Modern Language Association MLA

Suffering and Calm in Wordsworth's Early Poetry
Author(s): James H. Averill
Source: *PMLA*, Vol. 91, No. 2 (Mar., 1976), pp. 223-234
Published by: Modern Language Association
Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/461509
Accessed: 23-03-2016 11:41 UTC

REFERENCES
Linked references are available on JSTOR for this article:
http://www.jstor.org/stable/461509?seq=1&cid=pdf-reference#references_tab_contents

You may need to log in to JSTOR to access the linked references.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Modern Language Association is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *PMLA*.

http://www.jstor.org

This content downloaded from 203.255.172.36 on Wed, 23 Mar 2016 11:41:10 UTC
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions

JAMES H. AVERILL

Suffering and Calm in Wordsworth's Early Poetry

I

READERS OF Wordsworth have often thought that the ending of *The Ruined Cottage* evades the poem's emotional and philosophical consequences. The relentless depiction of Margaret's disintegration has seemed incongruous with the sense of calm pervading the closing lines. The tendency has been, with F. R. Leavis, to view this tranquillity as elegiac sleight-of-hand, in which the Pedlar's "consummate poetic skill" effects "a disciplined limiting of contemplation to the endurable, and, consequently, a withdrawal to a reassuring environment." Thus, Herbert Lindenberger has compared the poem's ending to Tate's desecration of *King Lear*; David Perkins has characterized it as a "retreat from 'uneasy thoughts' "; and E. E. Bostetter has said that "in affixing such a conclusion, Wordsworth has in effect repudiated the story as he has told it."[1] According to this view, Wordsworth, like a mere sorcerer's apprentice, became frightened at the emotions unleashed by his conjuration and desperately attempted to deny them; we have Wordsworth as existentialist manqué, retreating from the abyss of universal evil and despair. Such a reading, whatever its attractiveness, ignores Wordsworth's real fascination with suffering. The early poetry, after all, is virtually a parade of victims; the insane, the miserable, the diseased, decrepit, dying, and dead populate the landscape to the virtual exclusion of the healthy and the normal. The movement of such a mind from the depiction of suffering to a sense of calm surely has a more adequate explanation than a sudden need for decorum or repression; indeed, "calm" or "tranquillity" represents a central Wordsworthian response to the fictional representation of human misery.

Paradoxically, the place to begin in talking about the tranquil conclusion of *The Ruined Cottage*[2] is the poem's opening. Here we find a landscape completely unlike that through which the Pedlar and the young man "chearfully pursue" their "evening way":[3] the narrator wanders alone across a hot and desolate plain; the summer sun beats down and the "uplands" show a peculiar hostility as they "feebly glare" at him "through a pale steam"; he toils "with languid feet" baffled by "the slipp'ry ground," and finally

> when I stretched myself
> On the brown earth my limbs from very heat
> Could find no rest, nor my weak arm disperse
> The insect host which gathered round my face
> And joined their murmurs to the tedious noise
> Of seeds of bursting gorse that crackled round.
> (ll. 21–26)

In the midst of this description of an oppressive Nature, there is a digression upon a "dreaming man" who exists in comfort and harmony (ll. 10–18). His world is one of "soft cool moss," "dewy shade," and a wren's "soothing melody," yet Wordsworth makes clear that it is the same countryside. The prostrating "heat" is, to the dreaming man, "clear and pleasant sunshine . . . pleasant to him." Among much else, this digression serves to emphasize the subjective nature of the narrator's experience.[4] It suggests that internal psychological factors are largely responsible for his being out of tune with his surroundings, that the weariness is rather more a spiritual than a physical state. The condition of the Wordsworthian observer is, then, analogous to his state in the opening lines of *Salisbury Plain*, "A Night-Piece," and "The Climbing of Snowdon." He perceives Nature as hostile and oppressive because of the undefined psychological and spiritual burdens he is carrying. The insect host and bursting gorse seed function like the acorn that interrupts poetic composition in *Prelude* I; insignificant particulars impinge upon a mind weak and easily distracted. Surrounded by petty annoyances, beset by a profound sense of futility, the narrator finds in the world outside him a sympathetic image of the world within.

Within the narrative structure of *The Ruined Cottage*, this hostile landscape is antithetical to

This content downloaded from 203.255.172.36 on Wed, 23 Mar 2016 11:41:10 UTC
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions

the peaceful evening scene that closes the poem. There is no empirical reason why evening would be more pleasant or less oppressive than the bright noon hour. Suitably minded poets, like Gray and Young, have conjured gloom, despair, intimations of mortality out of the day's expiration, and one would not think it inappropriate for Wordsworth to have done as much after telling Margaret's tale. Instead

> He ceased. By this the sun declining shot
> A slant and mellow radiance, which began
> To fall upon us where beneath the trees
> We sate on that low bench. And now we felt,
> Admonished thus, the sweet hour coming on:
> A linnet warbled from those lofty elms,
> A thrush sang loud, and other melodies
> At distance heard, peopled the milder air. (ll. 526–33)

This transformation of a sympathetic Nature reflects the traveler's changed psychological state. Something has worked a complete transformation, as a nearly paranoid irritability has given way to calm and a sense of universal well-being. But all that has "happened" to him has been the experience of listening to the story of Margaret. If the change is not merely cosmetic, clearly it derives in some way from the contemplation of Margaret's suffering.

To emphasize this transformation, Wordsworth describes two such conversions from uneasiness to calm at the conclusion of *The Ruined Cottage*. Before the narrator perceives the calm landscape around him, the Pedlar has told him of a previous experience at Margaret's cottage:

> I well remember that those very plumes,
> Those weeds, and the high spear-grass on that wall,
> By mist and silent rain-drops silvered o'er,
> As once I passed, did to my mind convey
> So still an image of tranquility,
> So calm and still, and looked so beautiful
> Amid the uneasy thoughts which filled my mind,
> That what we feel of sorrow and despair
> From ruin and from change, and all the grief
> The passing shews of being leave behind,
> Appeared an idle dream that could not live
> Where meditation was. (ll. 513–24)

Before seeing the spear grass, the Pedlar had been in roughly the same state as the emotionally excited, "uneasy" present of the narrator. The spear grass gave a sense of calm which was explicitly an escape from temporality, "from ruin and from change," from "the passing shews of being"; the empirical world became "an idle dream." As has been seen, the young man accepts the vision, and the tranquillity of the past spear grass vision is recapitulated in the evening calm. Thus, at the end of *The Ruined Cottage*, a doubled experience of suffering and calm is meant to assert that a sense of tranquillity can result from the contemplation of human suffering.

A striking parallel to the calm vision in *The Ruined Cottage* is the final speech of the chorus in *Samson Agonistes*:

> His servants he with new acquist
> Of true experience from this great event
> With peace and consolation hath dismist,
> And calm of mind all passion spent. (ll. 1755–58)

Milton here is self-consciously incorporating the cathartic response of calm within the text of his play. Although Wordsworth's knowledge of the *Poetics* is less certain than Milton's,[5] in *The Ruined Cottage* he too is dramatizing a process like the Aristotelian *katharsis*.[6] The narrator and the Pedlar function as a tragic chorus, guiding and intensifying the reader's emotions. The calm of Nature is the metaphor by which the poet describes the cathartic effects of Margaret's tragedy.

Thus, the tranquillity which has been extensively criticized is the statement of a complex, significant, and familiar response to suffering. Whether he had in mind Aristotle's terminology or not, Wordsworth could find, on the beat of his own pulse and in contemporary theories of the sublime and the pathetic, ample evidence of the cathartic value of pathos. In this paper, I shall explore the Wordsworthian catharsis further: Section II discusses early examples of the juxtaposition of suffering and tranquillity in Wordsworth's poetry; Section III, the intensive process by which Wordsworth arrived at "calm" in *The Ruined Cottage*; finally, in Section IV, there is an attempt to relate the pattern of suffering and calm to a larger pattern of excitement and calm.

II

The Ruined Cottage is only one of several poems in early Wordsworth where natural tranquillity follows a tale of suffering; such a juxtaposition would seem to form an important habit of the poet's imagination. The earliest example of suffering and calm is the freezing family episode in *An Evening Walk* (ll. 242–328).[7] Significantly, it

This content downloaded from 203.255.172.36 on Wed, 23 Mar 2016 11:41:10 UTC
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions

is also the first time Wordsworth depicts "poor naked wretches . . . / That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm."

The apprentice poet spares little in the attempt to create pathos. He hurls "torrent gales" and "bitter showers" upon the innocents, relishing such commonplaces of eighteenth-century sentimentalism as "frozen arms," "chattering lips," "dying" hearts, and "flooded" cheeks; at length there is a tableau of the children dead in their dead mother's arms:

> Soon shall the Light'ning hold before thy head
> His torch, and shew them slumbering in their bed,
> No tears can chill them, and no bosom warms,
> Thy breast their death-bed, coffin'd in thine arms.
> (ll. 297–300)

At this point one might expect anger at a society that makes inevitable such occurrences, or sympathetic moralizing on human existence, or, at the least, the justification that God will reward the patient sufferer in the afterlife.[8] The episode seems to demand response or comment, but instead we are told:

> Sweet are the sounds that mingle from afar,
> Heard by calm lakes, as peeps the folding star,
> Where the duck dabbles 'mid the rustling sedge,
> And feeding pike starts from the water's edge,
> Or the swan stirs the reeds, his neck and bill
> Wetting, that drip upon the water still;
> And heron, as resounds the trodden shore,
> Shoots upward, darting his long neck before.
> While, by the scene compos'd, the breast subsides,
> Nought wakens or disturbs it's tranqil tides.
> (ll. 301–10)

Without comment upon the tale or any transition to the narrative present, the description of the frozen woman ends, and the poet returns to an evening lakeside whose natural tranquillity is made more pronounced, eerie, and moving by the frantic human striving that has preceded it.[9]

As Robert Mayo has shown, the figure of a person helpless and suffering in a hostile Nature was a common topic for poetry in the 1790's.[10] In an age when emotional outpouring to suffering was an important literary pleasure, poets found the necessary pathos in wretches who wandered country roads. It is notable, however, that although Langhorne, Southey, Crabbe, and Cowper, among others, make sketches of suffering rural humanity, none of them places tranquillity after the pathos in the manner of Wordsworth. Even the apparent literary source of the *Evening Walk* freezing family, an anonymous "Winter Piece" in Knox's *Elegant Extracts* (in *Music of Humanity*, pp. 52–53), asks no more response to suffering than sentiment.

If there is one text from which Wordsworth learned to express cathartic feelings by juxtaposing suffering and natural tranquillity, probably it is "Celadon and Amelia" in Thomson's *Summer* (ll. 1169–1232).[11] *The Seasons* are much in the background of Wordsworth's early poetry; and in "Essay, Supplementary to the Preface," he writes that "in any well-used copy of the Seasons the book generally opens of itself with the rhapsody on love, or with one of the stories" (*Prose*, III, 74). In "Celadon and Amelia," the lovers wander through an "eternal Eden." Suddenly a storm arises. To Amelia's expressions of fear, Celadon confidently responds that the innocent face no danger from lightning; only the "guilty heart" need shrink from the agent of wrath. He embraces her, exclaiming " 'Tis safety . . . thus / To clasp perfection." Divine justice, however, is not human justice, for no sooner are the words out than "that moment to the ground, / A blackened corse, was struck the beauteous maid." Turning from the embittered lover, Thomson describes the scene:

> As from the face of Heaven the shattered clouds
> Tumultuous rove, the interminable sky
> Sublimer swells, and o'er the world expands
> A purer azure. Nature from the storm
> Shines out afresh; and through the lightened air
> A higher lustre and a clearer calm
> Diffusive tremble. (ll. 1223–29)

It is as if the girl's death causes the heavens to seem sublimer, brighter, clearer, purer; the contemplation of suffering lends to experience an intensity and awesomeness it had previously lacked. The movement in Thomson to the "clearer calm" is similar to Wordsworth's shift from the pathetic to the tranquil. In his early reading of Thomson, Wordsworth very likely noticed, felt, and admired the effect of juxtaposing suffering and calm, and when he came to write his own poems, he duplicated the effect.

Another instance of suffering and calm appears in *Descriptive Sketches*.[12] There, drawing on his tour through Switzerland and on Ramond de Carbonnières, Wordsworth depicts the death of a

This content downloaded from 203.255.172.36 on Wed, 23 Mar 2016 11:41:10 UTC
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions

chamois hunter lost in the high Alps (ll. 366–413). The description of the victim's strivings reveals a fascination with the minutiae of suffering; Ramond's macabre detail of the hunter slashing his feet in order to climb "the peak's impracticable sides" seems particularly to have caught the young poet's attention.[13] Avalanches, cold, starvation each have a turn in torturing the man, until finally the scavengers, the eagle and an ironically unhelpful "raven of the skies," appear to await the end. The poet extends his pathos by showing the family's futile vigil and even a son's discovery, "in future days," of his father's bones.

On this occasion, a series of four questions is interposed between the suffering and the tranquillity (ll. 414–21). Grammatical and topical connections join these questions into two distinct pairs, which seem to postulate alternative responses to pathos. The first questions refer to simple emotional responses; the poet asks, "Hence shall we turn . . . with fear" to listen to a torrent "or rather stay to taste the mild delights" of the melancholy Underwalden?[14] This response approximates the initial response of the narrator in *The Ruined Cottage*, the ambivalent pleasure of strong emotion. The second pair of questions, however, like the spear grass vision, suggests a different order of experience: Is there one who "has seen / The native Genii walk the mountain green," who has heard "other worlds" revealed in "soft music from th'aereal summit"? Here Wordsworth apparently opts for the visionary and sublime tranquillity implied by the second pair of questions, for, in the lines that follow, there is an extended evocation of natural calm (ll. 422–39).

The landscape described is that which had destroyed the chamois hunter. The "dangerous steep," an eagle's "faint wail," the "rumbling . . . of falling snow" recall the pathetic scene just narrated, yet it is "all changed, changed utterly." No longer is there terror, but a pastoral tranquillity "mid the quiet of the sky": "How still! no irreligious sound or sight / Rouzes the soul from her severe delight."[15] As in the spear grass vision, the tranquillity is claimed to be a transcendental experience. The language is of the temple: the Alps become a "sabbath region" where "a secret Power" reigns, and no trace of humanity "profanes . . . the spot."

A third poem where the contemplation of suffering leads to a sense of natural tranquillity is *Salisbury Plain*.[16] Here, as in *The Ruined Cottage*, the description of nature is subjective, "only presented to the reader as refracted by" a human mind (Legouis, p. 334). A single "traveller" appears, "wearily" (Gill, p. 45) making his way alone across Sarum's Plain. Clearly, he is, if not Wordsworth, just such a man as the Wordsworth who passed through the area in August 1793: despairing, lost, isolated, "more like a man / Flying from something that he dreads than one / Who sought the thing he loved."[17] As it must have for Wordsworth, Salisbury Plain provides a landscape sympathetic to the traveler's imagination. Wherever he turns, he finds images of his psychic situation: the sun sets in a "troubled west . . . red with stormy fire"; there is "no shade," "no meads of pleasant green," "no brook to wet his lips or soothe his ear," "no sounds" except the lark's "wasted strain" and the melancholy wind; traces of agriculture only reinforce his sense of isolation —he sees the corn, but the sower, the shepherd, the cottage are not to be found; even the crows overhead, "in blackening eddies homeward borne," emphasize his homelessness (ll. 37–58). An approaching storm is as much the image of turbulence within as it is a real storm.

That the traveler half perceives and half creates this landscape is evident from the contrasting mood and perceptions he draws from the same countryside on the following morning:

> But now from a hill summit down they look
> Where through a narrow valley's pleasant scene
> A wreath of vapour tracked a winding brook
> Babbling through groves and lawns and meads
> of green.
> A smoking cottage peeped the trees between,
> The woods resound the linnet's amorous lays,
> And melancholy lowings intervene
> Of scattered herds that in the meadows graze,
> While through the furrowed grass the merry
> milkmaid strays. (ll. 406–14)

On a purely literal level, it hardly needs a poet to tell us that the morning after a storm, with sun shining, waterdrops sparkling, and birds warbling, would be more pleasant than the evening of the first fifteen stanzas. However, since the landscape is psychological and sympathetic, clearly this change mirrors a radical transformation in the traveler's state of mind. As in *The Ruined Cottage*, all that has happened to the man is hearing a tale of sorrow—he has met the female

This content downloaded from 203.255.172.36 on Wed, 23 Mar 2016 11:41:10 UTC
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions

vagrant in the dead house and listened to her story. Nothing in her successive disasters directly encourages hope or cheerfulness, but the narration itself works the change. The best word available to describe such a freshening and revitalization brought on by a tale of suffering is catharsis.

Clearly, then, at the time he was finishing *The Ruined Cottage* in early 1798, it was one of Wordsworth's poetic habits to describe his response to fictive suffering in terms of natural tranquillity. The young poet apparently received a cathartic purgation from the contemplation of his gloomy fictions, and the calm of Nature was his preferred metaphor for describing this response.

III

I would suspect, however, that until 1798 the expression of catharsis by natural tranquillity primarily reflected a crude, emotional response rather than any rigorous, intellectual effort at self-awareness. The calm felt right, and thus it became a recurrent pattern in Wordsworth's poetry. In *The Ruined Cottage*, however, Wordsworth settles on the spear grass vision as the response to Margaret's story only after exploring intensively several contemporary theories about the pleasures of fictional suffering. The calm here is the fruit of settled deliberation by a mind curious to know itself.

Recent work by John Finch, Jonathan Wordsworth, and Mark Reed has focused on the two major stages of *The Ruined Cottage*'s composition, April–July 1797 and January–March 1798. There is general agreement that Coleridge and Lamb heard a relatively integrated version of Margaret's story in summer 1797. This "ur-Margaret" (which Helen Darbishire called MS. A_2) consisted of passages describing the disintegration of the family (ll. 98–185), Margaret's final decline (ll. 431–92), and at least one of the Pedlar's recurrent visits. When the poet reworked *The Ruined Cottage* in early 1798, he added the dramatic framework: the opening lines (1–54), two interruptions in the narrative (ll. 185–237, 362–76), the conclusion, and "The Pedlar."[18]

Such a revision radically changes the poem's emphasis. The original *Ruined Cottage* had been the straightforward narration of Robert's desertion of his family and Margaret's tragedy of hope. Like Southey's "Hannah," Cowper's "Crazy Kate," and the less restrained novels of the day, the response anticipated was "delicious pain." The reader, and the poet as reader of his own work, would commiserate with Margaret's sufferings and feel the pleasure of strong passion. In later versions, however, *The Ruined Cottage* is complicated by two layers of response interposed between the reader and the suffering object. The Pedlar is deeply moved by Margaret's sufferings as he tells her story to the equally moved narrator. As Geoffrey Hartman has said, "Instead of centering transparently on Margaret, the tale reflects also the narrator, and tends to become a story about the relation of teller to tale" (p. 139).

Why then did Wordsworth feel it appropriate or necessary to change the poem's focus? Nothing in the letters, notes, or journals of winter 1798 suggests artistic, philosophical, or rhetorical reasons for such a revision; thus, surmise must be drawn from the internal evidence of the poem and our general knowledge of Wordsworth's development in the late 1790's.[19]

Let us begin with the assumption that Wordsworth knew what he was about. If *The Ruined Cottage* is a dramatization of the relationship of teller and tale, it seems not improbable that the imagination's use of pathetic narrative was an issue that Wordsworth felt compelled to explore in early 1798. With his growing interest in the mind, with the example of Coleridge's chronic self-monitoring before him, it would have been only natural that Wordsworth should begin asking questions about the response to fictional suffering. In the three previous years, after all, he had created *Adventures on Salisbury Plain*, *The Borderers*, MS. A_2 of *The Ruined Cottage*, and had begun the still more horrific *Somersetshire Tragedy*. In January–March 1798, he is in the midst of writing "The Discharged Soldier" and revising "Description of a Beggar" into "The Old Cumberland Beggar." The spring is to see the "*poesie larmoiante*"[20] of *Lyrical Ballads*, featuring Goody Blake, the forsaken Indian woman, Martha Ray, Simon Lee, and the drowned man of *Peter Bell*. For such a writer to look self-consciously at his work would necessitate coming to terms with the pleasures of pathos.

The question Wordsworth posed to himself is that which the Pedlar asks in the first interruption of the narrative:

> Why should a tear be in an old man's eye?
> Why should we thus with an untoward mind,

This content downloaded from 203.255.172.36 on Wed, 23 Mar 2016 11:41:10 UTC
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions

> And in the weakness of humanity,
> From natural wisdom turn our hearts away,
> To natural comfort shut our eyes and ears,
> And, feeding on disquiet, thus disturb
> The calm of Nature with our restless thoughts?
> (ll. 192–98)

In context, this is meant rhetorically: the Pedlar wants to reprimand his own weakness and to halt the narration of Margaret's story. Nevertheless, the question is a real one for Wordsworth. Emphatically, the weakness of humanity is not the inability to face up to suffering—the weakness lies in the "untoward" mind which consciously "shuts our eyes and ears" to Nature in order to lust after the morbid and pathetic. It is the part of human nature that causes man to write, read, and enjoy stories about the sufferings of others, that part of Wordsworth's mind that craves excitement and writes such poems as *Michael* and *Ruth* to produce "an unusual and irregular state of the mind" (*Prose*, I, 146). "Feeding on disquiet" recalls Nature feeding the mind "with lofty thoughts" in "Tintern Abbey"; but the source of the tumult here is the pathetic rather than the natural sublime.

Clearly Wordsworth is uneasy about the kind of nourishment to be obtained. When the narrator, "impelled / By a mild form of curious pensiveness" (*PW*, V, 393; ll. 472–73), requests a continuation of the story, the Pedlar protests, rather too vehemently, the innocence of the collective undertaking:

> It were a wantonness, and would demand
> Severe reproof, if we were men whose hearts
> Could hold vain dalliance with the misery
> Even of the dead, contented thence to draw
> A momentary pleasure, never marked
> By reason, barren of all future good.
> (MS. D, ll. 221–26)

The bare thought that one can indeed draw pleasure from such dalliance is troubling Wordsworth here, and the Pedlar's words are a way of exorcising and moralizing a ghoulish imagination. This outburst represents an outright rejection of contemporary theories that the pleasure of pathos lies in the gratifying stimulation of the passions.[21] Where Burke, for one, accepts the sadistic and morbidly curious as a portion of human nature, characteristically Wordsworth cannot rest with feelings he considers to be "coarse sympathies" (*PW*, I, 334). For him, there must be a more adequate and exalted explanation; the additions to the tale of Margaret's suffering represent the struggle to find such an explanation.

Wordsworth's explorations lead him at one point to invoke a variation of the traditional religious justification of suffering. The Pedlar turns aside from the main thread of his narrative as he is describing his penultimate visit with Margaret:

> A momentary trance comes over me,
> And to myself I seem to muse on one
> By sorrow laid asleep or borne away,
> A human being destined to awake
> To human life, or something very near
> To human life, when he shall come again
> For whom she suffered. (ll. 369–75)

It is an unusual moment in the early "semi-Atheist" Wordsworth, for the Pedlar is calling up an essentially Christian vision of immortality. The phrase "he shall come again," while it refers to Robert, has resonances of resurrection and apocalypse. From musing on Margaret's suffering, the Pedlar gains an intimation of immortality much like that contained in the Christian promise. Earthly suffering appears as transitory and unimportant except as the occasion of life everlasting. The notable distinction is that in Christian dogma immortality is used to solace the sufferer; here, suffering itself is "permanent, obscure and dark, / And has the nature of infinity" (*PW*, I, 188; ll. 1543–44). In contemplating the pathetic, the Pedlar gains a sense of possible sublimity.

But Wordsworth's first impulse is to find a moral justification. After rejecting "vain dalliance" with misery, the Pedlar theorizes, "there is often found / In mournful thoughts, and always might be found, / A power to virtue friendly" (ll. 227–29). This explanation recurs in the first two discarded endings of MS. B (*PW*, V, 400); the "sweet trouble" in his soul impels the narrator to say to the Pedlar, "for the tale which you have told I think / I am a better and a wiser man." Wordsworth, of course, is apt to ascribe moral effects to whatever excites him deeply, as in "Tintern Abbey" where recollections of the Wye Valley are responsible for "that best portion of a good man's life." But here he is also drawing on the neoclassical and sentimentalist theory that a tale of suffering has a beneficial effect upon the hearer's moral constitution. This notion, derived

This content downloaded from 203.255.172.36 on Wed, 23 Mar 2016 11:41:10 UTC
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions

from Horace's maxim that tragedy should instruct, is the theoretical justification for such works as *Clarissa* and *The Vicar of Wakefield.* The late eighteenth century, however, treated this moral theory as a rather stale truism; "it was inclined to accept the moral value of tragedy as a profound truth and to move on" to other topics. Thus Wordsworth, in 1798, finds the bald assertion of moral transformation attractive but inadequate, and in the "Addendum" to MS. B (*PW*, v, 400–04), he develops a peculiarly Wordsworthian mutation of the contemporary "doctrine of sympathy" (Wasserman, pp. 283, 299).

Much of the theoretical superstructure Wordsworth builds in 1798 over the poem of 1797 has to do with "sympathy." Sympathy, of course, was a modish word in the late eighteenth century; Burke, Adam Smith, Blair, and Lord Kames, among others, ascribed the pleasure of pathos to the "social passion"they interchangeably called sympathy, pity, or compassion. According to Burke, it was the "bond of sympathy" that attracted mankind to tragic plays and executions.[22] The Pedlar is himself such a man of feeling; "by nature tuned . . ."

> To sympathy with Man, he was alive
> To all that was enjoyed where'er he went,
> And all that was endured. (*PW*, v, 386–87)

It seems a matter of curious indifference whether happiness or misery is the lot of those whom he observes; the equality of "enjoyed" and "endured" suggests it is the depth of human passion, not its nature, that stirs him and keeps him "alive." He can "afford to suffer" with those whom he sees suffer, and out of his watching becomes "rich" in "our best experience."

In Wordsworth, however, sentimentalism is complicated by pantheism. The word *sympathy* encompasses not only the Pedlar's feelings for mankind but also his relationship with natural objects.[23] He has "sympathies" with "every natural form" and finds "in all shapes . . . a secret and mysterious soul, / A fragrance and a spirit of strange meaning" (*PW*, v, 388; ll. 276–86). It is the Wordsworthian "sympathy with [the] real or imagined Life" of objects denounced by Coleridge in an 1803 notebook.[24] These "sympathies" are reciprocal to those of the grove which "had fallen / Like a refreshing dew upon my heart" (*PW*, v, 344), or to the "silent sympathy" Lucy feels in "Three Years She Grew in Sun and Shower."

In the "Addendum" Wordsworth attempts to provide a theoretical rationale for the interest in suffering by relating the pantheistic and pathetic sympathies. The fragment opens:

> Not useless do I deem
> These quiet sympathies with things that hold
> An inarticulate language . . . (ll. 1–3)

The argument is the argument of "Tintern Abbey." The poet's morbid passions, his disquietude, vengeance, hatred, and contempt, are "softened down" by natural objects. This relationship causes a "holy tenderness" to "pervade" his being, and, though he does not quite "see into the life of things," he does find "all his thoughts now flowing clear / From a clear fountain" (ll. 16–17). This quiet sympathy with the thing-in-itself is supplemented by sympathy with the "vestiges of human hands, some stir / Of human passion" (*PW*, II, 480):

> And further, by contemplating these forms
> In the relations which they bear to man
> We shall discover what a power is theirs
> To stimulate our minds. ("Addendum," ll. 24–27)

In objects with human associations, we read "Some sweet and tender lesson to our minds / Of human suffering or of human joy" (ll. 34–35). It matters little to the spectator ab extra whether he sees suffering or joy; the important thing is that the mind find in sympathy the stimulation "to quicken and to rouze" itself from "weariness." The effort is to achieve a high level of sensibility whether in the "holy tenderness" of pantheism or the "tender lesson" of human sympathy.

When the Pedlar exhorts himself and the narrator to "rise / From this oblivious sleep, these fretful dreams / Of feverish nothingness" (ll. 76–78), the fretful dream is not Margaret's story but unstimulated, weary existence such as the narrator had known at the poem's beginning. In that state one "dimly pores on things minute, / On solitary objects, still beheld / In disconnection dead and spiritless" (ll. 60–62)—the "insect host" and "seeds of bursting gorse." Thus, Margaret's story, bringing significance and emotional associations to objects, has a "fructifying virtue."[25] Wordsworth finds the justification for pathos in the activity of mind it engenders, the imaginative growth which enlarges "our sphere of pleasure and of pain" (l. 82)[26]:

This content downloaded from 203.255.172.36 on Wed, 23 Mar 2016 11:41:10 UTC
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions

Whate'er we see
Whate'er we feel, by agency direct
Or indirect, shall tend to feed and nurse
Our faculties, and raise to loftier heights
Our intellectual soul. (ll. 95–99)

Here Wordsworth has found an answer to the Pedlar's earlier question—"feeding on disquiet" nourishes and exalts the imagination, fostering the growth of the poet's mind. At this point he is close to the Burkean sublime, where the "exercise of the mental powers" is good for its own sake: "as these emotions [pain and terror] clear the parts, whether fine, or gross, of a dangerous and troublesome incumbrance, they are capable of producing delight; not pleasure, but a sort of delightful horror, a sort of tranquillity tinged with terror" (Burke, pp. 135–36). For Burke, the stimulation of the passions is explicitly cathartic, whether the source of emotion is the natural or pathetic sublime. For Wordsworth, too, it is cathartic, but he also claims it is moral: stimulated by sympathy, "we shall move / From strict necessity along the path / Of order and of good" (ll. 93–95).

In the "Addendum" the Pedlar's speech on "sympathies" is followed by the conclusion of *The Ruined Cottage*. Therefore, in the original context, the spear grass vision exemplifies the consecration of objects resulting from the contemplation of suffering. It is another moment when the "eye made quiet" can "see into the life of things" or, as the Pedlar expresses it, when "we" can "drink in the soul of things" ("Addendum," l. 92). It is yet another of those sublime moments in Wordsworth, but, notably, the source of the sublime is the pathetic. Thus, Wordsworth arrives at the "calm of mind all passion spent" only after expending considerable thought on the question of fictional pathos and its imaginative importance. The spear grass vision and the reciprocal sunset are the results of an investigation into the very sources of his poetic excitement.

IV

The pattern of suffering and calm takes on still greater significance when we recall that time and again Wordsworth refers to a transcendental state which he calls variously serenity, tranquillity, or calm: "such a holy calm / Did overspread my soul"; "I stood and watch'd / Till all was tranquil as a dreamless sleep"; "A tranquillizing spirit presses now / On my corporeal frame"; "The calm existence that is mine when I / Am worthy of myself!"[27] No doubt the most famous such moment occurs in "Tintern Abbey" when the poet recalls how the remembered images of the Wye have served him in times of depression and weakness; speaking of "these beauteous forms," he says:

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.

The mind passes through four distinct stages: (1) the initial weariness or dejection, (2) the evocation of a picture in the mind's eye, (3) emotional response to the picture, and (4) transcendence into the state of calm:

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.

The movement of mind is strikingly like the response to suffering delineated in *The Ruined Cottage* and elsewhere. A scene possessing emotional weight is called forth, a response is excited, and, following this outpouring, comes the sense of "cathartic" calm. The original sources of the excitement are different, but, in each case, images are brought before the mind in anticipation of immediate emotional excitement and the consequent sense of calm.

The most striking expression of a psychology of excitement and calm appears in "trances" which characters undergo in several narrative poems. For instance, in the second *Salisbury Plain*, *Adventures*,[28] the traveler experiences a moment curiously like the characteristic Wordsworthian calm. In *Adventures* the traveler has evolved into a remorseful murderer; walking through a Childe Roland landscape, he hears "a sound of chains" and looks up to see "on a bare gibbet nigh / A human body that in irons swang" (ll. 113–15). The gibbet, of course, is a powerful image of suf-

This content downloaded from 203.255.172.36 on Wed, 23 Mar 2016 11:41:10 UTC
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions

fering for Wordsworth; in *Prelude* XI, the experience at Cowdrake Quarry provides the energy that shrouds the girl in "visionary dreariness." For the traveler, the gibbet has additional force, as it "rouzed a train / Of the mind's phantoms," the memories of his deed, his guilt and fear (ll. 121–22). The emotional pressure is such that "He fell and without sense or motion lay" (l. 125). He is evidently experiencing the Wordsworthian response to intense emotion, for when the "trance" is gone,

> As doth befall to them whom frenzy fires,
> His soul, which in such anguish had been toss'd,
> Sank into deepest calm; for now retires
> Fear; a terrific dream in darkness lost
> The dire phantasma which his sense had cross'd.
> His mind was still as a deep evening stream.
> (ll. 127–32)

A second instance of this excitement and calm appears in *Peter Bell*, MS. 2.[29] At the end of Part First, Peter falls into a trance:

> His eyes will burst, his heart will break
> He gives a loud and frightful shriek,
> And back he falls just like a stone. (*PW*, II, 355)

The immediate cause of this is his perception of the drowned man as a "fiend with visage wan / A live man fiend." Of course, the wandering potter has already had a troubled night; what with the uncanny braying of the ass and the oppressive silence, his imagination is hyperexcited. The pressure of superstitious horror is too much; he passes out, and when he comes to,

> In Peter's brain there is no riot
> His eye upon the stream he fixes
> And with the sight no terror mixes
> His heart is calm and quiet. (*PW*, II, 356)

A third sequence of excitement, trance, and calm is in *The White Doe of Rylstone*. There, after the loyal Francis has broken with his family, "A phantasm, in which roof and wall / Shook, tottered, swam before his sight" overcomes him:

> And, when he waked, his languid eye
> Was on the calm and silent sky;
> With air about him breathing sweet,
> And earth's green grass beneath his feet.
> (*PW*, III, 296; ll. 422–30)

Francis explicitly undergoes some kind of catharsis, for he is "cleansed from the despair / And sorrow." The common factor of these calm-inducing trances is strong emotion. The source of the emotion, guilt, fear, or family conflict, seems irrelevant to the psychological mechanism being described.

These trances are as much literary as psychological phenomena. In the eighteenth century, literary personae were continually losing consciousness or entering a borderline state of "waking sleep." In *The Borderers*, however, Wordsworth presents as an imitation of reality a character who goes from stressful passion to unearthly calm without the intervention of anything so melodramatic as a trance. In Act III, the hero Mortimer enters alone, meditating upon his recent actions. In the previous scene, driven by a sense of misguided justice and revenge, he has left the old, blind Baron Herbert to undergo an ordeal by nature on the heath. Such conflicting emotions as anger, guilt, pity, jealousy, and grief had raged through him; it had been a scene full of pathos and emotion, yet, with such an experience in the immediate past, Mortimer utters these unexpected, enigmatic words:

> Deep, deep and vast, vast beyond human thought,
> Yet calm.—I could believe that there was here
> The only quiet heart on earth. In terror,
> Remembered terror, there is peace and rest.
> (*PW*, I, 186; ll. 1466–69)

This is surprising and peculiar: it is as if Hamlet were calm in the scene after he learns of his father's murder or Lear after he has been shut out from the castle. After all, when Mortimer was last on stage, the pressure of events and conflicting emotions had nearly driven him mad, and now Wordsworth expects his reader to believe that the man is finding "peace and rest" by means of the "remembered terror" of the experience! Only a person who had experienced the sensation of finding calm in vivid remembrance would be likely to create such a response in a character who has recently undergone Mortimer's ordeal. And, indeed, in the *Prelude*, Wordsworth calls before his mind the "spots of time," images of "all / The terrors, all the early miseries / Regrets, vexations, lassitudes," and claims that these "have made up / The calm existence that is mine when I / Am worthy of myself!" (I, ll. 355–61). Only one who habitually used the energy of recollected emotion to reach a state of mind "Deep, deep and vast, vast beyond human thought, / Yet calm" would

This content downloaded from 203.255.172.36 on Wed, 23 Mar 2016 11:41:10 UTC
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions

have thought he was presenting a credible imitation of reality in the response of Mortimer.

I would suggest that Wordsworth deliberately provoked in himself the state that he has his characters experience accidentally. A recurring assumption of the "Preface" to *Lyrical Ballads* is that poetry's purpose is to "excite" the reader. In the attack on "frantic novels, sickly and stupid German Tragedies, and deluges of idle and extravagant stories in verse," the only objection is to the means employed; the claim that "the human mind is capable of excitement without the application of gross and violent stimulants" implicitly accepts the premise that a primary function of literature is exciting the reader's mind. For Wordsworth, poetry serves as a conduit of psychic energy: "Such objects as strongly excite" the poet are to be described in "the real language of men in a state of vivid sensation" in order to achieve the end of poetry, "to produce excitement in coexistence with an overbalance of pleasure." The "Preface" goes on to claim that this excitement has important effects on the imagination: "Now, by the supposition, excitement is an unusual and irregular state of the mind; ideas and feelings do not in that state succeed each other in accustomed order" (*Prose*, I, 128, 128, 126, 118, 146, 146). Again, in the "Appendix to the Preface," Wordsworth speaks of "the genuine language of passion" (i.e., poetry) causing "a perturbed and unusual state of mind" (*Prose*, I, 160). One writes poetry, then, and reads it deliberately to stir up the dead ashes of emotion. As Wordsworth makes a poem or takes up an old poem to rewrite or reread, he does so in the expectation that the poetry will produce an unusual mental state. What he desires is the state of mind in which feelings do not succeed each other normally, when profound emotional agitation is followed by deepest calm.

The calm that follows suffering is, therefore, not a facile attempt to cover up or glide over issues that Wordsworth is afraid to face; rather it is the same, in kind and intensity, as the calm that ensues from intense interactions throughout his poetry. The pattern of suffering and calm is part of an excitement-tranquillity complex which lies at the heart of his poetic imagination. For Wordsworth at least, the cathartic response to pathos is but one aspect of a more general response to literature and life.

Cornell University
Ithaca, New York

Notes

[1] Leavis, *Revaluation* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1949), pp. 181, 179; Lindenberger, *On Wordsworth's 'Prelude'* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1963), pp. 228–29; Perkins, *Wordsworth and the Poetry of Sincerity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap, 1964), p. 116; Bostetter, *The Romantic Ventriloquists* (Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 1963), p. 65.

[2] Unless otherwise noted, the text of *The Ruined Cottage* used in this paper is MS. D, published in Jonathan Wordsworth, *The Music of Humanity* (London: Nelson, 1969), pp. 33–49.

[3] This is the original closing line of MS. B, published in *Poetical Works of William Wordsworth*, ed. Ernest de Selincourt (Oxford: Clarendon, 1940–49), v, 404, l. 147; hereafter *Poetical Works* will be cited as *PW*.

[4] In " 'Finer Distance': The Narrative Art of Wordsworth's 'The Wanderer,' " *ELH*, 39 (1972), 87–111, Reeve Parker has artfully traced the "dreaming man" motif of *Excursion*, Bk. I. In his discussion of these opening lines, Parker emphasizes the dreamer's subjectivity, saying that he, no less than the narrator, is "the prisoner of either an innocent or a willed illusion." Parker's evidence for this is the "ambiguity of language" and "equivocal connotations" of the description of the dreamer's view (p. 94). I would note that, for Wordsworth, the force of this dual subjectivity is positive rather than invidious—far from despairing that objectivity is impossible, he emphasizes the extent to which the mind creates the world in which it lives.

[5] For comment on Wordsworth's awareness of the *Poetics*, see Ben Ross Schneider, *Wordsworth's Cambridge Education* (Cambridge, Eng.: Univ. Press, 1957), pp. 95, 263. A passage in the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* suggests hearsay knowledge: "Aristotle, I have been told, has said, that Poetry is the most philosophic of all writing." *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, ed. W. J. B. Owen and Jane W. Smyser (Oxford: Clarendon, 1974), I, 139.

[6] Cleanth Brooks and Jonathan Wordsworth have suggested in passing that something like catharsis is described in the spear grass vision: "Wordsworth and Human Suffering," in Frederick W. Hilles and Harold Bloom, eds., *From Sensibility to Romanticism, Essays Presented to Frederick A. Pottle* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1965), p. 387; *Music of Humanity*, p. 99. Differing in emphasis is the opinion that the spear grass vision is essentially elegiac, that it represents the "benign and redemptive power" of natural process. This view has recently been argued by Paul D. Sheats, *The Making of Wordsworth's Poetry, 1785–1798* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1973), pp. 177, 180: "At this point the pedlar intervenes, cutting the poet's last ties to the cottage by citing the

This content downloaded from 203.255.172.36 on Wed, 23 Mar 2016 11:41:10 UTC
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions

vision of the speargrass, which in this new position becomes a means of disciplining the poet's grief. Both characters then enact the disengagement of feeling proper to the pastoral elegy." This reading ignores the psychological nature of the landscape; I would suggest that the sense of natural process in the closing lines comes from the emotional purgation that the rehearsal of Margaret's tale engenders. Implicit in *The Ruined Cottage* is the view of tragedy described by a contributor to Thomas R. Henn's *The Harvest of Tragedy* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1966), p. 273: "I experience a sense of vision, a feeling of harmony within myself extending consciously outwards; a sense of vision that is a frequent reaction to all great art. . . . It is not the content of the vision that matters—for me it has no moral, no picture—so much as the capacity that is given to see deeply into the heart of things. Wordsworth's lines have for a long time had a wider content and application for my own experience than the mere description of the effect of nature. [Here he quotes the 'burthen of the mystery' passage from *Tintern Abbey*.] It is then a capacity to see deeply that is the content of the tragic vision, a vision not so much of a man but of Man as a species. While its spell lasts, I see deeply and for that brief moment it would be impossible to act or feel merely human."

[7] All references to *An Evening Walk* are to the 1793 ed., rpt. in *PW*, I, 4–38.

[8] Indeed, these are the characteristic responses that poets of the "female vagrant" genre made to the suffering they had evoked; see Cowper's "Crazy Kate," Southey's "The Widow," and magazine poems cited by Robert Mayo, "The Contemporanaeity of the *Lyrical Ballads*," *PMLA*, 69 (1954), 486–522.

[9] Geoffrey Hartman has noted this example of the apparently incongruous juxtaposition of suffering and calm in *Wordsworth's Poetry 1787–1814* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1964), pp. 95–96. He, however, ascribes it to the fact that Wordsworth has not resolved his "apocalyptic fears" and his sense of Nature's duality: "There is often no real harmony between what one recognizes again as sterner and milder nature."

[10] "Contemporanaeity of the *Lyrical Ballads*," pp. 495–506.

[11] All references to *Summer* are from James Thomson, *Poetical Works*, ed. J. Logie Robertson (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1908), pp. 52–120.

[12] All references to *Descriptive Sketches* are to the 1793 ed., rpt. in *PW*, I, 42–90.

[13] For Wordsworth's reliance on Ramond, see Emile Legouis, *The Early Life of William Wordsworth*, trans. J. W. Matthews (London: Dent, 1897), pp. 113–14, 475–77.

[14] Wordsworth's note (*PW*, I, 68, n.) suggests that he associates the Underwalden with the "melancholy disposition."

[15] The phrase "severe delight" is evidently borrowed from Thomson's *Summer* where the poet "deep-roused" feels "A sacred terrour, a severe delight" (ll. 540–41). Thomson's vision and "delight" have their source in a commonplace of 18th-century sublime, "the midnight depth / Of younder grove, of wildest largest growth" (ll. 516–17), while Wordsworth, like Burke, finds a source of sublime "delight" in human suffering. It is interesting to note that Thomson's experience also ends in attaining "This holy calm, this harmony of mind. / Where purity and peace immingle charms" (ll. 550–51).

[16] This is MS. 1 of *Guilt and Sorrow*. The text used is from *The Salisbury Plain Poems of William Wordsworth*, ed. Stephen Gill (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1975), pp. 21–38. It has not been generally realized that this original *Salisbury Plain* is organized much like *The Ruined Cottage*. At the beginning of each poem, a man travels on foot, acutely aware of oppressive natural surroundings. He then meets a fellow traveler in a deserted building who tells him a tale of great misery. As each poem concludes, the travelers move off toward shelter in a transformed world of natural serenity.

[17] See Mary Moorman, *William Wordsworth: A Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1957–65), I, 232–33.

[18] Finch, "*The Ruined Cottage* Restored," in *Bicentenary Wordsworth Studies in Memory of John Alban Finch*, ed. Jonathan Wordsworth (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1970), pp. 29–49; Reed, *Wordsworth: The Chronology of the Early Years, 1770–1799* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1967), pp. 321–28, 337–39; *Music of Humanity*, pp. 9–22; *PW*, V, 377.

[19] Using such material Jonathan Wordsworth has suggested that the dramatic structure serves "to distance Margaret's suffering, making bearable a story which in its original conclusion was too painful, too abrupt." He connects the expansion of the poem with the concept of the One Life: "unrelieved sadness is quite incompatible with the Philosophy of Joy now put forward in *The Pedlar*." The framework brings the reader "momentarily to believe in a philosophical resolution which outside the context of the poem is presumably unacceptable" (*Music of Humanity*, pp. 150, 19, 92). Much of this seems plausible, and it is the purpose of this paper not so much to disagree with Jonathan Wordsworth as to point to another issue important to the poet at that time.

[20] Dr. Burney's review of *Lyrical Ballads* from *The Monthly Review*, 29 (June 1799), rpt. in *Lyrical Ballads*, ed. R. L. Brett and A. R. Jones (London: Methuen, 1963), p. 317.

[21] The seminal spokesman for this view in the 18th century was René Dubos, although both Dennis and Rapin had expressed it earlier. For 2 fine studies of the pleasures of pathos in the 18th century, see Earl R. Wasserman, "The Pleasures of Tragedy," *ELH*, 14 (1947), 283–307, and Baxter Hathaway, "The Lucretian 'Return upon Ourselves' in Eighteenth-Century Theories of Tragedy," *PMLA*, 62 (1947), 672–89. The references to the historical background in this paper largely follow Wasserman and Hathaway.

[22] Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, ed. James T. Boulton (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1958), pp. 44–48.

[23] Wordsworth's dalliance with the notion of pantheistic sympathy has long been noted. For discussions of this subject, see Herbert W. Piper, *The Active Universe* (London: Athlone, 1962); Eric D. Hirsch, *Wordsworth and Schelling: A Typological Study of Romanticism* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1960), pp. 38–61; *Music of Humanity*, pp. 184–232.

[24] *The Notebooks of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Kathleen Coburn, I (New York: Pantheon, 1957), 1616.

[25] *The Prelude*, ed. Ernest de Selincourt, rev. Helen Darbishire (Oxford: Clarendon, 1959), p. 445. This phrase is from the "spots of time" passage in MS. V of *The Prelude*. In the original context, the "spots of time" declaration was closely allied to the response to fictional suffering. It came immediately following a discussion of the "tragic facts of rural history" to be found in *Prelude*, p. 163. All references to *The Prelude* are from the de Selincourt-Darbishire edition and the

This content downloaded from 203.255.172.36 on Wed, 23 Mar 2016 11:41:10 UTC
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions

1805 version, unless noted otherwise.

[26] In *PW*, v, 402, Darbishire reads "pain" as "clearly a copyist's error" and substitutes "power" from MS. D. However, in D "pain" is the original fair-copy reading; see *Music of Humanity*, p. 271.

[27] *Prelude* II, ll. 367–68; I, ll. 488–89; II, ll. 27–28; I. ll. 360–61. For a suggestive reading of this phenomenon, see David Rogers, "The Wordsworthian Repose," *Tennessee Studies in Literature*, 13 (1968), 39–47.

[28] The text of MS. 2 of *Guilt and Sorrow* is available in *Salisbury Plain Poems*, pp. 123–54.

[29] The text of *Peter Bell* is among the most complicated in the Wordsworth canon. I have had the advantage of working with Floyd G. Stoppard's unpublished dissertation, "Wordsworth's *Peter Bell*: A Critical Edition," Cornell 1965. Within this paper I have given the approximate location in *PW*.

This content downloaded from 203.255.172.36 on Wed, 23 Mar 2016 11:41:10 UTC
All use subject to JSTOR Terms and Conditions