. Wlecke, p. 121, n. 12 and pp. 7 ff.

[19]Hartman, p. 164. The phenomenon, Hartman says, is dilation.

[20]Langer, I. 59.

[21]Paul M. Zall, ed., Literary Criticism of William Wordsworth (Lincoln: The Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1966), pp. 28-29.

[22]Langer, II. 262

[23]I use symbol in Langer's sense of "pure form abstracted and remembered" from the perceived object. II, p. 191.

[24]I mean permanence in the sense of Whitehead's "enormous permanences of nature." Science and the Modern World (1927; rpt. New York: New Directions, 1967), p. 86.

[25]Wordsworth and the Poetry of Sincerity (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press, 1964), p. 207.

[26]Langer, I. 60.

[27]Havens, pp. 53 ff.

[28]Imagination and Fancy (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1966), p. 219.

[29]Wordsworth's seeing personifications in nature as a boy is what Langer calls "physiognomic seeing," or "the immediate reception of expressive value in visual forms. In man it is stronger in childhood than in later years" (vol. 2, p. 294).

[30]Scholars have argued the syntax of this passage in an attempt to determine whether the lines should be read as pantheism or as psychological process. As far as I can determine the argument for the latter seems to hold the field. Empson comments "the word in seems to distinguish, though but faintly, the mind of man from the light" (p. 152) and the natural objects "are things active in the mind of man" (p. 153). See also Weaver, p. 115; Perkins, p. 195; Maniquis, pp. 361-362, n. 2, and pp. 372-373; Wlecke, p. 3, p. 7 and pp. 44-46.

[31]The Allegory of Love (1936; rpt., Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1972), p. 234.

[32]Whitehead, p. 94.

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