

NOTES

WAS IT FOR THIS

- 1-29 The starting-point of *The Prelude* (see Introduction and 1799 I 1n., below). Wordsworth's urgent questions imply a sense of inadequacy, yet reveal at once that childhood has provided him with underlying sources of strength. Revised to form 1799 I 1-26|1805 I 271-304.
- 16-19 *Was it for this . . . unrememberable being*: Lines with no counterpart in 1799, which show Wordsworth distancing himself from the fashion for nostalgic poetry associated with Charlotte Smith, William Lisle Bowles and the early Coleridge.
- 30-46 First written of the great childhood episodes of *The Prelude*, yet showing, as the boy hangs alone on the cliff-face in the presence of the sublime forces of nature, a complete sureness of touch. Revised to form 1799 I 50-66|1805 I 333-50.
- 47-58 Already in this first seemingly unmeditated draft, Wordsworth perceives his theme to be education through the 'eternal things' of nature, which 'sanctify' by their presence the pains and fears of childhood, creating in the process adult security and strength. Preserved almost verbatim as 1799 I 130-41, then heavily revised to form 1805 I 428-41 ('Wisdom and spirit of the universe').
- 59-75 Lines that present for the first time the central associationist doctrine of *The Prelude*, a way of thinking that comes to seem essentially Wordsworthian, but depends upon Coleridge's reworking of David Hartley (*Observations on Man*, 1749, reissued 1791). Strongly felt, though in themselves unimportant, emotions, coming to be associated with particular landscapes, create for the child a vital imaginative relationship with the natural world. Shortened to form 1799 I 186-98|1805 I 490-501.
- 76-97 The woodcock-snaring episode is placed before the bird's-nesting (ll. 30-46, above) in 1799 and later versions of *The Prelude*. Revised to form 1799 I 27-49|1805 I 309-32.
- 98-123 Wordsworth's earliest myth of origins, anticipating in important ways both the Infant Babe passage of 1799 (II 267-301) and the pre-existent child of *Intimations*, whose 'birth is but a sleep and a forgetting'. Shortened and revised in 1799 I 375-90|1805 I 571-85 so as to exclude reference to the Platonic 'eternal spirit' of ll. 104-9.
- 98-9 *Nor while . . . The mazes of this argument*: Wordsworth at this point in *MS JJ* counts the lines he has written, and makes a fresh start, his sense of purpose marked by the earliest *Prelude* allusions to Milton. By implication Wordsworth too has a 'great argument', his poetry too is 'epic'. Though divesting himself of the Christian panoply of *Paradise Lost*, he too will

'assert eternal providence' (*PL* I 25). Bringing this theme up to date in his account of human consciousness and the education of the mind through nature, Wordsworth makes a further significant allusion. His argument may seem to wander, may seem to have its 'mazes', but he is in control, unlike the fallen angels of *Paradise Lost*, debating theological issues 'in wandering mazes lost' (*PL* II 561).

124-45 Wordsworth's definition of innocent vision – the child's holding of 'unconscious intercourse|With the eternal beauty' – consists of responding to the natural scene with a mind that has no standards of judgment, makes no sophisticated comparisons. Preserved almost verbatim as 1799 I 391-412, then revised to form 1805 I 586-608.

146-50 Lines, not present in later versions, that round off this early *Prelude* draft, giving it the sense of being a completed poem.

THE TWO-PART PRELUDE OF 1799

First Part

1-26 *Was it for this . . . thunder-shower*: Like the original *Prelude* draft, *Was It For This*, the two-part version of 1799 begins in unexplained self-reproach. 'This' in ll. 1, 6 and 17 sets up a contrast between Wordsworth's present inactivity (especially his failure to write the philosophical *Recluse*, planned with Coleridge seven months before, in March 1798) and his sense of having been singled out for his vocation as poet by a specially favoured childhood:

For a time Wordsworth seems to have intended to compose some introductory lines that would explain what it was that 'this' referred to, but to have done so would have spoiled the impact of a rhetorical pattern which had been used in succession by Milton (*Samson Agonistes* 361-3), Pope (1717 *Rape of the Lock* IV 97-102) and Thomson (1746 *Seasons* III 1101-5): . . . Milton's lines are especially important. Manoah, shocked at the condition of his son, 'Eyeless in Gaza at the mill with slaves', reproaches God because it appears no longer possible that Samson can fulfil his appointed task:

For this did the angel twice descend? for this
Ordned thy nurture holy, as of a plant;
Select and sacred . . .

Like Samson, with whom Milton of course identifies, Wordsworth has a mission – the writing of the prophetic and redemptive *Recluse* – and he too is failing to fulfil it, despite a childhood in which nurse and Nature had combined to create a 'nurture holy, as of a plant;|Select and sacred'. (*BV* 36-7)

6 *That flowed along*: to intertwine (*WIFT* 6).

7 *Derwent*: The River Derwent runs along a terrace at the foot of the garden of Wordsworth's father's house at Cockermouth.

8 'sweet birthplace': A quotation from Coleridge's *Frost at Midnight* of February 1798: 'already had I dreamt|Of my sweet birthplace' (ll. 32-3). Wordsworth, who had written *Tintern Abbey* in July as a companion-piece

- to *Frost at Midnight*, seems to have regarded *The Prelude* from the first as the 'Poem to Coleridge' (see Introduction).
- 14 *earnest*: foretaste, pledge.
- 16 *Beloved Derwent* . . . *streams*: Single-line replacement of *WIFT* 16-19.
- 18 *A naked boy among*: A new detail: 'Beneath thy scars and in' (*WIFT* 21).
- 19 *Made one long bathing of a summer's day*: A playful allusion to Mulciber's fall from Heaven in *Paradise Lost*: 'from morn[To noon he fell, from noon to dewy eve,|A summer's day' (I 742-4).
- 21 *coursed*: raced.
- 22-3 *and dashed the flowers* . . . *groundsel*: The boy's aggression is for Wordsworth part of a natural and happy childhood.
- 23 *groundsel*: ragwort (growing two to three feet high on waste ground, with large heads made up of many small yellow daisy-like flowers).
- 24 *distant Skiddaw's lofty height*: 'all the distant mountains' (*WIFT* 27); standing 3,000 feet above Keswick, Skiddaw is plainly visible nine miles away at Cockermouth.
- 27-49 Wordsworth has switched the order of his first two childhood episodes, the woodcock-snaring (*WIFT* 76-97) being placed before the bird's-nesting (*WIFT* 30-46).
- 29 *snapped*: nipped (*WIFT* 77).
- 34 *springs*: snares; cf. Polonius, 'Ay, springs to catch woodcocks' (*Hamlet* I iii 115) and Thomas Pennant's *Tour of Scotland* (1790) 32 (pointed out, Mary Moorman, *The Early Years* 33): 'Saw on the plain part of these hills numbers of springs for woodcocks, laid between tufts of heath, with avenues of small stones on each side, to direct these foolish birds into the snares, for they will not hop over the pebbles.' Pennant makes clear that the birds were sold at a considerable price, and sent by coach to London.
- 35 *Gentle powers*: spirits that preside over the child's education; see 68-8n., below.
- 42 *expectation*: 'hope and fear' (*WIFT* 90).
- 44 *toils*: labours (also, appropriately, 'trap' or 'snare').
- 50 *Nor less*: For this *WIFT* 30. Wordsworth's opening question is repeated four times in his original draft, only twice in 1799 and later *Prelude* versions.
- 55-8 *Though mean* . . . *raven's nest*: Ravens, largest members of the crow family, are a danger to lambs on Cumbrian hill-farms; Wordsworth's 'inglorious' intention ('view') was to claim a reward paid by the parish for destruction of a nest. To judge from *Wordsworth's Hawkshead* 211-15, he was probably roped, and let down the cliff-face by other boys from the Grammar School.
- 62 *Shouldering*: Against *WIFT* 42. Both wind and boy 'shoulder' the crag in 1799.
- 68-80 *I believe* . . . *More palpable*: The neo-classical spirit-world that Wordsworth invokes in 1799 Part I comes as a surprise after the single pervading life-force of *Tintern Abbey* and the Platonic world soul of *Was It For This*. In place of a committed pantheist sharing in the life of things, we have polytheism that carries no conviction. But guardian-spirits are common in the eighteenth century, from the sylphs of *The Rape of the Lock* to the Polar Spirit of *The Ancient Mariner*. They enable Wordsworth to express

- his sense of having been 'Fostered alike by beauty and by fear' (1805 I 306), without naming too solemnly the power that has singled him out.
- 76 *With me, though, rarely in my early days*: Last four words pencilled in in *MS V*, lacking in *MS U*. In transcribing *V* Dorothy places commas round 'though rarely' ('With me, though rarely, [in my early days] They communed'). But the phrasing is awkward, and the implication more so. It is hard to believe that Wordsworth intended to weaken the emphatic claim of l. 80 ('and of their school was I') by stating that gentle powers did indeed commune with him.
- 81-129 The boat-stealing episode follows *Was It For This* in *MS JJ*, and was probably written within a matter of days.
- 84 *its usual home 1805*: shows the episode to have taken place on Ullswater, when Wordsworth was travelling between his school at Hawkshead and his grandparents' home at Penrith. For Wordsworth's attempt to work up the experience c. 1788 (in the form of a simile about a shepherd rowing by moonlight), see Carol Landon, 'Sidelights on *The Prelude*', *Bicentenary Studies* 359-62.
- 89 *Just like a man . . . Though bent on speed*: Wordsworth uses a stilted iambic rhythm to evoke the movement of his boat as it heaves stroke by stroke through the water (recollecting as he does so *PL XII* 1-2, 'As one who . . . bates at noon, | Though bent on speed').
- 95-6 *one track . . . sparkling light*: Maxwell points to a link with the water-snakes of *The Ancient Mariner*, with their 'tracks of shining white' (l. 266).
- 100 *that same craggy ridge*: Probably Stybarrow Crag.
- 109 *instinct*: imbued; if the 'craggy ridge' of l. 100 is Stybarrow, the 'huge cliff' that emerges as the boy rows out from the shore is Black Crag.
- 124 *blank desertion*: As the avenging mountain-forms invade his mind, the boy is 'deserted' by visual reassurance, mental pictures of day-to-day existence.
- 130-41 *WIFT* 47-58.
- 135 *vulgar works of man*: common man-made objects.
- 143 *stinted*: grudged, partial.
- 150-85 Sent to Coleridge by Dorothy, 14-21 December 1798, as 'from a description of William's boyish pleasures'.
- 156-7 *All shod . . . ice*: As Maxwell points out, a reminiscence of Erasmus Darwin's *Botanic Garden* (1791) I iii 570, 'Hang o'er the sliding steel, and hiss along the ice'.
- 173 *shadow*: reflection (often, at this period, in colour).
- 182 *her diurnal round*: Cf. Lucy, 'Rolled round in earth's diurnal course | With rocks and stones and trees' (*A Slumber Did My Spirit Seal* 7-8). Both passages are related to Milton, *PL VII* 22, 'Within the visible diurnal sphere', and both written c. November 1798.
- 183 *train*: succession.
- 186-98 The central statement from *Was It For This* about the poet's education through nature, originally reading straight on from 'A grandeur in the beatings of the heart' (l. 141 above).
- 186-9 *Ye powers . . . standing pools*: A case in which Wordsworth's tutelary spirits derive, not from classical or neo-classical literature, but from Shakespeare: Prospero, *Tempest V* i 33, 'Ye elves of hills, brooks, standing lakes and groves'.

- 194 *Impressed*: stamped, printed; *characters*: marks, letters, signs.
- 198 *Work*: seethe; see Cowper, *Task* VI 737–8, ‘this tempestuous state of human things|Is merely as the workings of a sea’.
- 198–233 Wordsworth’s ‘home amusements’ section is inserted after Part I has been completed in draft, to make the point that his childhood had its more ordinary, gregarious, side.
- 210 *With crosses . . . o’er*: noughts and crosses (American tick-tack-toe); Wordsworth has in mind *PL* VIII 83, ‘With centric and eccentric scribbled o’er’, where man is being mocked for attempting to map the heavens.
- 215 *loo*: eighteenth-century card game; mentioned in *The Rape of the Lock*, which Wordsworth is imitating in this mock-heroic section, alongside Cowper’s *Task* (also dependent on Pope, but distinct in its satirical voice).
- 225–7 *Meanwhile abroad . . . keen and silent tooth*: Based on Cowper’s *Winter Evening* – ‘how the frost|Raging abroad, and the rough wind, endear|The silence and the warmth enjoyed within’ (*Task* IV 308–10) – but with more obvious reference to Amiens’ song in *As You Like It* II vii: ‘Blow, blow, thou winter wind . . . thy tooth is not so keen|As man’s ingratitude.’
- 232 *yellings*: Used at this period of noises made by animals (and objects) as well as human beings.
- 233 *Bothnic main*: the northern Baltic.
- 236 *milk-white clusters*: hazel-nuts; a reference to *Nutting*, published as a separate poem in *Lyrical Ballads* 1800, but according to Wordsworth first written for *The Prelude*.
- 258–374 The ‘spots of time’ sequence, written c. January 1799, is here seen in its original form and original position. In later *Prelude* texts it is elaborated and dispersed, 1799 I 258–79 becoming 1805 V 450–81, and I 288–374 being revised to form 1805 XI 257–388. The link-passage I 279–87 belongs only to 1799.
- 258–9 *Ere I . . . Eight summers*: Though Wordsworth claims to have been seven, he had in fact been sent to Hawkshead Grammar School in May 1779 aged nine.
- 267–70 *I saw . . . bathing*: Records show that Joseph Jackson, schoolmaster of Sawrey at the far end of Esthwaite Water; was drowned while bathing on 18 June 1779. So much, at least, is fact.
- 279–82 *I might . . . disasters Othello*: I iii 134–5, ‘Wherein I spoke of most disastrous chances|Of moving accidents by flood and field’.
- 287 *archetypes* originals (the permanent forms of nature). Distresses and disasters of the past have stamped on the memory visual images of the countryside where they occurred. These attain within the mind an emotional permanence comparable to that of the natural forms themselves.
- 290 *fructifying virtue*: the power (Latin *virtus*) to make fruitful, creative.
- 290–4 *whence, depressed . . . invisibly repaired*: Six months after the writing of *Tintern Abbey* (July 1798) Wordsworth, it appears, is still subject to ‘the heavy and the weary weight|Of all this unintelligible world’ (*TA* 40–1). The burden now is lightened, however, not by a pantheist seeing ‘into the life of things’, but by a secular imaginative process, in which the mind – always the agent of its own recovery – is entirely self-nourished, and self-restored.

- 301-3 *I mounted; and we rode . . . guide*: Lines that catch the five-year-old's sense of pleasure and importance. 'Honest James', fellow horseman in the child's fantasy, was his grandparents' servant at Penrith.
- 308 *a bottom . . . hung|In irons*: If we assume that the child did stumble on the site of a gibbet, the valley-bottom was Cowdrake Quarry east of Penrith, where Thomas Nicholson had been hanged in 1767 for murdering a local butcher. *The Prelude* is not a record of fact, however; Nicholson's gibbet was still standing (and tenanted) in 1775, and the five-year-old would not have ridden that far. Wordsworth is creating a composite experience, and has chiefly in mind the rotted seventeenth-century gibbet of Thomas Lancaster (who was 'the murderer of his wife') in the meadows at Hawkshead, which we know was an object of terror for him during his schooldays.
- 312-13 *Only a long green ridge . . . grave*: Wordsworth's language is delicately ambiguous, 'remained' implying that this was the place of execution, whereas 'like a grave' draws attention to the unreliability of the evidence — there are many such long green ridges on the moor. The child knows that a murderer has been hanged in the vicinity; we enter his terrified imagination as he stumbles upon what seems to him the spot.
- 316 *The beacon . . . summit*: the tall conical stone signal-beacon, built on the hill above Penrith after the Jacobite risings of 1715 and 1719 to give warning of future Scottish invasions. Fires lit on the upper platform were visible twenty miles to the south.
- 317 *A girl who bore a pitcher on her head*: a cottage-woman fetching water from a stream in the valley — at the time (as Wordsworth says) 'an ordinary sight'.
- 322 *visionary dreariness*: desolation so extreme as to have a spiritual quality; readers would recollect 'The dismal situation waste and wild' of Milton's hell, where there was 'No light, but rather darkness visible' (*PL* I 60, 63).
- 324-6 *the naked pool, The beacon . . . The woman*: 'I have been struck with the important truth', De Quincey (who had read the 1805 *Prelude* in MS) writes in *Suspiria De Profundis*,
- that far more of our deepest thoughts and feelings pass to us through perplexed combinations of concrete objects; pass to us as *involute*s (if I may coin that word) in compound experiences incapable of being disentangled, than ever reach us directly and in their own abstract shapes. (Ward 130)
- Note also the pattern of 'involute's (concrete objects with which the emotions have become involved, or associated, and which thus recall the original feelings) in ll. 341-5, 363-4 below.
- 329 *a kindred power*: the 'fructifying virtue' of l. 290 above.
- 331 *The day before the holidays began*: Probably 19 December 1783; the poet was thirteen.
- 335 *My brothers and myself*: Two of Wordsworth's three brothers were also at Hawkshead Grammar School in 1783: Richard (later a pernicky lawyer), aged fifteen, and John (later the sea-captain), aged just ten. Christopher (later Master of Trinity, Cambridge) joined them in 1785.
- 335-40 *There was a crag . . . choice uncertain*: Wordsworth is waiting above Hawkshead, and to the north. The horses, sent by his father in Cockermouth,

have to go round the central mountains of the Lake District, and may either have come south along the coast, cutting across to Hawkshead via Hardnott and Wrynose Passes, or gone east to Keswick and south via Grasmere and Ambleside.

- 346 *Those two companions*: Note the touch of humour as Wordsworth draws attention to the non-human 'involutes' (324-6n. above) with which he formed a relationship as he waited. The hawthorn is present in the *Vale of Esthwaite* account (quoted 353-5n.), the 'single sheep' is a narrowing down of the 'poor flocks . . . sad-drooping', and the 'naked wall' replaces 'yon naked rock'.
- 351 *A dweller in my father's house*: A phrase notable for its biblical ring and for its impersonality. Wordsworth had been born in the house, and spent his childhood there, but the reference hardly makes it sound like home.
- 352 *orphans then*: The poet's mother had died in March 1778, just before his eighth birthday. His father died on 30 December 1783.
- 353-5 *The event . . . appeared* | *A chastisement*: The child feels that he is being punished for looking forward too eagerly to the Christmas holidays – in effect, that he has killed his father. An interesting gloss is put on the child's remorse by a version of the episode written for *The Vale of Esthwaite*, 1786-7, while Wordsworth was still at Hawkshead Grammar School:

No spot but claims the tender tear,
By joy or grief to memory dear:
One evening when the wintry blast
Through the sharp hawthorn whistling passed
And the poor flocks, all pinched with cold,
Sad-drooping sought the mountain-fold,
Long, long upon yon naked rock
Alone I bore the bitter shock –
Long, long my swimming eyes did roam
For little horse to bear me home,
To bear me (what avails the tear?)
To sorrow o'er a father's bier.
Flow on! In vain thou hast not flowed,
But eased me of a heavy load;
For much it gives my heart relief
To pay the mighty debt of grief.
With sighs repeated o'er and o'er
I mourn because I mourned no more! (Oxford I 279-80)

NB The 'bitter shock' of l. 8 is a reference to the weather, not (as some have supposed) the child's bereavement.

- 358-60 *With trite reflections . . . corrected my desires*: Wordsworth's emphasis on 'trite reflections' ('Put not your trust in the things of this world', and the like) tells us how to read God's 'correction' of the boy's desires. Cowper remarks, *Task* V 875-6, on our practice of 'inventing to ourselves | Gods such as guilt makes welcome'.
- 367 *indisputable shapes*: As De Selincourt points out, an echo (probably unconscious) of Hamlet's response to the appearance of his dead father on the

battlements at Elsinore: 'Thou comest in such a questionable shape|That I will speak with thee' (I iv 43-4). See *BV* 63-5 (quoted 1805 XI 379-81n.) for discussion of underlying implication, here, and in the deliberate *Hamlet* allusion at *Intimations* 149-50: 'High instincts before which our mortal nature|Did tremble like a guilty thing surprised'. 'Indisputable' is stressed on the second and fourth syllables.

370 *fountain*: stream or well; cf. *Intimations* 153-5, where the 'first affections' and 'shadowy recollections' of childhood,

be they what they may,
Are yet the fountain-light of all our day,
Are yet the master-light of all our seeing . . .

373-4 *unknown to me . . . are brought*: 'Spots of time' shape the adult mind through the powers of association, though it remains unconscious of their workings.

375-90 A cut-down form of *WIFT* 98-123, Wordsworth's earliest discussion of the origins of adult consciousness. It is significant that having (at different stages) inserted the boat-stealing and skating episodes, the 'home amusements' section and the 'spots of time' sequence, he should be returning to the structure of his original draft. Though he is now unwilling to invoke an 'eternal spirit' who is 'the soul|Of our first sympathies' (ll. 108-90), *Was It For This* continues to determine the pattern of his thinking.

375 *sedulous*: anxious; Milton, *PL* IX 27-9, 'Not sedulous by nature to indite|Wars, hitherto the only argument|Heroic deemed'.

376 *collateral*: indirect, sideways, peripheral.

377 *extrinsic passion*: feelings unrelated to the natural scenes that were to have a permanent effect on the poet's mind.

383 *hallowed and pure motions of the sense*: Wordsworth (as Maxwell was first to point out) seems to be 'recalling, and reversing' the implications of *Measure for Measure* I iv 59, 'The wanton stings and motions of the sense'.

385 *intellectual*: spiritual; as in Shelley's Platonist *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty*.

391-412 *WIFT* 124-45.

395 *the eternal beauty*: A Platonist concept, surviving from *Was It For This*, and suggesting the underlying continuity of Wordsworth's thinking. Often it seems in revision that he has decided to be less outspoken, but only the terminology has changed.

396 *organic*: sensuous.

405-6 *linking . . . associated forms*: enjoying the view in and for itself, not by association with earlier experience or with landscape painting.

413 *vulgar*: ordinary, unremarkable.

430-1 *in their substantial . . . brain*: The process of storing up visual images had been described in similarly physical terms at *Pedlar* 32-4: 'on his mind|They lay like substances, and almost seemed|To haunt the bodily sense'.

433 *the impressive agency of fear*: the power of fear to stamp 'impressions' on the memory.

441 *invisible links*: links of association within the mind. As at *WIFT* 59-75, Wordsworth is thinking in terms that go back, via Coleridge, to Hartley's *Observations on Man*. Coleridge regarded Hartley as providing the theologi-

- cal basis of Unitarianism, Wordsworth valued him for his account of the workings of the mind.
- 442 *affections*: emotions.
- 445-6 *ere the birth . . . snows*: attributing 'flowers' of memory to a period for which in truth the memory is blank; cf. 1850 I 615-16.
- 447-8 *my friend's so prompt|In sympathy*: The first clear indication that *The Prelude* is being addressed to Coleridge.
- 449 *With fond and feeble tongue a tedious tale*: A touch of humour that Coleridge would appreciate.
- 451 *Reproaches from my former years*: Wordsworth's thoughts go back to the mood of self-reproach in which Part I (and *Was It For This*) had opened. Both the happiness and the imaginative power experienced in his 'former years' convict him of the failure to make use of his talent.
- 453 *honourable toil*: Wordsworth at this stage (February 1799) expected to go straight ahead with *The Recluse*, rather than extending his autobiography.
- 461 *visionary things*: things seen in the imagination, with the inward eye.

Second Part

- I *Thus far, my friend*: Wordsworth, having completed a version of Part I by the time he and Dorothy left Goslar on 23 February 1799, begins work on Part II c. September, finishing it before the move to Dove Cottage, Grasmere, in mid-December. *MS 18A* preserves an attempt on Part II made in the spring that shows the extent to which Wordsworth depended on Coleridge's approval of his work:

Friend of my heart and genius, I had reached
 A small green island which I was well pleased
 To pass not lightly by, for though I felt
 Strength unabated, yet I seemed to need
 Thy cheering voice or ere I could pursue
 My voyage, resting else for ever there.

- 5 *nourishment that came unsought*: Wordsworth's theme in Part I has been the child's unconscious response to the workings of nature upon his imagination. Part II will show how nature in adolescence comes to be 'sought|For her own sake'.
- 6-7 *From week . . . tumult*: The phase of childhood summed up in *TA* 74-5 as 'The coarser pleasures of my boyish days,|And their glad animal movements'.
- 16 *a beating mind*: A transferred epithet (it is the heart that beats, not the mind), characteristic of Wordsworth, but deriving in this instance from Shakespeare: Prospero, 'a turn or two I'll walk|To still my beating mind' (*Tempest* IV i 162-3).
- 18 *And needs*: Read: 'and yet needs'. *monitory voice*: warning, admonishment. Memories of the spontaneous joys of youth show how paltry are the achievements of adulthood.
- 26 *my corporeal frame*: body; 'this corporeal frame', *TA* 44.

- 28 *self-presence*: actuality, immediacy (associated with the continuing imaginative 'presence' of the poet's former 'self').
- 33 *our small market-village*: Hawkshead.
- 37 *smart assembly-room*: Hawkshead Town Hall, built in 1790, and covered with gravel stucco ('rough-cast') and white-wash. For Wordsworth's consistent dislike of the obtrusiveness of white buildings, see *Guide to the Lakes*.
- 44 *huckster*: stall-keeper.
- 50 *collaterally attached*: taken into account for the additional pleasure they could give to the boys' activities.
- 52 *less grateful else*: otherwise less enjoyable.
- 55 *plain of Windermere*: level surface of the lake.
- 56 *bourne*: destination; cf. *Hamlet* III i 79-80, 'That undiscovered country, from whose bourne|No traveller returns'.
- 58-60 *a sister isle . . . lilies-of-the-valley*: Naming the islands that form the 'archipelago' of Windermere, West notes, 'Grass Holm is at present shaded with a grove of oaks. And two smaller islets borrow their names from the lilies-of-the-valley which decorate them' (*Guide* 56-7). *umbrageous covert*: shady canopy.
- 61-3 *a third small island . . . hermit's history*: 'Lady Holm, where in ancient times stood an oratory, is an isle of an oval form, vested with coppice wood' (West, *Guide* 56). 1850 replaces the Gothic details of the 'old stone table', 'mouldered cave' and contemplative hermit (cf. *Tintern Abbey*), with an accurate reference to 'ruins of a shrine|Once to Our Lady dedicate'. It may be that Wordsworth deliberately conflated Lady Holm with St Herbert's Isle on Derwentwater, which does preserve 'A hermit's history'.
- 78 *delicate viands*: food designed to tempt the palate.
- 81 *Sabine fare*: Cf. Dryden, *Georgics* II 777, 'frugal Sabines'; Wordsworth may also be thinking of the frugality of Horace on his Sabine farm.
- 82-6 *little weekly stipend . . . profusely filled*: Wordsworth's pocket-money was sixpence a week in his final year at school, but augmented in January 1787, after the half-yearly holiday, by an extra guinea (worth 42 'weekly stipends').
- 90 *board*: table, stall.
- 95-7 *that provoked . . . corporeal appetite*: Food increased the boys' pleasure in landscape; pompous lines that were cut in 1805.
- 108-9 *the antique walls|Of a large abbey*: Furness Abbey, built by Cistercian monks in 1127 near Barrow-in-Furness (twenty miles from Hawkshead) was 'dissolved' in 1537 under Henry VIII. Its roof-timbers, stripped of their valuable lead, had long since fallen by Wordsworth's day.
- 120 *the cross-legged knight*: 'In the middle space, where the first barons of Kendal are interred, lies the procumbent figure of a man in armour, cross-legged' (West, *Guide* 39). The knight is now in the Abbey museum.
- 121-30 *that single wren . . . such music*:

Like Keats in *Bright Star*, Wordsworth is using the background presence of Shakespeare to enhance a moment of border vision. The famous metaphor of Sonnet 73 - 'Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang' - is made actual, just as in *The Ruined Cottage* the broken pitcher of *Ecclesiastes* becomes the 'useless fragment of a wooden bowl'. But though the choirs become the nave of a

- palpable abbey, the bird remains invisible, intangible, its sourceless song conveying the presence of the sublime. (*BV*:119)
- 134 *that still spirit of the evening air*: After the direct address to the rocks and streams, it would have been natural to write 'thou, still spirit'. Wordsworth, it seems, wishes to achieve his numinous effect without invoking the spirit-world of Part I.
- 136 *breathed*: rested the horses – gave them a 'breather'.
- 139 *the level sand*: Levens Sands, south of Barrow, which would take the riders back to Hawkshead via Greenodd.
- 140–78 The one section of Part II to be omitted in 1805; a cut-down version of the Coniston episode is restored in 1850, as VIII 458–75.
- 145 *An old hall*: Coniston Hall, with steep Elizabethan 'gavel ends' (gables).
- 150 *piazza*: colonnade.
- 153 *chafing-dish*: portable charcoal-stove, used in this case to cook trout or char from the lake.
- 160 *Himself unseen*: Setting unseen behind the western fells, the sun casts a glow to the east. Wordsworth makes his point by a subdued quotation from *Hamlet*: 'But look the morn, in russet mantle clad|Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastward hill' (I i 166–7).
- 166–74 Lines drawn appropriately from Wordsworth's schoolboy *Vale of Esthwaite*, which, after their appearance in 1799 (but not in 1805), are revised to form *Dear Native Regions* (*Poems* 1815).
- 181 *an inn*: the White Lion, Bowness (now gone).
- 184 *liveries*: uniformed servants.
- 185 *the blood-red wine*: A phrase used to sinister effect in the *Ballad of Sir Patrick Spens*.
- 186 *or ere*: before. *the Hall*: On Belle Isle, completed early 1780s.
- 208 *The minstrel of our troop*: Identified by Wordsworth as Robert Greenwood, afterwards (like the poet's brother, Christopher) a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge. Ann Tyson, Wordsworth's landlady, remembered him simply as 't'lad wi't flute'.
- 229–30 *To patriotic and domestic love*|*Analogous*: A very Wordsworthian way of thinking: the moon is valued not for itself (or for its literary associations), but in the deep-down way in which country and family are valued. Compare the patriotic sonnets of 1802–3, heart-felt because they are about the protection of a way of life.
- 236 *huts*: cottages (built of local slate).
- 240 *intervenient*: experienced in the midst of other concerns.
- 251 *that false secondary power*: analytic reason, the tendency to categorize – at the expense of an imaginative perception of wholeness.
- 255–6 *To thee . . . The unity of all has been revealed*: Coleridge, as a Unitarian, believed in a single God 'who from eternity doth teach|Himself in all, and all things in himself' (*FM* 66–7). The envy in Wordsworth's tones is a reminder that his own faith had no such clear doctrinal basis. Always drawn to the One Life, he seldom commits himself to it (as in *The Pedlar* and *Tintern Abbey*, spring–summer 1798) except when Coleridge is near.
- 258–9 *to class the cabinet*|*Of their sensations*: to classify as in a show-case; a rare instance in which Wordsworth's language can be related in detail to a philosophical text. His metaphor of the mind as stocked like a museum

collection is drawn from chapter 2 of Locke's *Essay on Human Understanding*: 'The senses at first let in particular ideas, and furnish the yet empty cabinet'.

262 *Hard task to analyse a soul*: Raphael in *Paradise Lost* refers to narrating the war in Heaven as 'Sad task and hard' (V 564). Tacitly Wordsworth is claiming for his own task an importance comparable to Milton's.

269 *The progress of our being*: In his quest for origins, Milton had charted human progress from the Garden of Eden; Wordsworth will trace it from the relationship of mother to infant in the world of everyday experience.

271-2 *when his soul: . . . earthly soul*: when his pre-existent soul becomes conscious of its new earthly condition (rather than my timid Norton reading, 'when his soul forms an evident relation with the soul of another human-being'). Though we tend to associate it with Wordsworth's *Intimations* of 1804, the concept of pre-existence is found in Coleridge as early as his sonnet on the birth of Hartley, September 1796: 'and some have said|We lived ere yet this robe of flesh we wore' (ll. 5-6).

275 *Like an awakening breeze*: A draft in *MS RV* had gone still further: 'This passion is the awakening breeze of life' (Parrish 188-9). Behind this life-giving human relationship of mother and child is the 'eternal spirit' of *Was It For This*:

oh bounteous power,
In childhood, in rememberable days,
How often did thy love renew for me
Those naked feelings which when thou wouldst form
A living thing thou sendest like a breeze
Into its infant being. (ll. 109-14)

284 *Tenacious of the forms*: The child learns from the first by storing up 'forms' and associations of the external world; cf. the 'forms of beauty' that are carried away by the adult poet of *Tintern Abbey* 23ff., enabling him later, 'mid the din|Of towns and cities', to 'see into the life of things'.

286 *apprehensive*: suited to learning. *habitude*: relationship - not elsewhere used by Wordsworth, but known to him through Coleridge's section of Southey's *Joan of Arc* (1795), 'holiest habitude|Of constant faith' (II 15-16).

288-90 *there exists . . . sense*: As F. R. Leavis long ago pointed out (*Revaluation*, London, 1936, 160) there is a clear link with *TA* 101-2: 'A motion and a spirit, that impels|All thinking things, all objects of all thought'. In effect the mother's 'beloved presence' has replaced the divine 'presence' of *TA* 95.

293-4 *The gravitation and the filial bond . . . world*: As in *Was It For This*, Wordsworth is concerned with 'those first-born affinities which fit|Our new existence to existing things' (ll. 120-1), but it is by virtue of his bond with the mother that the child is a part of nature (subject to the gravitational pull of the earth).

302 *the one great mind*: God.

303 *creator and receiver both*: In terms of *Biographia Literaria* chapter 13, the child is capable of the god-like highest powers - at once creative and perceptive - of the primary imagination. Though his major definitions were yet to come, Coleridge (on whom Wordsworth's formulation certainly

depends) had been thinking of the human imagination as imitating God's creativity at least since the Slave Trade lecture of 1795.

304-5 *Working but in alliance . . . beholds*: A retreat from the position in *Tintern Abbey*, where the transcendental 'presence' had dwelt equally in the mind and the blue sky, 'impelling' both. The child is now distinct from the natural world with which he forms an imaginative alliance.

315-16 *this infant sensibility . . . our being*: Portrayed at first as the child at the breast, the infant babe has moved into a symbolic realm, 'powerful' in an array of emotions that he could not possibly have experienced. Wordsworth, however, refuses to think of him as unordinary: his sensibility is the birthright of our being.

320 *chamois*: agile mountain antelope, probably seen by Wordsworth in the Alps.

321 *a trouble came into my mind*: The phase of late adolescence recorded in *Pedlar* 187-9: 'he was o'erpowered|By nature, and his spirit was on fire|With restless thoughts'.

324 *The props of my affections*: Boyish sports which had 'collaterally' supported the growing love of nature.

328 *influxes*: influences.

338-42 *every season . . . else unknown*: Short-lived relationships that each new season offers (with spring flowers, or summer fulness, or falling leaves, or frost) are now, through the power of love, permanently recorded in the mind.

344 *'best society'*: It is Adam who, rather surprisingly, comments in Eden, 'For solitude sometimes is best society' (*PL IX* 249).

347 *gentle agitations*: Not dependent on 'By' in the previous line, but the last item in the list that follows 'Hence' in l. 343.

351-71 *For I would walk . . . pursue*: Written originally in February 1798 to describe the *Pedlar*; adapted for *The Prelude* in autumn 1799 by the simple turning of 'he' to 'I'.

358 *ghostly*: A range of meanings seems to be appropriate, from 'sacred' to 'otherworldly' to 'insubstantial'.

366 *obscure*: Stressed on the first syllable; cf. *PL II* 132, 'with obscure wing'. Wordsworth is Burkean in his association of obscurity with the sublime; see *Sublime and Beautiful* Part II, section iv, 'A clear idea is another name for a little idea'.

377-8 *a superadded soul,|A virtue not its own*: Penetrating to the 'latent qualities|And essences of things' (seeing perhaps into their life), the adolescent Wordsworth is moved by a power that we probably associate with his own creativity (see ll. 411-25 below), but which he feels as an external preternatural force.

379 *the hours of school*: From 6 or 6.30 a.m. in the summer.

380 *our little lake*: Esthwaite Water.

382-3 *a friend . . . loved*: John Fleming, of whom Wordsworth had written in *The Vale of Esthwaite*, 'Friendship and Fleming are the same'.

391-2 *I sat . . . jutting eminence*: Thomson, *Seasons II* 1042, 'Sad on the jutting eminence he sits'.

401 *prospect*: landscape.

411 *plastic*: shaping, creative; another Coleridgean word, cf. *Eolian Harp* 46-8:

as o'er them sweeps
 Plastic and vast, one intellectual breeze,
 At once the soul of each and God of all.

414-17 *A local spirit . . . communed*: The spirit (broadly to be equated with imagination) is 'local' in the sense that it reflects Wordsworth's individuality, refusing to subscribe to 'general tendency' (the norms of human behaviour). Mostly, however, it is willing to take second place to 'external things' (the forms of nature with which the mind interacts).

417 *auxiliar*: enhancing.

424-5 *Hence my obeisance . . . transport*: Wordsworth paradoxically gives his 'obeisance' (allegiance) to nature, and experiences 'transport' (rapture – again the sensation of being 'carried away'), because his imagination is able to dominate her, enhance the effect of her workings upon the mind.

426 *still*: always.

428 *analytic industry*: rational thinking.

432 *interminable building*: vast structure (within the mind).

437-41 *or, from excess . . . own enjoyments*: Wordsworth is thinking of important lines in the 1798 text of *Frost at Midnight*, not retained in later versions:

the living spirit in our frame,
 That loves not to behold a lifeless thing,
 Transfuses into all its own delights
 Its own volition . . . (ll. 21-4)

446-64 *Pedlar*: 204-22, adapted for *The Prelude* autumn 1799, and incorporating (in the first person) Wordsworth's central pantheist statement of belief from February 1798: 'In all things|He saw one life, and felt that it was joy.' Faith in the One Life is attributed to the past (the poet's 'seventeenth year'), yet by implication has lasted till the present day (see ll. 465ff. below).

463 *grosser prelude of that strain*: sensual enjoyment that prefaces the higher pleasures of response to the One Life.

465 *If this be error*: A sudden concession that reproduces the pattern of *TA* 50ff.: 'If this|Be but a vain belief . . .' And cf. Shakespeare, Sonnet 116 ('Let me not to the marriage of true minds|Admit impediments . . .'): 'If this be error and upon me proved,|I never writ, nor no man ever loved.'

478-87 *if in these times . . . dismay*: Wordsworth is drawing on a letter from Coleridge of September 1799 urging him to incorporate in *The Recluse* an address to

those, who, in consequence of the complete failure of the French Revolution, have thrown up all hopes of the amelioration of mankind, and are sinking into an almost epicurean selfishness, disguising the same under the soft titles of domestic attachment and contempt for visionary *philosophes*.

479 *waste*: desert.

481-2 *when good men|On every side fall off*: Best known among those who renounced their radical views at this time was James Mackintosh, author of *Vindiciae Gallicae* (1791), a point-by-point reply to Burke's hostile *Reflections on the French Revolution*.

- 489 *more than Roman confidence*: Maxwell instances the Roman general, Varro, commended after his defeat by Hannibal at Cannae (216 BC) for not despairing of the Republic.
- 496-7 *Thou, my friend . . . other scenes*: Addressing his infant son, Hartley, Coleridge had written in *Frost at Midnight*, 'thou shalt learn far other lore,|And in far other scenes! For I was reared|In the great city' (ll. 50-2). This time there are no inverted commas, but Wordsworth has consciously rounded off the 1799 *Prelude* by quoting in conclusion the poem quoted at the outset ('my "sweet birthplace"', l. 8).
- 501-5 *The insinuated scoff . . . love*: Cf. 'the sneers of selfish men' and 'greetings where no kindness is' (*TA* 130-1).
- 509-14 *Fare thee well . . . mankind*: A signing-off of the poem, but also a parting. While Wordsworth and Dorothy were about to move into Dove Cottage, Grasmere, Coleridge in November 1799, when these lines were written, had decided to go back to his career as a journalist with the *Morning Post* in London.

THE PRELUDES OF 1805 AND 1850

Line numbers in bold type refer to the 1850-text.

Book First

- 1-54 Commonly referred to as the Glad Preamble (see Wordsworth's backward glance, VII 1-4), ll. 1-54 seem to have been composed on 18-19 November 1799 and inserted in *The Prelude* c. late January 1804. They are the record of a mood of exuberance and optimism as Wordsworth walked from Ullswater to Grasmere to arrange the renting of Dove Cottage, where he and Dorothy would live until 1808. Among literal-minded scholars the poet's metaphor of leaving behind him a city caused confusion that was not resolved until 1970; see John Alban Finch, 'Wordsworth's Two-Handed Engine', *Bicentenary Studies* 1-13.
- 1-4 *there is blessing . . . gives*: Cf. *To My Sister* 5-8, 'There is a blessing in the air,|Which seems a sense of joy to yield . . .' and Cowper, *Task* I 155-6, 'we have borne|The ruffling wind, scarce conscious that it blew'.
- 2,3,5 *it . . . it . . . its*: A clear case of the poet's executors ignoring his intentions. The printer's copy, *MS. E*, reads 'he . . . he . . . his', making clear his intention to personalize the breeze.
- 6-7 *a house|Of bondage*: The poet's sense of release is expressed in a quotation from *Exodus* 13.3: 'And Moses said unto the people; Remember this day in which ye came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage.'
- 8 *immured*: walled up; Wordsworth's backward reference at VIII 347-53 suggests that his metaphor of the city is a compound of London and the walled city of Goslar, in Saxony, where 1799 Part I was written. For the state of mind represented by the poet's city metaphors, see Lucy Newlyn, 'In City Pent', *RES*, November 1981, 408-28.
- 9 *at large*: Cowper, *Task* III 18-19, 'I feel myself at large,|Courageous, and refreshed for future toil.'

- 15 *The earth is all before me*: An allusion to the beautiful last lines of *Paradise Lost*, as Adam and Eve – never before so human – are driven out of Eden:
- Some natural tears they dropped, but wiped them soon;
The world was all before them, where to choose
Their place of rest, and Providence their guide.
They hand in hand, with wandering steps and slow,
Through Eden took their solitary way.
- Wordsworth's poem starts where Milton's leaves off. He too is beginning a new life, but does so joyously and voluntarily.
- 17-18 *should the guide I choose . . . cloud*: Adam and Eve had been allocated Providence as their guide; Wordsworth is free to choose, and chooses nature – at her least solemn (here, 'a wandering cloud', at ll. 31-2, 'a twig, or any floating thing|Upon the river').
- 20 *Trances . . . mind*: An important self-borrowing, see 41-7n. below, and Parrish 116-17.
- 23-4 *That burden . . . weary day*: Reworking of *Tintern Abbey* 39-41: 'the burden of the mystery . . . the heavy and the weary weight|Of all this unintelligible world'.
- 31-45 Wordsworth's revisions to 1805 I 33-54 are characteristic of many throughout the poem that establish the voice of 1850: weaker in rhythm, often more formal in diction, tending to smooth away eccentricity, and to sacrifice power, in the name of exactitude.
- 41-7 *For I, methought . . . creation*: Drawn, together with l. 20 above, from inspired jottings in *MS Jf*, October 1798 (Parrish 116-17). For larger implications, see Introduction; for literary associations of the wind, see M. H. Abrams, 'The Correspondent Breeze' 5-43.
- 46 *redundant*: overflowing, exuberant.
- 52 *proress in an honourable field*: Especially the writing of *The Recluse*; see Introduction.
- 55-271 Written c. late January 1804 to form a link between the exuberant Preamble and the muted, self-reproachful opening of 1799 ('Was it for this . . .'), incorporated at l. 271.
- 55 *friend*: Coleridge, to whom all versions of *The Prelude* are addressed.
- 57 *measured strains*: verse.
- 60-1 *poetic numbers came|Spontaneously*: A claim nowhere else made by Wordsworth. Though twice offering spontaneity as an ideal in the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* 1800, he had been careful to stress that poetry was created at a secondary stage – not during the original moment of emotion, but during an imaginative re-experiencing of that moment.
- 74 *'Twas autumn, and a calm and placid day*: A variant of the opening line of *The Ruined Cottage*: 'Twas summer and the sun was mounted high'.
- 83 *the very house*: Dove Cottage, in the 'one sweet yale' of Grasmere.
- 85-7 *some work|Of glory . . . performed*: Wordsworth did, as he intended, make a start on his 'work of glory' soon after arriving at Dove Cottage. *Home at Grasmere*, however, written largely in March 1800, and described in *MS B* (1806) as Book I of *The Recluse*, failed to develop as he had hoped. *The Prelude* and *The Excursion* would be completed, as subordinate parts of the

- larger scheme; but the philosophical centrepiece that was to carry the poet's redemptive message would never be written.
- 88 *genial*: pleasant, warm, sympathetic.
- 90 *that balanced me*: kept me in touch with reality.
- 88-9 *cloud/Of city smoke*: Wordsworth's adding of detail to his phantom city should be seen not as proof that it existed, but as 'unwillingness to submit the poetic spirit to the chains of fact and real circumstance' (Fenwick Note to *An Evening Walk*).
- 104 *Eolian visitations*: moments of poetic inspiration; the eolian harp, played on by the wind (and named after Aeolus, Greek god of winds), is a favourite romantic image for inspiration; see Coleridge, *Eolian Harp* (1795), *Dejection: An Ode* (1802); Shelley, *Ode to the West Wind* (1819), etc.
- 105 *defrauded*: betrayed (by the lack of a creative breeze).
- 102-3 *shed/Mild influence*: 'the Pleiades . . . shedding sweet influence' (*PL VII* 374-5).
- 112 *sabbath*: day of rest, thus 'peacefulness'.
- 106 *three days*: An unexplained late correction of 1805 'two days'; the distance covered, from the foot of Ullswater over the Kirkstone Pass to Grasmere, was approximately 21 miles.
- 115 *my hermitage*: Appropriate to Wordsworth as the recluse, dedicating himself to 'The holy life of music and of verse'.
- 121 *self-congratulation*: pleasure in his good fortune; used (as was 'complacency' at the time) without the modern implication of smugness.
- 124-7 *some determined aim . . . interference*: Conscious of following in Milton's footsteps, Wordsworth portrays himself as searching for suitable themes for an epic, modern or from antiquity. There is no reason to believe he actually did so (see Jonathan Wordsworth, 'That Wordsworth Epic', *WC*, winter 1980, 34-5). Not till l. 228 does the poet mention his true ambition, to write a philosophical centrepiece for *The Recluse*.
- 130 *phantoms of conceit*: images, mental conceptions, that are to be embodied in narrative (given 'a frame of outward life'). 1850 'airy phantasies' confirms that Wordsworth is thinking of Shakespeare's great lines on poetic creativity, *Midsummer Night's Dream V.i* 14-17:

as imagination bodies forth

The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen

Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing

A local habitation and a name.

- 132-3 *to such beings temperately . . . heart*: Wordsworth had hoped, with due moderation ('temperately'), to confer his own oppressive feelings upon 'beings' created by the imagination.
- 143-4 *gifts/Of humbler industry*: shorter poems, that would be easier to write, and more immediately rewarding.
- 151-2 *mother dove/Sits brooding*: 'Dove-like satst brooding' (*PL I* 21); Milton's reference is to the Holy Spirit brooding over Chaos, and making it fruitful.
- 153-4 *goadings on . . . groves*: Cf. the 'tempest' and 'redundant energy' of the Preamble (l. 46 above), and *Castle of Indolence Stanzas* 35-6, 'his own mind did, like a tempest strong,|Come to him thus, and drove the weary man along'.

- 165-6 *Nor am I naked . . . Forms, images*: More than other poets Wordsworth values the ability to carry 'external things' within the mind; cf. *Tintern Abbey* 24-5, 'These forms of beauty have not been to me | As is a landscape to a blind man's eye'.
- 169 *manners*: customs, observed ways of life.
- 178 *Proud spring-tide swellings*: 'tide' is effectively a pun: high tides of springtime are not (in Wordsworth's image) to be confused with a 'sea' of inspiration consistently at the full.
- 180 *Romantic tale . . . unsung*: Before writing *Paradise Lost* Milton had planned a national epic on King Arthur.
- 182 *the groves of chivalry*: Wordsworth turns from Milton to Spenser. As De Selincourt notes, the elaborations in 1850 (ll. 170-85) show a 'moral turn of thought' of which the poetry of 1805 had been 'quite innocent'.
- 185 *hallowing faithful loves*: Spenser in the first stanza of *The Faerie Queene* speaks of 'Fierce wars and faithful loves'.
- 186-8 *How vanquished Mithridates . . . became That Odin*: Gibbon, who associates, but does not identify, the two figures, comments significantly, 'This wonderful expedition of Odin . . . might supply the noble groundwork of an epic poem [but] cannot be received as authentic history' (*Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, 1776, I 246). Wordsworth would also know of Mithridates (d. 63 BC) in Plutarch's *Lives*, and had doubtless read Southey's *Race of Odin* (1795).
- 190 *Sertorius*: Roman general (c. 112-72 BC), the subject of one of Plutarch's *Lives* and an ally of Mithridates. Owen, *Annotating Wordsworth* 62-4, notes that Wordsworth's source for the story told in ll. 195-8 is probably George Glas, *History of the Discovery of the Canary Isles* (1764).
- 199 *like a pestilence*: Wordsworth's astonishing image of the 'soul | Of liberty' as a disease seems to have been suggested by an actual plague brought by the Europeans to the Canaries. According to Glas two-thirds of the 14,000 fighting men succumbed.
- 205 *that one Frenchman*: 'Dominique de Gourgès, a French gentleman who went in 1568 to Florida to avenge the massacre of the French by the Spaniards there' (note to first edition; drawn from Hakluyt's *Navigations*). Wordsworth's language - 'Went single in his ministry' (l. 208), 'Withering the oppressor' (l. 211) - conceals a story of bloodthirsty revenge that would not have made a very heroic poem.
- 211 *Gustavus*: Gustavus I of Sweden (1496-1560), who raised support among the miners of Dalecarlia and in 1521-3 freed the country from Danish rule.
- 213 *Wallace*: William Wallace (c. 1272-1305), Scottish general and patriot, captured and executed by Edward I; brought to Wordsworth's mind by the Highland walking tour of August 1803. 'Passed two of Wallace's caves', Dorothy records on the 21st, 'There is scarce a noted glen in Scotland that has not a cave for Wallace or some other hero.'
- 226-8 *beauteous fabric . . . unsubstantial*: From Prospero's 'Our revels now are ended . . .' *Tempest* IV i 148-63.
- 228-38 *Then, last wish . . . clearer insight*: Two months after evoking in these lines the 'awful burden' of writing a central section for *The Recluse* (*The Excursion* was planned by March 1804, and *The Prelude* was also to be part of the scheme), Wordsworth was writing desperately to Coleridge to ask

for instructions. Coleridge, who was thought to be dying, had promised a 'letter on *The Recluse*'. 'I cannot say', Wordsworth wrote on 29 March, 'what a load it would be to me should I survive you and you die without this memorial left behind.'

- 233-4 *immortal verse* . . . *Orphean lyre*: Orpheus was thought of as philosopher as well as poet-musician. Wordsworth is piecing together phrases from Milton: 'airs|Married to immortal verse', *L'Allegro* 136-7, 'Orphean lyre', *PL* III 17.
- 239-40 *a mockery* . . . *virtue*: so indecisive as to be capable neither of vice nor of virtue.
- 248 *Doth lock my functions up*: Pope, *Imitations of Horace* Epistle I i 39-40, 'So slow the unprofitable moments roll,|That lock up all the functions of my soul' (note the use of 'unprofitably' in l. 269; Wordsworth knew Pope extremely well).
- 262 *interdict*: prohibition; pronounced 'interdite'.
- 265 *absolute accomplishment*: complete success, fulfilment.
- 270-1 *Like a false steward* . . . *renders nothing back*: In the capitalist parable, *Matthew* 25. 14-30, the steward is rebuked for burying, rather than investing, his 'talents' of silver. Making silent use of the pun (the modern word actually derives from the parable), Wordsworth convicts himself of failure to make use of God-given poetic talents. After more than five years he thus neatly provides an antecedent for 'this' in the questioning with which his work on *The Prelude* had originally begun.
- 271 *Was it for this*: Words with which both the first *Prelude* draft (*Was It For This*, above) and Part I of 1799 had opened. The remainder of Book I in 1805 (and 1850) is a version of Part I, revised in late January 1804, and without the 'spots of time' sequence (1799 I 258-374). For the repeated questioning of ll. 271-85, see 1799 I 1n.
- 275 *holms*: flat ground by the river.
- 278 '*sweet birthplace*': Drawn from Coleridge, *FM* 33; see 1799 I 8n.
- 284 *earnest*: foretaste, pledge.
- 284 *a shattered monument*: Cockermouth Castle.
- 296 *coursed*: raced.
- 298 *groundsel*: ragwort; see 1799 I 22-3n.
- 302 *Indian plains*: American Indian (as in *Complaint of the Forsaken Indian Woman*, 1798).
- 306 *Fostered* . . . *fear*: nurtured (in Burkean terms) by the sublime as well as the beautiful; cf. 1799 I 68-80.
- 308 *belovèd vale*: Esthwaite, site of Hawkshead Grammar School.
- 306-7 *Ere I had told|Ten birth-days*: The right date (Wordsworth was nine), as against 1805 (eight) and 1799 I 258-8 (seven).
- 317 *springs*: snares; as at *Hamlet* I iii 115, 'Ay, springs to catch woodcocks'. For an eighteenth-century account of woodcock-snaring on the fells, see 1799 I 34n.
- 327 *toils*: A double meaning: 'trap' and 'labours'.
- 326 *cultured*: under cultivation (as opposed to the hillsides, merely grazed by sheep).
- 339 *lodge*: nest.
- 342 *the raven's nest*: Ravens are a danger to lambs; the boy's 'inglorious' purpose was to claim the bounty paid by the parish to those who destroyed

- their nests. He was probably let down the rockface on a rope (note 1850's use of the plural: 'Moved we as plunderers', 'though mean|Our object').
- 345 *amain*: strongly.
- 340 *Dust as we are . . . grows*: A line of pious self-abasement first appearing in the base text of *MS D*, c. January 1832 (when the poet was 62).
- 352 *dark*: mysterious.
- 363 *nature*: A replacement, in January 1804; for the sub-classical spirit-world of 1799 I 68-81.
- 360-1 *Straight I-unloosed . . . shore*: A replacement for 1805 376-88, cut in 1832. Ll. 376-82 (introduced in 1805) are no great loss, but the cutting of ll. 383-8 (going back through 1799 to the early *JJ* drafts) weakens the lead-in to this great episode.
- 376 *Patterdale*: Ullswater.
- 388 *Though bent on speed*: 'As one who . . . bates at noon|Though bent on speed' (*PL XII* 1-2).
- 393-4 *one track . . . sparkling light*: Maxwell points to a Coleridge echo; 'tracks of shining white' (*AM* 266).
- 406 *a huge cliff*: Probably Black Crag, appearing behind Stybarrow Crag (the 'craggy steep') as the boy rows out from the shore.
- 407 *instinct*: imbued.
- 422 *blank desertion*: As the avenging mountain-forms invade his mind, the boy is 'deserted' by visual reassurance, mental pictures of day-to-day existence.
- 428-89 One of only five passages of *The Prelude* known to Wordsworth's contemporaries before his death in 1850. Printed by Coleridge in *The Friend*, 28 December 1809 (with the title *Growth of Genius from the Influences of Natural Objects on the Imagination in Boyhood and Early Youth*), and by Wordsworth himself in collections from 1815.
- 428-31 *Wisdom and spirit . . . motion*: In place of the polytheism of 1799 I 130-2, Wordsworth now offers a monotheistic but not specifically Christian conception, close to the immanent life-force of *Tintern Abbey* but with an emphasis on pervading wisdom. The change is largely one of presentation.
- 435 *vulgar works of man*: common man-made objects.
- 443 *stinted*: grudged, partial.
- 460-1 *All shod . . . ice*: As Maxwell points out, a reminiscence of Erasmus Darwin's *Botanic Garden* (1791) I iii 570, 'Hang o'er the sliding steel, and hiss along the ice'.
- 450 *reflex*: reflection; Wordsworth tried 'shadow' (1799), then 'image' (1805), before achieving what is surely the most satisfactory reading.
- 486 *her diurnal round*: Cf. Lucy, 'Rolled round in earth's diurnal course|With rocks and stones and trees' (*A Slumber Did My Spirit Seal* 7-8;) both passages are related to Milton *PL VII* 22, 'Within the visible diurnal sphere', and both are written c. November 1799.
- 487 *train*: succession.
- 497 *Impressed*: stamped, printed. *characters*: marks, letters, signs.
- 501 *Work like a sea*: seethe; see Cowper, *Task VI* 737-8, 'this tempestuous state of human things|Is merely as the workings of a sea'.
- 511 *milk-white clusters*: hazel-nuts; a reference to *Nutting*, published as a separate poem in *Lyrical Ballads* 1800, but at first written for *The Prelude*.
- 538 *With crosses . . . o'er*: noughts and crosses (American tick-tack-toe); Wordsworth has in mind a passage in *PL VIII* 83, 'With centric and eccentric

- scribbled o'er', where man is being mocked for attempting to map the heavens.
- 543 *loo*: eighteenth-century card game, mentioned by Pope, whose influence becomes more obvious in the successful 1805 elaboration of the mock-heroic in Wordsworth's home-amusements section.
- 549 *plebeian cards*: Cf. Pope, *Rape of the Lock* III 54, 'Gained but one trump and one plebeian card'.
- 562-4 *Meanwhile abroad . . . silent tooth*: Based on Cowper's *Winter Evening* - 'how the frost|Raging abroad, and the rough wind, endear|The silence and the warmth enjoyed within' (*Task* IV 308-10) - but with more pointed allusion to Amiens' song in *As You Like It* II vii:

Blow, blow, thou winter wind,
Thou art not so unkind
As man's ingratitude:
Thy tooth is not so keen . . .

- 569 *yellings*: Used of animal noises (and objects) at this period, as well as human beings.
- 570 *Bothnic Main*: the northern Baltic.
- 571 *sedulous*: anxious; Milton is 'Not sedulous by nature to indite|Wars, hitherto the only argument|Heroic deemed' (*PL* IX 27-9).
- 572 *extrinsic passion*: feelings unrelated to the natural scenes that were to have a permanent effect on the poet's mind.
- 578 *hallowed and pure motions of the sense*: In Maxwell's words, the poet seems to be 'recalling, and reversing' *Measure for Measure* I iv 59, 'The wanton stings and motions of the sense'.
- 580 *intellectual*: spiritual; as in Shelley's Platonist *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty*.
- 562-3 *with beauty|Old as creation*: Wordsworth's original phrase, 'With the eternal beauty', persisting from *Was It For This* through 1799 and 1805, has been modified in case its Platonism should seem unorthodox.
- 591 *organic*: sensuous.
- 609 *vulgar*: ordinary, unremarkable.
- 618-19 *ill-sorted unions . . . fairies*: The union of Titania and Bottom, for instance, in *Midsummer Night's Dream*.
- 628-9 *in their substantial lineaments . . . brain*: The process of storing up visual images is described in similarly physical terms at *Pedlar* 32-4: 'on his mind|They lay like substances, and almost seemed|To haunt the bodily sense'.
- 631 *the impressive discipline of fear*: the power of fear to stamp 'impressions' on the memory.
- 639-40 *invisible links|Allied to the affections*: links of association, valued by Wordsworth for their capacity to conserve and bring to mind past emotions ('affections'); see 1799 I 324-6n. Wordsworth's thinking is a personal redefinition of the associationism of Hartley's *Observations on Man*, which in the mid-1790s had provided the theological basis of Coleridge's Unitarianism.
- 643-4 *ere the birth . . . snows*: attributing 'flowers' of memory to a period of life for which in truth the memory is blank; see the very late emendation of 1850, garrulous but explicit.

- 653 *honourable toil*: Wordsworth, when he wrote these lines in February 1799, expected to go straight ahead with *The Recluse* rather than extending his autobiography.
- 660 *visionary things*: things seen in the imagination, with the inward eye.
- 664-71 Wordsworth's concluding paragraph, written late January 1804, states plainly to Coleridge why it is that he prefers to shelve the writing of *The Recluse* in favour of an extended *Prelude*; see Introduction.

Book Second

- 7 *nourishment that came unsought*: Wordsworth's theme in Book I has been the child's unconscious response to the workings of nature upon his imagination. Book II will show how nature in adolescence comes to be 'sought|For her own sake'.
- 8-9 *From week . . . tumult*: The phase of childhood summed up in *TA* 74-5 as 'The coarser pleasures of my boyish days,|And their glad animal movements'.
- 18 *a beating mind*: Prospero, 'a turn or two I'll walk|To still my beating mind' (*Tempest* IV i 162-3).
- 20 *And needs*: Read: 'and yet needs'. *monitory voice*: warning, admonishment. Memories of the spontaneous joys of youth show how paltry are the achievements of adulthood. 1850 'Nor needs' shows a change of mind in the poet. Memories of youth are now seen as insufficient in their effect: everyone needs the warning to beware of pride in intellect.
- 28 *my corporeal frame*: body; 'this corporeal frame' (*TA* 44).
- 30 *self-presence*: actuality, immediacy (associated with the continuing imaginative 'presence' of the poet's former 'self').
- 35 *our small market-village*: Hawkshead.
- 39 *smart assembly-room*: Hawkshead Town Hall, built 1790, and covered with gravel stucco ('rough-cast') and white-wash. For Wordsworth's consistent dislike of the obtrusiveness of white buildings, see *Guide to the Lakes*.
- 46 *huckster*: stall-keeper.
- 52 *collaterally attached*: taken into account as the boys plan their otherwise less enjoyable ('grateful', l. 54) pastimes.
- 57 *plain of Windermere*: level surface of the lake.
- 58 *bourne*: destination; cf. *Hamlet* III i 79-80, 'That undiscovered country, from whose bourne|No traveller returns'.
- 60-2 *a sister isle . . . lilies-of-the-valley*: Naming the islands that form the 'archipelago' of Windermere, West notes: '*Grassholme*: is at present shaded with a grove of oaks. And two smaller islets borrow their names from the lilies-of-the-valley which decorate them' (*Guide* 56-7).
- unbrageous covert*: shady canopy.
- 63-5 *a third small island . . . hermit's history*: '*Lady-holm*, where in ancient times stood an oratory, is an isle of an oval form, vested with coppice wood' (West, *Guide* 56). Wordsworth clearly knew of the island's association with the Virgin Mary, but in 1799 and 1805 preferred Gothic imprecision: 'old stone table', 'mouldered cave'; and a contemplative hermit (as in *Tintern Abbey*, but perhaps borrowed from St Herbert's Isle, Derwentwater). 1850 puts it all straight.

- 79 *delicate viands*: food designed to tempt the palate.
- 82 *Sabine fare*: Cf. Dryden, *Georgics* II 777, 'frugal Sabines'; Wordsworth may also be thinking of the frugality of Horace on his Sabine farm.
- 83 *A little weekly stipend*: Wordsworth's pocket-money was sixpence a week in his final year at school, but augmented in January 1787, after the half-yearly holiday, by an extra guinea (worth 42 'weekly stipends').
- 91 *board*: table, stall.
- 101-2 *some famed temple . . . Druids worshipped*: Wordsworth associates the stone circle at Swinside, near Duddon Bridge, with Druids in a footnote to *Evening Walk*; Castlerigg, above Keswick (featured in Keats' *Hyperion*) would also have been in his mind. The circle-builders are no longer believed to have been Druids.
- 109-10 *the antique walls* | *Of that large abbey*: Furness Abbey, built by Cistercian monks in 1127 near Barrow-in-Furness (20 miles from Hawkshead) was 'dissolved' in 1537 under Henry VIII. Its roof-timbers, stripped of their valuable lead, had long since fallen by Wordsworth's day.
- 115-21 *To more than inland peace . . . quietness*: Revision of 1799 II. 112-17 in the name of accuracy (as is so often the case with Wordsworth): on second thoughts, the coast is flat, and too far away. Trees at Furness cannot

Hear all day long the murmuring sea that beats
Incessantly upon a craggy shore.

- 124 *the cross-legged knight*: 'In the middle space, where the first barons of Kendal are interred, lies the procumbent figure of a man in armour, cross-legged' (West, *Guide* 39). The knight is now in the Abbey museum.
- 125-35 *that single wren . . . such music*:

Like Keats in *Bright Star*, Wordsworth is using the background presence of Shakespeare to enhance a moment of border vision. The famous metaphor of Sonnet 73 - 'Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang' - is made actual, just as in *The Ruined Cottage* the broken pitcher of *Ecclesiastes* becomes the 'useless fragment of a wooden bowl'. But though the choirs become the nave of a palpable abbey, the bird remains invisible, intangible, its sourceless song conveying the presence of the sublime. (*BV* 119)

- 129-30 *sobbings of the place* | *And respirations*: A numinous addition to 1799.
- 139 *that still spirit of the evening air*: For the relation of Wordsworth's line to the polytheism of 1799 Part I, see 1799 II 134n. above.
- 141 *breathed*: rested the horses - gave them a 'breather'.
- 144 *the level sand*: Levens Sands, south of Barrow, which would take the riders back to Hawkshead via Greenodd.
- 144/5 Omission of the Coniston episode (1799 II 140-78) is the one major difference between Book II of 1805 and Part II of 1799.
- 147 *an inn*: the White Lion, Bowness (now gone).
- 150 *liveries*: uniformed servants.
- 151 *the blood-red wine*: A phrase used to sinister effect in the *Ballad of Sir Patrick Spens*.
- 152 *or ere*: before. *the Hall*: on Belle Isle, completed early 1780s.
- 174 *The minstrel of our troop*: Identified by Wordsworth as Robert Greenwood,

- afterwards (like the poet's brother Christopher) a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge. Ann Tyson, Wordsworth's landlady, remembered him simply as 't'lad wi't flute'.
- 195-6 *To patriotic and domestic love*|Analogous: A very Wordsworthian way of thinking: the moon is valued not for itself (or for its literary associations), but in the deep-down way in which country and family are valued. Compare the patriotic sonnets of 1802-3, heart-felt because they are about the protection of a way of life.
- 202 *huts*: cottages (built of local slate).
- 206 *intervenient*: experienced in the midst of other concerns.
- 219 *succedaneum*: remedy; science, with its reliance on the 'false secondary power' of analytic reason, is merely a support to us in our lack of imaginative vision. We are taught to categorize, instead of perceiving oneness and wholeness.
- 225-6 *To thee . . . The unity of all has been revealed*: Coleridge, as a Unitarian (at least when these lines were written in 1799), believed in a single God 'who from eternity doth teach|Himself in all, and all things in himself' (*FM* 66-7). Wordsworth's position was never so clear-cut; see 1799 II 256n.
- 228-9 *to class the cabinet*|*Of their sensations*: to classify as in a show-case; a rare instance in which Wordsworth's thinking can be related in detail to a philosophical text. His metaphor of the mind as stocked like a museum collection is drawn from chapter 2 of Locke's *Essay on Human Understanding*: 'The senses at first let in particular ideas, and furnish the yet empty cabinet'.
- 232 *Hard task to analyse a soul*: Raphael in *Paradise Lost* refers to narrating the war in Heaven as 'Sad task and hard' (V 564). Tacitly Wordsworth is claiming for his own task an importance comparable to Milton's.
- 239 *The progress of our being*: In his quest for origins, Milton had charted human progress from the Garden of Eden; Wordsworth will trace it from the relationship of mother to infant in the world of everyday experience.
- 241-2 *when his soul . . . earthly soul*: when his pre-existent soul becomes conscious of its new earthly condition (rather than my timid Norton reading, 'when his soul forms an evident relation with the soul of another human being'). Though we tend to associate it with Wordsworth's *Intimations* of 1804, the concept of pre-existence is found in Coleridge as early as his sonnet on the birth of Hartley, September 1796; 'and some have said|We lived ere yet this robe of flesh we wore' (ll. 5-6).
- 244-57 Cut during the drastic revisions of 1832 and 1838-9.
- 245 *Like an awakening breeze*: For important earlier phases in Wordsworth's thinking, see 1799 II 275n.
- 254 *Tenacious of the forms*: The child learns from the first by storing up 'forms' and associations of the external world; cf. the 'forms of beauty' that are carried away by the adult poet of *Tintern Abbey* 23ff., enabling him later, 'mid the din|Of towns and cities', to 'see into the life of things'.
- 256 *apprehensive*: suited to learning. *habitude*: relationship - not elsewhere used by Wordsworth, but known to him through Coleridge's section of Southey's *Joan of Arc* (1795); 'holiest habitude|Of constant faith' (II 15-16).
- 258-60 *there exists . . . sense*: As F.R. Leavis long ago pointed out (*Revaluation* 160), there is a clear link with *TA* 101-2: 'A motion and a spirit, that

- impels|All thinking things, all objects of all thought'. In effect the mother's 'beloved presence' has replaced the divine 'presence' of *TA* 95.
- 263-4 *The gravitation and the filial bond . . . world*: It is through the bond with his mother that the child becomes a part of nature (subject, in Wordsworth's metaphor, to the gravitational pull of the earth); see 1799 II 293-4n.
- 245-51 *Is there a flower . . . harm*: Lines added in 1832 that sentimentalize the child's responses, making him (perhaps) a more credible human baby, but weakening the great imaginative claims made by the poetry of 1799 and 1805. Where before he was 'powerful in all sentiments of grief,|Of exultation, fear, and joy' (1805 270-1, cut 1832), now he is a 'Frail creature . . . helpless as frail' (l. 254).
- 257 *like an agent*: In 1799 and 1805 the child had worked 'as an agent' of God, now he merely resembles one.
- 273 *creator and receiver both*: In terms of *Biographia Literaria* chapter 13, the child is capable of the god-like highest powers – at once creative and perceptive – of the primary imagination. Though his major definitions were yet to come, Coleridge (on whom Wordsworth's formulation certainly depends) had been thinking of the human imagination as imitating God's creativity at least since the Slave Trade lecture of 1795.
- 274-5 *Working but in alliance . . . beholds*: A retreat from the position in *Tintern Abbey*, where the transcendental 'presence' had dwelt equally in the mind and the blue sky, 'impelling' both. The child now is distinct from the natural world with which he forms an imaginative alliance.
- 285 *the infant sensibility . . . our being*: Portrayed at first as the child at the breast, the infant babe has moved into a symbolic realm, 'powerful' in an array of emotions that he could not possibly have experienced. Wordsworth, however, refuses to think of him as unordinary: his sensibility is the birthright of our being.
- 290 *chamois*: agile mountain antelope, probably seen by Wordsworth in the Alps.
- 291 *a trouble came into my mind*: The phase of late adolescence recorded in *Pedlar* 187-9: 'he was o'erpowered|By nature, and his spirit was on fire|With restless thoughts'.
- 294 *The props of my affections*: Boyish sports which had 'collaterally' supported the growing love of nature.
- 298 *influxes*: influences.
- 308-12 *every season . . . else unknown*: Short-lived relationships that each new season offers (with spring flowers, or summer fulness, or falling leaves, or frost) are now, through the power of love, permanently recorded in the mind.
- 314 *'best society'*: It is Adam who, rather surprisingly, comments in Eden, 'For solitude sometimes is best society' (*PL* IX 249).
- 317 *gentle agitations*: Not dependent on 'By' in the previous line, but the final item in a list that follows 'Hence' in l. 313.
- 321-41 *For I would walk . . . pursue*: Written originally in February 1798 to describe the *Pedlar*; adapted for *The Prelude* in autumn 1799 by the simple turning of 'he' to 'I'.
- 328 *ghostly*: A range of meaning seems to be appropriate, from 'sacred' to 'otherworldly' to 'insubstantial'.
- 336 *obscure*: Stressed on the first syllable; cf. *PL* II 132, 'with obscure wing'.

Wordsworth is Burkean in his association of obscurity and the sublime; see *Sublime and Beautiful* Part II, section iv, 'A clear-idea is another name for a little idea'.

347-8 *a superadded soul, | A virtue not its own*: Penetrating to the 'latent qualities | And essences of things' (seeing perhaps into their life), the adolescent Wordsworth is moved by a power that we probably associate with his own creativity (see ll. 381-95 below), but which he feels as an external preternatural force.

349 *the hours of school*: From 6 or 6.30 a.m. in the summer.

350 *our little lake*: Esthwaite Water.

352-3 *a friend . . . loved*: John Fleming, of whom Wordsworth had written in *The Vale of Esthwaite*, 'Friendship and Fleming are the same'.

341-2 *or the vernal thrush . . . the woods*: Rewording by the poet's executors to avoid his revision of 1838-9, in which 'the thrush, high perched, | Piped to the woods his shrill reveillé' - sounded a wake-up call.

361-2 *I sat . . . jutting eminence*: Thomson, *Seasons* II 1042, 'Sad on the jutting eminence he sits'.

346-7 *where find | Faith . . . I felt*: The tones of one for whom the 'visionary gleam' has long disappeared. Again an *MS D* revision of 1838-9.

371 *prospect*: landscape.

381 *plastic*: shaping, creative; another Coleridgean word, cf. *Eolian Harp* 46-8:

as o'er them sweeps

Plastic and vast, one intellectual breeze,

At once the soul of each and God of all.

384-7 *A local spirit . . . communed*: The spirit (broadly to be equated with imagination) is 'local' in the sense that it reflects Wordsworth's individuality, refusing to subscribe to 'general tendency' (the norms of human behaviour). Mostly, however, it is willing to take second place to 'external things' (the forms of nature with which the mind interacts).

387 *auxiliar*: enhancing.

394-5 *Hence my obeisance . . . transport*: Wordsworth paradoxically gives his 'obeisance' (allegiance) to nature, and experiences 'transport' (rapture - again the sensation of being 'carried away'), because his imagination is able to dominate her, enhance the effect of her workings upon the mind.

396 *still*: always.

398 *analytic industry*: rational thinking.

402 *interminable building*: vast structure (within the mind).

407-11 *or, from excess . . . own enjoyments*: Wordsworth is thinking of important lines in the 1798 text of *Frost at Midnight*, not retained in later versions:

the living spirit in our frame,

That loves not to behold a lifeless thing,

Transfuses into all its own delights

Its own volition . . . (ll. 21-4)

416-34 *Pedlar*: 204-22, adapted for *The Prelude* autumn 1799, and incorporating (in the first person) Wordsworth's central pantheist statement of belief from February 1798: 'In all things | He saw one life, and felt that it was joy.'

Faith in the One Life is attributed to the past (the poet's 'seventeenth year'), yet by implication has lasted till the present day (see ll. 435ff. below).

- 413 *the Uncreated*: Wordsworth in 1850 409-14 not only replaces the great pantheist assertion of 1805 429-30, but puts a careful theological distance between God, who is uncreated, and his adoring Creation. He wrote the original lines of joy and sharing at the end of the eighteenth century, aged 27; he revised them, with Queen Victoria on the throne, aged almost 70.
- 433 *grosser prelude of that strain*: sensual enjoyment that prefaces the higher pleasures of response to the One Life.
- 435 *If this be error*: A sudden concession that reproduces the pattern of *TA* 50ff., 'If this|Be but a vain belief . . . ?'
- 448-57 *if in these times . . . dismay*: Wordsworth is drawing on a letter from Coleridge of September 1799 urging him to incorporate in *The Recluse* an address to

those, who, in consequence of the complete failure of the French Revolution, have thrown up all hopes of the amelioration of mankind, and are sinking into an almost epicurean selfishness, disguising the same under the soft titles of domestic attachment and contempt for visionary *philosophes*.

- 449 *waste*: desert.
- 451-2 *when good men|On every side fall off*: Best known among those who renounced their radical ideals at this period was James Mackintosh, author of *Vindiciae Gallicae* (1791), a point-by-point reply to Burke's hostile *Reflections on the French Revolution*.
- 459 *more than Roman confidence*: Maxwell instances the Roman general, Varro, commended after his defeat by Hannibal at Cannae (216 BC) for not despairing of the Republic.
- 466-7 *Thou, my friend . . . other scenes*: Addressing his infant son, Hartley, Coleridge had written in *Frost at Midnight*, 'thou shalt learn far other lore,|And in far other scenes! For I was reared|In the great city'.
- 471-5 *The insinuated scoff . . . love*: Cf. 'the sneers of selfish men' and 'greetings where no kindness is' (*TA* 130-1).
- 479-84 *Fare thee well . . . mankind*: While Wordsworth and Dorothy were about to move into Dove Cottage, Grasmere, Coleridge in November 1799 (when these lines were written) had decided to go back to his career as a journalist with the *Morning Post* in London.

Book Third

- 1-167 Probably composed in December 1801, as an extension of the 1799 *Prelude*, to take account of the poet's University education. It is not clear how long at this stage he thought his poem would be. The remainder of Book III belongs to late January 1804.
- 1 *It was a dreary morning*: Wordsworth arrived in Cambridge on, or soon after, 30 October 1787.

- 17 *And at the Hoop . . . inn*: As De Selincourt points out (defending the line against Matthew Arnold, who thought it pompous), Wordsworth from the first adopted a playful, somewhat mock-heroic, tone in his account of Cambridge.
- 16 *spirit*: Sometimes scanned by Wordsworth (and Milton) as a monosyllable; cf. IV 153, 'And swellings of the spirits, was rapt and soothed'.
- 17 *Some friends I had*: Small as Hawkshead Grammar School was, Wordsworth had nine schoolfriends at Cambridge to support him in his 'strange transformation' (l. 30).
- 31 *courts*: Cambridge has 'courts', Oxford 'quadrangles'.
- 36-7 *hair . . . rimy trees*: Visiting her brother in December 1788, Dorothy found the 'smart powdered heads' and academic dress of Cambridge 'odd', 'but exceedingly becoming'. *rimy*: covered with hoar-frost.
- 42-3 *Smooth-housekeeping . . . Liberal*: Taken by Owen to mean 'hospitable both inside and outside the College', but maybe Wordsworth is a more fortunate version of Lamb's Thomas Tame, *Elia* (1823) 8: 'Thomas Tame was very poor. Both he and his wife looked outwardly gentlefolks, when I fear all was not well at all times within.'
- 44 *The Evangelist . . . was*: St John's College, Cambridge, is dedicated to the Evangelist; St John's, Oxford, to the Baptist.
- 54 *with a male and female voice*: The hour strikes twice, first with a tenor bell, then with a treble.
- 55 *pealing organ*: Milton, *Il Penseroso* 161-2, 'let the pealing organ blow|To the full-voiced choir below'.
- 62-3 *The marble index . . . alone*: Famous lines, added to *The Prelude* in 1838-9, and seemingly distilled from Thomson's little-known elegy on Newton:

The noiseless tide of time, all bearing down
To vast eternity's unbounded sea,
Where the green islands of the happy shine,
He stemmed alone . . . (ll. 125-8)

Newton's statue is by Roubiliac, 1755.

- 63 *recusants*: resisters of authority.
- 65-6 *Examinations . . . balance*: See Daniel's interpretation of the writing on the wall at Belshazzar's feast: 'Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting' (5.27). As Maxwell points out, Wordsworth is punning: 'examination' derives from Latin *examen*, a balance (pair of scales).
- 75-6 *melancholy thoughts|From . . . family regards*: The poet's family expected him to distinguish himself at Cambridge and gain a Fellowship at St John's, as his uncle, William Cookson, had done before him - and as his younger brother, Christopher, was soon to do at next-door Trinity. Instead, he neglected his academic work, taking a BA without honours in January 1791.
- 81 *wherefore be cast down*: 'Why art thou cast down, O my soul' (twice repeated in Psalm XLII, 'As the hart panteth after the water-brooks').
- 83-7 *For (not to speak . . . one far mightier)*: A pious replacement of 1838-9 for the bold claim, 'Why should I grieve? I was a chosen son' (originally Pedlar 326).

- 101-7 *What independent . . . night of death*: Again pious elaboration in 1838-9 of a single line (1805 108) that had come to seem too bold.
- 115 *Incumbences*: spiritual broodings.
- 116 *the upholder*: Punctuation in the manuscripts makes it fairly certain that the 'upholder' is a spiritual principle within the self, equated with 'the tranquil soul'.
- 121 *That tolerates the indignities of Time*: A memorable line, occurring first in an early revision to 1805 117-18 that is incorporated in *MS C*:

Which regulates the motion of all life
And tolerates the indignities of time
Till time shall cease.

The underlying and upholding soul is more clearly immortal (in a Christian sense) in 1850, but from the first there has been the implication that it is beyond, or outside, time. Hence the awe-fulness of the poet's 'incumbencies' (spiritual brooding or overshadowing, *OED*).

- 121-67 Revised and augmented version of Wordsworth's climax to *The Pedlar* (ll. 330-56), transferred to *The Prelude* in December 1801.
- 128 *quickenings*: life-giving; the material world is presented as drawing nourishment like a plant from an underlying spirit. When transcribing *MS B* in 1805-6, Mary Wordsworth was so conscious of the gardening metaphor that she actually wrote 'quickenings soil' for 'quickenings soul'.
- 129 *respired*: breathed; cf. *Kubla Khan* 18, 'As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing'.
- 136-7 *in a kindred sense* *Of passion*: Wordsworth's 'sense of passion' (mood, experiencing of emotion) is akin to nature's in l. 133.
- 142-4 *I had a world . . . into my mind*: Though the 'world' exists only within the mind, the fact that it 'lives' for God as well as the poet gives it a certain actuality - enhanced by the use of 'sympathies' in l. 145.
- 152 *higher up*: further back.
- 164 *its power*: The 'power' that penetrates exterior forms to find their essences, speaks 'logic' to the soul and 'binds' the senses, can only be imagination.
- 167 *Did bind my feelings . . . chain*: Wordsworth's senses are not (as one might think) 'bound' in the sense of restricted or controlled, but connected in a 'chain' of beneficial memories and associations. Cf. *Pedlar* 77-81:

the curious links
By which the perishable hours of life
Are bound together, and the world of thought
Exists and is sustained.

In such a 'chain' the poet's days are 'Bound each to each by natural piety' (*Rainbow* 9).

- 168 *And here, o friend*: Wordsworth is presumably taking up his story in late January 1804. The new impulse behind composition is his wish to send an extended version of *The Prelude* (in five books, see Introduction) with Coleridge on his voyage to the Mediterranean in search of health.
- 173-6 *Of genius . . . within me*: That Wordsworth should leave these astonishing

- claims unmodified in 1850 is a mark of how little, despite concessions to Anglican thinking, he changed in his essential beliefs.
- 180 *The yoke of earth*: Wordsworth's image of man as harnessed to existence as an ox is harnessed to the plough is used again twice within a matter of weeks: 'years [that] bring the inevitable yoke' (*Intimations* 127), and 'yoke-fellows|To custom' (V 544-5 below).
- 182 *heroic argument*: Milton describes his 'argument' (theme) in *Paradise Lost* as 'Not less but more heroic' than the battle-poetry of Homer and Virgil (IX 13ff.). In drawing attention to the passage, Wordsworth tacitly places himself in this distinguished tradition. Lines 171-83 offer the new theme of human consciousness, beside which even Milton's Christian epic seems a narrative 'of outward things|Done visibly for other minds'.
- 188 *Breathings for incommunicable powers*: A strange line that Wordsworth seems to have been perfectly happy with. Are the 'breathings' inept, or inspired (like the breath of I 41)? Are they made by the poet in order to acquire 'incommunicable powers', or in lieu of them?
- 191 *heartless*: dejected.
- 191-2 *there's not a man . . . godlike hours*: An assumption on which the entire *Prelude* depends. If moments of transcendence are (however theoretically) within the reach of all, Wordsworth is Everyman, protected from the charge of egotism, and his poem has importance for us all.
- 201 *Uphold . . . fainting steps*: Seemingly a blend of two passages in *Samson Agonistes*: the opening lines, 'A little onward lend thy guiding hand|To these dark steps', plus l. 666, 'And fainting spirits uphold'.
- 211-12 *empty noise|And superficial pastimes*: Writing to De Quincey a month or so after composing these lines, Wordsworth is anxious to hear whether Oxford has 'seduced [him] into unworthy pleasures or pursuits' (6 March 1804). 'The manners of the young men' at Cambridge, he recalls, were 'very frantic and dissolute.'
- 217-28 *Could I behold . . . through the world*: A good example of the unpunctuable Wordsworth sentence, burdened by parentheses and barely sustained by the triple repetition of 'Could'.
- 226 *miscellaneous . . . flowers*: undergraduates, pictured improbably as a garland of flowers that Cambridge, their *alma mater*, wears on her brow.
- 232 *spells seemed on me*: I seemed to be enchanted (to live in a magical world).
- 235-6 *my heart|Was social*: A corrective to the stereotype of Wordsworth as solitary. To Matthews he wrote on 7 November 1794, 'I begin to wish much to be in town; cataracts and mountains are good occasional society, but they will not do: for constant companions'.
- 240 *divided*: shared.
- 245 *Unburdened, unalarmed, and unprofaned*: A pattern that Wordsworth probably associates with Milton ('Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified', *PL* VI 80), though it is found also in Spenser and Shakespeare, and imitated by Cowper and others.
- 248 *Want*: lack.
- 254 *trivial*: A small but significant change from 1805 'lazy'.
- 259 *the second act*: 'opening act' (1805) had failed to take into account the early phase when Cambridge turned the poet's mind in on itself.
- 268 *dark*: unconscious; with undertones perhaps of 'confused' and 'mysterious'.
- 271 *precincts*: surroundings; often those of a cathedral or place of worship.

- 274 *Dictators at the plough*: Cincinnatus was ploughing when summoned to become Roman dictator in 458 BC.
- 274 *the accustomed garb*: Figures in old portraits wore the same academic dress as the poet himself.
- 276-7 *Beside . . . I laughed with Chaucer*: The Reeve's bawdy tale, concerning two Cambridge undergraduates who 'swyve' a miller's wife and daughter, is set at Trumpington. The fact that Dorothy read the *Miller's Tale* (also very broad in its humour) aloud to the poet on 26 December 1801 suggests that this passage may have been drafted at the same time as 1-167.
- 283 *I called him brother*: Spenser had been at Pembroke Hall, Cambridge, 1569-76.
- 284-5 *our blind poet . . . odious truth*: Milton - also a Cambridge man - is seen by Wordsworth in political terms. He is the republican who denounced the Restoration, as Abdiel (associated with Milton himself, and twice referred to in *Paradise Lost* as standing 'single') denounced the fallen angels.
- 286 *Darkness before . . . behind*: 'In darkness, and with dangers compassed round' (*PL VII 27*).
- 291-2 *rosy cheeks* | *Angelical*: Milton, who went to Christ's College, Cambridge in 1625 aged sixteen, was fair as a boy.
- 295 *My class-fellow*: Edward Birkett from Hawkshead Grammar School was at Milton's old College.
- 301 *oratory*: shrine.
- 304 *libations*: offerings of wine, poured out to gods of the classical world. Wordsworth himself is not drinking, but merely 'intoxicated' at the thought of following in Milton's footsteps.
- 309 *ostrich-like*: Late for chapel (which he was required to attend, see ll. 419-27 below), Wordsworth gathers up his gown, or perhaps the surplice of ll. 316-18, in order to run faster.
- 310 *opprobrious*: disgraceful.
- 312 *Cassandra*: daughter of Priam, King of Troy, whose predictions of the destruction of the city were unwelcome and ignored.
- 319-20 *inferior throng . . . burghers*: townspeople who are grouped low down in the chapel, beneath the organ.
- 325 *stationed me for*: placed me in a position to receive (note the abasement of 1850).
- 339-40 *my life . . . floating island*: Wordsworth's bizarre image derives from a recurring phenomenon on Derwentwater, described in *Guide to the Lakes*: 'there occasionally appears above the surface . . . a considerable tract of spongy ground covered with aquatic plants, which is called the Floating Island' (*Prose Works II 184*).
- 354 *puissant*: powerful.
- 371 *Not that I slighted books*: Dorothy comments on 26 June 1791: 'He reads Italian, Spanish, French, Greek and Latin, and English, but never opens a mathematical book.' Unfortunately, maths (such was the dominance of Newton in eighteenth-century Cambridge) was the one subject in which the University held exams, and academic distinction could be achieved.
- 380 *magisterially*: masterfully; cf. II 387-95.
- 384 *to science and to arts*: It is not clear what distinction Wordsworth is making. Sometimes he uses science with its modern sense (Natural Science), sometimes (as at l. 427 below) with its earlier, general meaning, 'knowledge'

- (Latin *scientia*): 'Arts' is scarcely easier to define at this period. Johnson's *Dictionary* encapsulates the problem: 'Art - A science; as, the liberal arts'.
- 387 *Toil and pains*: industriousness.
- 388 *bodied forth*: 'as imagination bodies forth|The forms of things unknown' (*Midsummer Night's Dream*: V i 14-15).
- 392 *congregating temper*: gregariousness, sociability.
- 401 *The passing day*: the present, as compared to antiquity.
- 407 *Republican; or pious*: to be seen in terms either of the ideal republic (of Plato or Harrington) or of primitive Christianity.
- 408 *emblazonry*: embellishment, display of gorgeous colours (in this case, of the imagination).
- 414 *schools*: academic precincts.
- 415-16 *to your bells*|*Give seasonable rest*: Wordsworth's advice to the 'Presidents and Deans' of Cambridge colleges to stop compulsory chapel is never toned down, despite his brother's becoming Master of Trinity.
- 424-7 *your officious doings* . . . *Suffers for this*: Fellows of Oxford and Cambridge colleges were not permitted at this period to get married. When they wished to do so, they resigned their Fellowships and went into the Church, carrying with them to their parishes the attitudes towards religion formed at the University.
- 427 *science*: knowledge, learning; see 384n. above.
- 431 *Collateral suspicion*: Respect for learning goes with respect for religion.
- 435 *raised a pile*: Of expectations.
- 444-6 *though the shades . . . under-coverts*: Extending his metaphor of the ideal university as a 'virgin grove', Wordsworth pictures day-to-day life in terms of cheerful woodlands ('shades') and 'under-coverts' full of songbirds. *indigent* of lacking.
- 449 *ruminating creatures*: animals that chew the cud (common already as a metaphor for thoughtfulness).
- 452-4 *the pelican . . . sun himself*: William Bartram, *Travels in North and South Carolina* (1791) 48: 'Behold on yon decayed, defoliated cypress tree, the solitary wood pelican, dejectly perched upon its utmost elevated spire.' Bartram is a source for 'the deep romantic chasm' of *Kubla Khan*, and for tropical imagery in Wordsworth's *Ruth*.
- 458-9 *the impresses . . . gaudy region*: external influences are of mere gaudiness.
- 467 *fathered*: traced to a source; cf. the 'unfathered vapour' of VI 527.
- 468 *curfew-time*: sun-down; leading a frugal life, scholars did not work in the dark by light of expensive candles.
- 474-7 *that glorious time . . . king*: the Renaissance.
- 486-7 *'An obolus . . . scholar'*: 'I ought to have asked your permission for the scholars and their obolus' (Wordsworth to Coleridge, 29 March 1804). In its original form the story tells of a Byzantine general fallen from power and begging in Constantinople with the words 'Give an obol to Belisarius!'
- 489 *Bucer, Erasmus, or Melanchthon*: Famous early sixteenth-century scholars, Bucer working in Cambridge and Erasmus in Oxford.
- 492 *darkly*: confusedly; 'For now we see through a glass, darkly', *I Corinthians* 13.12.
- 510 *tax*: blame; 'Tax not divine disposal', *Samson Agonistes* 210.
- 513-14 *passions . . . low and mean*: Enumerated in ll. 533-5 below.
- 518 *shoal*: crowd.

- 520 *and not wanting love*: 1850 'yet not wanting' makes the easier reading; however, Wordsworth did not originally see an incongruity in the 'easy minds' possessing love of a kind.
- 524-41 Cut as early as *MS C*, c. 1819.
- 540 *the under-soul*: Note the reference back to 'the upholder . . . the tranquil soul' of l. 116, 'Which underneath all passion lives secure'.
- 542 *this deep vacation*: A quiet joke: term-time at Cambridge was for Wordsworth a 'vacation' from strenuous thought.
- 546-9 *a shepherd . . . beholds*: Thomson, *Castle of Indolence* (1748) I stanza 30; the shepherd is divorced from reality, not, as one might expect, valued for his imaginative response.
- 555 *intervenient*: that which 'comes between'; cf. II 206.
- 556 *visionary*: Cf. the poet's first response to the sights of Cambridge, 'I was the dreamer, they the dream' (l. 28 above).
- 557 *bolted forth*: driven into the open, like a hunted animal (in this case, forced prematurely into adult life).
- 563 *to ensue*: Unnecessary words that do not alter the meaning of Wordsworth's sentence, and seem to have no grammatical relation to what has gone before. Yet the lines persist unchanged in 1850. Could Wordsworth have intended 'to ensure'? A transitive verb would do no harm.
- 584 *Objects embossed*: standing out in relief. *sedulous*: anxious, diligent (a Miltonic usage, as at I 571).
- 590-6 *The surfaces . . . to watch*: In evoking 'the surfaces of artificial life' Wordsworth has woven a tapestry ('arras') of allusions to Spenser, *FQ* III xi stanza 28. *state*: formal, pompous.
- 610 *humourists*: eccentrics, 'humour characters'; applied by Lamb memorably to the clerks of the South-sea House.
- 618 *hardly*: forcefully.
- 630-43 Suggested by Cowper, *Task* II 699-750, 'In colleges and halls, in ancient days . . .' but with some reminiscence of Shakespeare's Sonnet 66. Though renouncing personifications in the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth used them very effectively for satirical purposes.
- 634 *And simple pleasure, foraging for death*: Not an easy line. Pleasure either 'forages' on behalf of death, or actually seeks him. Wordsworth could have a situation in mind akin to that of Chaucer's *Pardoner's Tale*, with its revellers who seek death - and of course find him.
- 637 *bald*: crude, graceless.
- 644 *notices*: observations.
- 650 *is still with innocence*: is always, like innocence . . .
- 652 *cabinet*: display-case; as at II 228.
- 657 *quicken*: enlivens, animates.
- 661 *congress*: assemblage, gathering.
- 669-71 *This in submissive idleness . . . away*: As at ll. 542-3 above, Wordsworth plays the idleness of Cambridge off against 'labouring-time' in the outside world.

Book Fourth

- I-4 *A pleasant sight . . . Windermere*: Wordsworth was returning to Hawkshead,

scene of his schooldays, at the beginning of the Cambridge summer vacation of 1788. He had come by coach to Kendal, then walked ten miles or so, via Crook, to the ridge at Cleabarow, 500-600 feet above Windermere.

I *clomb*: climbed; the strong past participle existed both in Cumbrian speech and as a poetic archaism: 'While clomb above the eastern bar | The horned moon' (*AM*: 201-2).

11 *that sweet valley*: the Vale of Esthwaite.

14 *Charon*: ferryman of the Greek Underworld, who transported the souls of the dead across the Rivers Styx and Acheron. Doubtless, as De Selincourt commented, an 'inapt allusion', but pleasurable in its incongruity.

17 *my old dame*: Ann Tyson, Wordsworth's landlady at Hawkshead, who died in 1796 aged 83.

20 *good creature*: A term of affection - 'creature' literally meaning 'created one' - not restricted at this period to animals.

40 *froward*: impetuous.

53-4 *my late course* . . . *enthralment*: life at Cambridge.

66 *habiliments*: clothing.

101-8 *A hundred times . . . yet again*: As at 1799 II 166-74, Wordsworth works into his blank verse adolescent poetry in order to evoke the period at which it was composed. On this occasion it is *The Dog: An Idyllium* of 1786-7:

If while I gazed, to nature blind,
In the calm ocean of my mind
Some new-created image rose
In full-grown beauty at its birth,
Then, while my glad hand sprung to thee,
We were the happiest pair on earth!

The change from 'new-created image' to 'fair enchanting image' (l. 104) is enough to suggest the adult poet's indulgence towards a former self.

114 *passenger*: passer-by. Wordsworth never lost the habit of composing on the roads; see Kilvert's account of his 'crooning out loud some lines of a poem which he was composing' near Ambleside in 1838-9, 1850 XI 377-8n.

130 *consummate*: complete (pronounced 'consūmmit').

140-2 *Gently did my soul . . . her God*: Moses stood unveiled before Jehovah on Mount Sinai, but veiled his shining face when he descended to meet the people (*Exodus* 34.33-4).

150 *I saw but little, and thereat was pleased*: Assuming Wordsworth to be looking at himself on the scales, we expect 'but' for 'and' (he saw little, but what there was was promising). Giving full force to the 'and', we arrive at an odder reading, 'I saw little, and was pleased by that fact'. 1850, meanwhile, has a reading that makes sense, but surely does not represent the poet's original intention.

157 *Informs, creates, and thaws the deepest sleep*: An echo of Thomson, *Seasons* I 855, 'Adjusts, sustains, and agitates the whole' (Thomson's subject is the inspiring breath of God).

168-80 *meanwhile . . . were there*: Uncomfortably close to self-parody: readers are asked to take seriously that Wordsworth mistook the breathing of the earth

- (‘sobblings of the place|And restrictions’, II 129-30 above) for the panting of his dog. 1850 is a considerable improvement.
- 172 *coppice*: copse, small wood (often of hazels).
- 184 *prospect*: In this case, the human scene.
- 199 *To deck some slighted-playmate’s homely cheek*: A version of *Lycidas* 65, ‘To tend the homely slighted shepherd’s trade’, and intended to be recognized as such.
- 215 *business*: busy-ness.
- 237-8 *those fair Seven . . . child*: the Pleiades, otherwise known as the ‘Seven Sisters’.
- 239 *my own beloved star*: Wordsworth was born under Jupiter, on 7 April 1770.
- 247-64 *As one who hangs . . . like success*: An epic simile in the tradition of Virgil and Milton, but modelled in fact on Cowper; cf. *Task* III 1-20, quoted IX 5n.
- 263 *Incumbent*: leaning.
- 273-4 *gauds|And feast . . . and public revelry*: Milton, *L’Allegro* 127, ‘pomp, and feast, and revelry’. *gauds*: pastimes.
- 283 *grateful*: Not different in meaning from 1805 ‘pleasing’, but consciously Miltonic.
- 279 *feeding*: nutritive, spiritually sustaining.
- 289 *yearnings*: Wordsworth’s executors have omitted the adjective ‘daily’, present in the MSS, so as to reduce a (probably unintended) alexandrine to the standard ten-syllable line.
- 282 *To nature and to books*: ‘Love nature and books’, Wordsworth told the undergraduate De Quincey a month or so after writing these lines, ‘seek these, and you will be happy. For virtuous friendship, and love, and knowledge of mankind, must inevitably accompany these, all things thus ripening in their due season’ (6 March 1804).
- 291-7 The cutting of 1805 282-304 down to six-and-a-half lines makes for a smoother lead into the great consecration scene that is to follow, but at a considerable loss.
- 290 *Contagious air . . . me Hamlet*: II ii 318ff.: ‘This most excellent canopy the air, look you, this brave and overhanging firmament . . . it appears no other thing to me but a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours.’
- 296-8 *The authentic sight of reason . . . faculty of truth*: Not analytic reason, but ‘reason in her most exalted mood’, showing the influence of Coleridge (and through him, of Kant), and equated at XIII 166-70 with imagination, ‘absolute strength|And clearest insight’.
- 302 *pageant plaything with vile claws*: Wordsworth’s imagery in ll. 301-4 unites the mood and diction of *Hamlet* (see 290n. above) with specific reference to a life-sized model of a tiger savaging a white man, captured at Seringatam in 1799 and probably shown to Wordsworth by Lamb at the East India Company in 1802. See Owen, ‘Tipu’s Tiger’, *NQ* 1970, 379-80, and, better still, the remarkable model itself at the Victoria and Albert Museum.
- 304 *heartless*: dispiriting.
- 309 *manners put to school*: the study of human behaviour.
- 318 *promiscuous rout*: mixed (heterogeneous) company. Wordsworth’s model is *PL* I 380, ‘the promiscuous crowd stood yet aloof’; as Maxwell points out, ‘rout’ too is Miltonic in this sense.
- 319 *tempers*: temperaments.

- 329 *Two miles I had to walk*: Efforts to place Wordsworth's walk have not been very successful. As elsewhere he is probably conflating memories; Mary Moorman, *The Early Years* 57, points to an interesting statement made by the poet in old age that 'the first voluntary verses' he ever wrote 'were written after walking six miles [from Whitehaven] to attend a dance at Egremont' (private papers).
- 323-7 *Magnificent|The morning rose . . . the clouds*: Three times in under five lines Wordsworth has altered 1805 by replacing the verb to be. De Selincourt, who regarded the early text in general as more powerful, commented in 1926 'no one can miss the gain in strength and vividness effected by the[se] simple changes'. To judge from his defence of *The Leech Gatherer* to the Hutchinson sisters on 14 June 1802, the younger Wordsworth would have had something to say on the matter: "'A lonely place, a pond", "by which an old man *was*, far from all house or home" – not stood, not sat, but "*was*" – the figure presented in the most naked simplicity possible.'
- 335 *grain-tinctured*: An imitation of 'Sky-tinctured grain' (*PL* V 285), though Milton meant blue, and Wordsworth (depending on *OED*, sense 10) means scarlet. *empyrean light*: light from the uppermost heaven, consisting of pure fire; cf. *PL* VI 13-14, 'highest heaven, arrayed in gold|Empyrean'.
- 338 *Dews, vapours, and the melody of birds*: There is a Miltonic source for this lower Wordworthian style as well as for the poetry of the empyrean: 'fruits and flowers,|Walks, and the melody of birds' (*PL* VIII 527-8).
- 341-2 *vows|Were then made for me*: As a 'chosen son' (III 82), Wordsworth is 'dedicated' by the higher power (sometimes specifically referred to as nature) that has directed his education. The dedication is to a life of service, by implication as the poet of *The Recluse*.
- 339 There is no manuscript authority for the punctuation of 1850.
- 354 *loose*: undirected.
- 355 *primitive hours*: times of purer vision.
- 363-504 Composed in early February 1798 as a separate poem, *The Discharged Soldier*, and incorporated in *The Prelude* in February 1804. *The Discharged Soldier* was first published in its original form (to which reference is made below), by Beth Darlington, *Bicentenary Studies* 433-48.
- 353-78 Though the episode of the Discharged Soldier is cut by almost a third in 1850, Wordsworth replaces the brief introduction of 1805 with 14 lines emphasizing the theme of solitude, then inserts eight evoking the Windermere Regatta.
- 362 *Votary*: one who is bound by vows to a religious life (more loosely, a 'worshipper').
- 372 *oars with oars contending, sails with sails*: Pleasurable recollection of *Rape of the Lock* I 101-2.
- Where wigs with wigs, with sword-knots, sword-knots strive,
Beaus banish beaus, and coaches coaches drive.
- 378 *strenuous idleness*: Horace's famous oxymoron '*strenua nos exercet inertia*' (*Epistles* I xi 28) is quoted by Wordsworth in a letter to Matthews of 17 June 1791: London has whirled him about in 'the vortex of its *strenua inertia*'.
- 370 *a steep ascent*: Mention in 1850 370-8 of the poet's returning home after the

Windermere Regatta enables us to identify the 'steep ascent' as Brier's Brow, above the ferry on the Hawkshead side of the lake; see Thompson's *Hawkshead* 139-41.

371-3 *the road's watery surface . . . stream*: Dorothy Wordsworth, 31 January 1798: 'The road to the village of Holford glittered like another stream'. Wordsworth incorporated his sister's note within days (and despite the fact that they were in Somerset, and he was writing about the Lake District).

374 *lapse*: fall, flow; 'And liquid lapse of murmuring streams' (*PL* VIII 263).

400 *step by step led on*: Christ in *Paradise Regained* wanders into the desert, 'Thought following thought, and step by step led on' (I 192).

402 *an uncouth shape*: At *PL* II 666 (note the apocalyptic number), Satan meets Death at the gates of Hell: 'The other shape, | If shape he might be called, that shape had none'. Wordsworth would know Burke's comments on the sublimity of the encounter, and be aware too of illustrations by Fuseli and others.

405-9 *He was . . . day*: A playing down of the obsessional quality of Wordsworth's vision in 1798:

He was in stature tall,
A foot above man's common measure tall,
And lank, and upright. There was in his form
A meagre stiffness. You might almost think
That his bones wounded him. His legs were long,
So long and shapeless that I looked at him
Forgetful of the body they sustained. (*Discharged Soldier* 41-7)

412 *A milestone*: No milestone survives, but the corner that seems to be described is beyond Far Sawrey, three miles from Hawkshead.

403-4 *To which the trappings . . . back-ground*: Fidgety replacement for the elemental reading of 1805.

415 *entire. He was: Discharged Soldier*: 55-60 has been omitted at this point, including details of the Soldier's alienation with which Wordsworth had deeply sympathized in 1798:

His face was turned
Towards the road, yet not as if he sought
For any living thing. He appeared
Forlorn and desolate, a man cut off
From all his kind, and more than half detached
From his own nature.

434 *my heart's specious cowardice*: The heart is 'specious' in concealing its true motivation, of fear.

446 *tropic islands*: West Indies. Though his encounter with the Soldier is dated to the long vacation of 1788, the campaigns against the French that Wordsworth has in mind took place in the mid-1790s. By 1796 40,000 British troops had died of yellow fever; others survived in a wasted condition and were reduced to beggary on their return.

463 *And lain*: 'And such the languor of the weary man, | Had lain' (*Discharged Soldier* 119).

- 468-9 *Discharged Soldier*: 126-32 omitted, including a poignant stress on the Soldier's humanity. As with the Leech Gatherer, and London Beggar of VII 609-23, Wordsworth's concern at this later stage is with the symbolic importance of his solitary figure rather than his pathos.
- 475 *a strange half-absence*: Cf. *Ruined Cottage* 382-3, 'The careless stillness which a thinking mind|Gives to an idle matter', and the Old Cumberland Beggar's 'fixed and serious look|Of idle computation' (ll. 11-12).
- 491-2 *But ask . . . required*: An improvement on the wording of 1798, where the poet's reproof is oddly intrusive: 'And told him, feeble as he was, 'twere fit|He asked relief or alms' (*Discharged Soldier* 161-2).
- 466 *the patient man*: Truer to the Soldier's behaviour than the reading of *Discharged Soldier* and 1805: 'the poor unhappy man'.
- 502-4 *Back I cast . . . home*: Not present in *Discharged Soldier*.
- 469 Inserted in the text of *MS D* (though with a note, 'N.B. Query as to the omission of these three last lines?') is an additional sentence:

This passed, and He who deigns to mark with care
By what rules governed, with what end in view
This Work proceeds, *he* will not wish for more.

Both lines and note persist in *MS E*, and, as Owen points out, there is no warrant for excluding them. 'More' in the final line could of course mean 'greater length'; probably, though, it means 'material of greater importance'. Those who observe that Wordsworth is writing about the growth of the mind will not ask why meeting the Soldier has been significant.

Book Fifth

- 4 *Thou paramount creature*: A reminiscence of *Hamlet* II ii 315-16, where man is 'the paragon of animals' and yet a 'quintessence of dust'.
- 7 *I charm away*: Effectively, 'I leave aside' (the image is of magic, as if Wordsworth has Prospero as well as Hamlet in his thoughts).
- 11-13 *my mind hath looked . . . prime teacher*: Modelled on *FM* 63-8, where God, as the 'great universal Teacher', is to be heard and seen in 'The lovely shapes and sounds intelligible' of the 'eternal language' of nature.
- 13-16 *intercourse with man . . . participate*: God, as the 'sovereign intellect', has established communication with man through the natural world which is the 'bodily image' of his spiritual presence. As in *Tintern Abbey*, man is not merely aware of the 'soul divine', but 'participates' in it, shares its essence.
- 17 *As might appear . . . time*: Among Wordsworth's latest revisions; perception of the One Life is now to be seen as a fallible human way of looking at things.
- 18 *For commerce . . . itself*: as a communication of the human spirit to other human beings.
- 19 *Things worthy . . . life*: works of art and achievements of the human mind which the poet feels deserve to be permanent.
- 21 *must perish*: are bound to perish. In the light of ll. 22-3 it seems that it is for man's own good that human achievements (mere 'garments' in l. 23) are impermanent. True immortality will be spiritual.

- 23-7 *yet man . . . disconsolate*: Wordsworth's meaning seems to be that man, while yet alive (unextinguished), is forced to regret possession of the earthly achievements that he fears to lose, and to live on, abject and disconsolate. The quotation marks draw attention to Shakespeare's Sonnet 64, 13-14, which seem to have influenced both the matter and the cryptic expression of the *Prelude* lines: 'This thought is as a death, which cannot choose|But weep to have that which it fears to lose.'
- 33 *the living presence*: the presence of life (with an unspoken implication that life is the 'soul divine' of l. 16).
- 38 *adamantine holds*: impregnable defences.
- 39-40 *passion . . . soul sublime*: Passion is not merely identified with 'highest reason' (as experienced by the 'soul sublime'), but tacitly equated with imagination, described at XIII 166-70 as 'reason in her most exalted mood'.
- 41 *The consecrated . . . sage*: works (sacred, because they represent the highest achievements of the human spirit) of the imagination and of the intellect (to be equated, respectively, with poetry and mathematics at ll. 104-9 below).
- 44-8 *Oh, why . . . frail*: Catching the tones of Milton's lament, 'why was the sight|To such a tender ball as the eye confined' (*Samson Agonistes* 93-4), Wordsworth asks why works of art could not be imprinted on a substance that has the same durability as the human mind that conceived them. It is a question that could be asked only by a poet who feels the mind and human emotion to have the permanence of natural forms.
- 49 *a friend*: Almost certainly Coleridge (despite the fact that the poem as a whole is addressed to him). There is little to support Smyser's suggestion in 'Wordsworth's Dream of Poetry and Science', *PMLA* 1956, 269-75, that the friend might be Michel Beaupuy, the poet's French mentor in 1792.
- 53 *on the front of*: immediately following.
- 55 *kindred hauntings*: similar anxieties; cf. *Brothers* 236, 'hauntings from the infirmity of love'.
- 56 *Whereupon I told*: Not until the *Prelude* revisions of 1838-9 does Wordsworth claim to have experienced the dream of the arab Quixote himself. De Selincourt, for one, thought the 1805 version of events more probable.
- 59-60 *famous history . . . Cervantes: Don Quixote*.
- 67 *Exempt . . . injury* Poetry and geometry have in themselves a perfection (while those who profess them are subject to the 'injuries' of time and chance).
- 71-139 The great dream-sequence of *The Prelude* has unexpectedly a learned source, in Adrien Baillet's *Vie de Descartes* (1691); see Smyser, cited at 49n. above. Wordsworth has transformed the second of two dreams that Descartes is recorded as having experienced in November 1619. Descartes' dream takes place in a library, and the two 'books' it concerns are literally so: a dictionary and a collection of poetry.
- 75 *an uncouth shape*: 1850 sets up a parallel between the arab Quixote and the Discharged Soldier, also first perceived as 'an uncouth shape' (1805 IV 402).
- 79 *A lance he bore*: Quixote at one point famously uses his lance to tilt at windmills (believing them to be giants).

- 88 *Euclid*: Greek mathematician of the third century BC, whose *Elements* was the basic textbook of geometry used by Wordsworth at Hawkshead Grammar School and (less assiduously) at Cambridge.
- 97 *ode*: Wordsworth regarded *Tintern Abbey*, because of 'the impassioned music of its versification', as having 'the principal requisites of an ode'.
- 104-9 *The one . . . hope*: Lines quoted by De Quincey from memory, and brilliantly commented on, *Recollections* 168-9:

Wordsworth was a profound admirer of the sublimer mathematics; at least of the higher geometry. The secret of this admiration for geometry lay in the antagonism between this world of bodiless abstraction and the world of passion . . . in a great philosophical poem of Wordsworth's, which is still in MS; and will remain in MS until after his death, there is . . . a dream, which reaches the very *ne plus ultra* of sublimity in my opinion, expressly framed to illustrate the eternity, and the independence of all social modes or fashions of existence, conceded to these two 'hemispheres', as it were, that compose the total world of human power - mathematics on the one hand, poetry on the other: 'The one that held acquaintance . . .'

- 115 *engendered*: created (literally 'bred'); cf. *Brothers* 205-6, 'youth and age|Engendering in the blood of hale four score', where Wordsworth is consciously imitating Shakespeare (*Merchant of Venice* III ii 67-8).
- 116 *cleave unto*: stick with; cf. the woman's vow in the Marriage Service, 'and forsaking all other, cleave only to him'.
- 133 *charge*: burden; perhaps 'responsibility'.
- 137-9 *Whereat I waked . . . side*: As he rounds his dream off with a return to the book and landscape by which it was prompted, Wordsworth shows his awareness of the dream as a literary form, and almost certainly has Chaucer's early vision-poems in mind.
- 151-2 *the blind and awful lair|Of such a madness*:

One hasn't in the dream thought of the arab as mad at all, and neither the associations of Don Quixote nor the poet's own identification have led one to think of his mind as a 'blind and awful lair'. The image is violent, shocking, an intrusion of personal terrors into poetry that has seemed to be decorous and assured . . . One is left wondering whether at some level Wordsworth was confronting the possibility that he himself could be mad, crazed by protracted internal thought, deluded in his mission and his aspirations. (*BV* 207-8).

- 153,156 *Enow*: Archaic plural form of 'enough', used for its poetic quality, but (like 'clomb', IV 1) present in Cumbrian speech.
- 156-8 *yea, will I say . . . manifest*: Evidence, according to Owen's political reading, that Wordsworth 'foresaw the imminent collapse of Western civilization under French aggression.'
- 164 *casket*: Immortal verse is 'coffined', subjected to mortality, within the destructible earthly book; cf. the 'shrines so frail' of l. 48.
- 168 *the best of other thoughts*: the thought of books, nominally Wordsworth's theme in Book V.
- 171 *travelling back among those days*: returning in his thoughts (and in the narrative of his poem) to childhood.

- 172 *play an ingrate's part*: be ungrateful; cf. God's unamiable reference to Adam, *PL* III 97–8, 'Ingrate, he had of me|All he could have'.
- 178 *slender accents*: soft tones; Maxwell draws attention to the 'slender-notes' of the redbreast (Cowper, *Task* VI 78), cited by *OED* as the first usage of the word in such a context.
- 178–9 *some tale|That did bewitch me then*: Cf. Wordsworth's later references to fairy-stories and *The Arabian Nights* (ll. 364–9 and 482–500 below). In 1847 he recalled the happiness of his 'earliest days at school' in terms of being at liberty 'to read whatever books [he] liked' (*Memoirs* I 10). *Don Quixote* is cited, alongside Fielding, *Gil Blas* and Swift.
- 180 *O friend . . . soul*: Coleridge had addressed Wordsworth in very similar terms in the version of *Dejection: An Ode* printed in the *Morning Post* on 4 October 1802 (Wordsworth's wedding day): 'O lofty poet, full of life and love,|Brother and friend of my devoutest choice . . .'
- 201 *native prose or numerous verse*: 'in prose or numerous verse' (*PL* V 150); because of the counting of 'feet' involved, verse was often referred to as 'numbers'. *native natural* (not adjusted to metre).
- 206 *trumpet-tones of harmony*: Homer (representing classical poetry) and the river of Jewish song (the Scriptures) are followed in Wordsworth's thoughts by Milton, whose verse, uniting the two traditions, 'became a trumpet, whence he blew|Soul-animating strains' (*Scorn Not the Sonnet* 13–14).
- 219–22 *speak of them as powers . . . God*: Wordsworth's own hope was that his poetry might 'become|A power like one of nature's' (XII 311–12).
- 222 *Or His pure Word . . . revealed*: A reference to Christ's miraculous incarnation as the Word (Logos) become flesh; inserted in revised *MS D*, probably late 1832.
- 228 *pest*: plague, epidemic; probably modelled on Cowper, *Task* IV 500–1, 'vain the attempt|To advertise in verse a public pest'. Wordsworth turns out to have in mind the late eighteenth-century plague of rationalist educational theories, which might have deprived him and Coleridge of their wandering as children imaginatively through literature.
- 238 *noosed*: fitted with a halter.
- 239 *several*: separate.
- 244–5 *till it hath yielded . . . scythe*: The ox is not turned out to grass until after the first crop of hay has been cut – in terms of the poet's metaphor, till the mower (seen almost as a god) has received the first fruits as an offering. Again Wordsworth is drawing his imagery from Cowper, always present where *The Prelude* adopts a satirical voice: 'of its fruits he sends|Large prelibation' (*Task* V 573–4).
- 256–7 *Early died . . . mother*: Wordsworth's mother died suddenly in March 1778, when he was nearly eight. He clearly sees no incongruity as the verse moves abruptly from hen to parent.
- 259–60 *She left us destitute . . . together*: Note the unconscious resentment (and compare the envy of II 261, 'No outcast he, bewildered and depressed'). The family was split up at Ann Wordsworth's death, Dorothy, aged six, being sent to Halifax to be brought up by distant relatives (on the grounds that as a girl she couldn't properly grow up in an all-male household). William was sent to school at Hawkshead a year later, where he and his brothers lived in lodgings.
- 260–2 *Little suits it . . . others' blame*: Wordsworth thinks it improper to praise his

mother by comparison with the relatives who have helped to bring up her orphaned children: Dorothy's first extant letter (to Jane Pollard, July 1787) refers to 'the ill nature of all my relations', and adds:

Many a time have William, John, Christopher, and myself shed tears together, tears of the bitterest sorrow. We all of us, each day, feel more sensibly the loss we sustained when we were deprived of our parents, and each day do we receive fresh insults.

- 268 *for times to come*: 1805 'from those to come'; a small revision that wholly changes the meaning.
- 278 *overweeningly*: presumptuously.
- 283-4 *from regards . . . promises*: Wordsworth's mother had enjoyed life for what it was, without demanding restlessly whether it had fulfilled its promises, given her her due.
- 292-3 *the monster birth . . . times*: The 'monster birth', or prodigy, is created by the plague of educational theories, hinted at in ll. 223-45 above. Wordsworth's drift has indeed been scarcely obvious.
- 294-369 Wordsworth's satirical portrait of the Infant Prodigy created by artificial systems of education was composed in February 1804 to complement *There Was A Boy* (ll. 389-422 below, now first incorporated in *The Prelude*), with its portrayal of education through nature. Broadly the debate could be seen as Locke (*Thoughts on Education*, 1690) and the inculcation of knowledge, versus Rousseau (*Emile*, 1762) and freedom to be a child. But Wordsworth, as De Selincourt points out in a long and useful note, goes beyond Rousseau in his willingness 'to stand aside and leave nature and the child to themselves'. Dorothy Wordsworth's letter to Jane Marshall of 19 March 1797 shows that in the upbringing of Basil Montagu (entrusted to their care in 1796, and now four years old) she and the poet avoided not only system but Rousseau's coercive pointing of the lessons of nature (see l. 334n. below).
- 298-346 The Infant Prodigy is among the most comprehensively revised passages in *The Prelude*. The final version is 27 lines shorter than 1805; 35 lines were cut and eight added.
- 301-3 *Selfishness . . . his name*: Harry Sandford in Thomas Day's morally improving *Sandford and Merton* (1783) has precisely the goody-goody image that Wordsworth is attacking.
- 304 *Dumb creatures . . . nun*: Wordsworth, who saw Chaucer as the master of the satirical portrait, has in mind the affected tenderness of the Prioress (*General Prologue* 143-50).
- 306-8 *he is garnished . . . ridiculous*: 'Goodness' is set off to the best advantage: the child's remarks ('notices') are clever, knowing, and his sense of the ridiculous is sharp.
- 311 *licensed*: unrestrained; cf. Lear's 'all-licensed Fool' (I iv 201).
- 313 *read lectures*: speak learnedly.
- 315 *panoply complete*: full armour; cf. Cowper, *Task* II 345, 'armed himself in panoply complete'.
- 315-18 *fear itself . . . Touches him not*: To be incapable of fear is to be shielded from the major formative influence on Wordsworth's own childhood: 'and I grew up|Fostered alike by beauty and by fear' (I 305-6).

322 *terms of art*: learned terms, jargon.

325-7 *cushion of divine . . . head*: Wordsworth's image is suggested by Cowper's 'plump convivial parson' (*Task* IV 595-8), who 'lays'

His reverence and his worship both to rest
On the same cushion of habitual sloth.

The parson's cushion becomes an emblem ('type') of his 'thought profound' because the bible rests on it in front of the pulpit.

328-30 *The ensigns . . . maps*: Flags, orb and sceptre, symbolizing kingship, are replaced by scientific instruments as emblems of the prodigy's intellectual rule.

331 *Ships he can guide . . . sea*: De Selincourt draws attention to Locke's boast in *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1690):

I now live in the house with a child . . . [who] knew the limits of the four parts of the world, could readily point, being asked, to any country upon the globe . . . and could find the longitude and latitude of any place, before he was six years old. (*Educational Writings*, ed. J.L. Axtell, 289)

332 *cunning*: sophistication, complexity.

334 *He knows the policies of foreign lands*: With the prodigy's cult of knowledge compare Basil Montagu's natural curiosity, described by Dorothy Wordsworth on 19 March 1797:

You ask to be informed of our system respecting Basil. It is a very simple one – so simple that in this age of systems you will hardly be likely to follow it. We teach him nothing at present but what he learns from the evidence of his senses. He has an insatiable curiosity which we are always careful to satisfy to the best of our ability. It is directed to everything he sees: the sky, the fields, the trees, shrubs, corn, the making of tools, carts, &c, &c, &c. He knows his letters, but we have not attempted any further step in the path of book learning. Our grand study has been to make him happy . . .

337-8 *He sifts . . . trust*: Coleridge, whose views on this topic were probably very close to Wordsworth's, had written to Poole on 16 October 1797:

I have known some who have been *rationaly* educated, as it is styled. They were marked by a microscopic acuteness; but when they looked at great things, all became a blank and they saw nothing – and denied (very illogically) that anything could be seen . . . [They] called the want of imagination judgment, and never being moved to rapture, philosophy.

339-40 *The country people . . . experiments*: To the ignorant it seems that the child may be searching for forbidden knowledge. Maxwell points to the magician Glendower's 'deep experiments', *Henry IV Part I* III i 492.

345 *cistern*: water-butt, rain-barrel.

328 *trainer*: gardener (in this case); cf. *Richard II* III iv 63-6.

346-9 *old grandame earth . . . forlorn*: On the face of it, a reversal of *Intimations* 77ff. (also written in February 1804). In the Ode earth, as foster-mother, 'fills her lap with pleasures of her own', tempting the imaginative child to

- forget his former existence; here, 'grandame earth' (a conflation of *Henry IV Part I* III i 31 and 33) grieves that the unimaginative child rejects her bounty.
- 350 *Now this is hollow*: Cf. 'Now this is fulsome' from Cowper's account of the 'theatrical clerical coxcomb' (*Task* II 455) on whom later in the year Wordsworth based the 'pretty shepherd' of VII 544-66.
- 361 *pound*: impound, imprison.
- 362 *pinfold*: a pound, enclosure for stray animals.
- 364-7 *Oh, give us . . . St George*: Wordsworth shared Coleridge's view that reading fairy tales 'habituated' the child's mind 'to the vast', gave it 'a love of the great and the whole' (to Poole, 16 October 1797). The wishing-cap of Fortunatus transported him wherever he wished to go; Jack's coat made him invisible while killing giants; Sabra, daughter of the King of Egypt, was rescued by St George from a dragon, and duly married him.
- 370-422 A sequence put together early in 1799, probably with *The Recluse* rather than *The Prelude* in mind, and forming Wordsworth's first attempt to use *There Was A Boy* as part of a larger discussion of education. In its original form the sequence opened, 'There are who tell us that in recent times|We have been great discoverers'.
- 371-2 *Who with a broad highway . . . futurity*: The 'workmen' (educationalists) are tacitly compared to Milton's Sin and Death who in *Paradise Lost* build a bridge over Chaos to their new empire on earth (X 282-305). *froward* wayward.
- 382-3 *would confine . . . engines*: Erasmus Darwin (*Botanic Garden* I i 289-92) had predicted excitedly in 1791 that steam would soon provide power for 'the slow barge', 'the rapid car' and 'the flying-chariot'; despite his *Prelude* reference to 'the very road', however (l. 381), Wordsworth in 1804 is likely to have in mind static engines (pumps, or perhaps machine-loom) that are bolted down. Trevithick's first 'steam-carriage' was tested in 1801.
- 389-422 Lines published in *Lyrical Ballads* in 1800 as *There Was A Boy*, and regarded by Wordsworth as showing 'one of the earliest processes of nature in the development' of imagination (Preface to *Poems* 1815). In the original draft of *MS Jf*, October 1798, *There Was A Boy* concluded at l. 413, and (despite its impersonal opening line) was offered as the poet's own experience.
- 390 *Winander*: Windermere.
- 401 *Responsive to his call*: responsive to my call (*MS Jf*). For the original version read similarly 'my' for 'his' in ll. 405, 408, 410, and 'I' for 'he' in 406.
- 408 *far into his heart*: De Quincey comments beautifully:
This very expression, 'far', by which space and its infinities are attributed to the human heart, and to its capacities of reechoing the sublimities of nature, has always struck me as with a flash of sublime revelation. (*Recollections* 161)
- 410 *unawares*: unconsciously; the word points to a link with the central moment of *The Ancient Mariner* (also a poem about the reciprocal relationship of man and nature): 'A spring of love gushed from my heart,|And I blessed them unaware' (ll. 276-7).
- 412-13 *that uncertain heaven . . . lake*: 'Had I met these lines running wild in the

deserts of Arabia, I should have instantly screamed out "Wordsworth!" (Coleridge to Wordsworth, 10 December 1798).

414-22 Added to *There Was A Boy* early in 1799, and present in the text as published in *Lyrical Ballads* 1800; see 370-422n. above. As elsewhere in *The Prelude*, Wordsworth blends different facts and events to form an imaginative whole. Though presenting himself as the mimic-hooter of the original poem, he implies in the Fenwick Note (1842) that he had written with William Raincock in mind. Raincock did not however die as a schoolboy at Hawkshead; the person who did so was John Tyson, buried on 27 August 1782: (*Wordsworth's Hawkshead* 56) at the age of twelve (the figure mentioned in 1850, as against ten in 1805).

425 *spoken of erewhile*: At IV 14.

433-5 *easily indeed . . . arts and letters*: An unexpected comment. With its young Cambridge headmaster, William Taylor (d. 1786; aged 32), Hawkshead had for a brief period remarkably high academic standards. Wordsworth later claimed to have been a year ahead of his contemporaries in mathematics when he arrived at the university (*Memoirs* I 14). *arts and letters*: literature ('letters') and other branches of study.

450-72 *Well do I call . . . ghastly face*: Written c. January 1799 as the first element in the 'spots of time' sequence; 1799 I 258-74.

450-2 *the very week . . . valley*: Mid-May 1779.

454-6 *that very week . . . not what*: An elaboration belonging to February 1804.

465 *a fish, up-leaping, snapped*: 'a leaping fish disturbed' (1799).

444-6 *Drew to the spot . . . deep*: An attempt to dramatize the incident that tends instead to impinge on the child's solitary experience.

470 *the dead man*: Records show that Joseph Jackson, schoolmaster of Sawrey at the far end of Esthwaite Water, was drowned on 18 June 1779. So much, at least, is fact.

472-81 *a spectre shape . . . poesy*: Added in February 1804 with somewhat confusing effects. Wordsworth wishes to tie his 'spot of time' into the discussion of early reading, but in so doing he not only weakens the strong original conclusion ('Rose with his ghastly face', 1799 I 279), but plays down his former emphasis on the sublime. In 1799, where the Drowned Man is the first element of the 'spots of time' sequence, the episode is classed in an important link-passage (1799 I 279-87, not found in the later texts) among 'tragic facts|Of rural history, that impressed' the child's mind.

With images to which in following years

Far other feelings were attached (1799 I 284-5)

Like the succeeding 'spots', the Esthwaite experience comes, through images implanted in the mind, to have an imaginative value that it did not possess at the time. In 1805 this implication disappears.

484 *abstract*: extract; selection; *The Arabian Nights* made such an impression on Coleridge as a child that his father burned it (to Poole, 9 October 1797).

497 *Religiously*: scrupulously.

524-7 *adventures endless . . . extravagant*: The old warrior (dismantled by time as though he were the castle he once defended) spins stories out of the ideals and ambitions amongst which he wandered as a young man.

- 533 *elements*: natural forces; cf. *Lear* III ii 16, 'I tax not you, you elements, with unkindness'.
- 534 *I guess not . . . past*: Wordsworth, who has probably just completed *Intimations*, refuses to speculate on the sources of the child's imaginative power. At l. 561 below, however, he refers to man's 'native continent' of pre-existence.
- 536 *dubious*: doubtful (because the light is uncertain).
- 541 *stinted*: diminished, curtailed.
- 544-5 *yoke-fellows*|*To custom*: Cf. 'the might of souls . . . while yet|The yoke of earth is new to them' (III 178-80) and years that 'bring the inevitable yoke' (*Intimations* 127).
- 548 *Forgers of lawless tales*: makers of fairy stories and romance, not subject to the 'law' of probability.
- 549-50 *the ape*|*Philosophy*: rationalist philosophers (Locke probably above all), who would suppress imagination in the upbringing of the child.
- 554-5 *to whom*|*Earth crouches*: to whom earth itself is obedient.
- 555 *the elements are potter's clay*: The elements themselves (not the natural forces of l. 533, but earth, air, fire, water, out of which matter is compounded) become malleable in the hands of such writers.
- 558-67 *It might demand . . . hold of us*: A reference once again to *The Recluse* (cf. *WIFT* 103, 'what might demand a loftier song'), but in an unexpected context. Uncertain as to where material for the philosophical centrepiece of his poem is to come from (see the desperate letter to Coleridge, 29 March 1804), Wordsworth places his emphasis, not on higher truths and imaginative intensity, but on the calmer pleasures of 'growing youth' - 'sober truth, experience, sympathy'. 1850 drops the reference to *The Recluse* (as one would expect), and gives back to childhood its priority.
- 560-2 *the same isthmus . . . human life*: Wordsworth takes up Pope's famous image of man 'Placed on this isthmus of a middle state' between beast and god (*Essay on Man* II 3) and uses it to convey his sense of life as a journey from the 'native continent' of pre-existence to adult participation. Somewhat incongruously the isthmus (a thin connecting strip of land) in his case consists of the boy's developing response to literature and poetic language.
- 575-81 *Thirteen years . . . love*: Wordsworth's first extant poem is a celebration of the bicentenary of Hawkshead Grammar School, written at the age of fifteen in 1785. Though openly an imitation of Pope, it is very skilful, and suggests one who has been reading poetry well for some while. 1850 'twice five years' is not necessarily a boast.
- 583 *that dear friend*: John Fleming, mentioned at II 352-3.
- 589 *conning*: memorizing; cf. *Intimations* 102, 'The little actor cons another part'.
- 594 *in their splendour overwrought*: De Quincey (*Recollections* 166) identifies the verses as by Gray and Goldsmith, both poets whom Wordsworth knew well, though he came to think them 'overwrought'.
- 598 *inordinate*: As Maxwell points out, 'unordered', rather than the modern sense of 'excessive'.
- 601-6 *What wonder . . . Kept holiday*: A version of *Pedlar* 315-24, concluding in a touch from *Intimations* 32-3, 'with the heart of May|Doth every beast keep holiday'.
- 619-24 *Visionary power . . . proper home*:

How much effect are the winds really felt to have in Wordsworth's sentence? Where is it that the enigmatic 'darkness makes abode' – in winds? or in words? What would be the difference if one left the winds out, and read: 'Visionary power|Attends upon . . . the mystery of words'? A great deal falls into place if one realizes that the mighty poet whom Wordsworth has in mind in ll. 618–19 is not Shakespeare, or Milton, or even the Coleridge of the *Eolian Harp*, but his own earlier self. A cluster of verbal echoes refers us back to Alfoxden, and what may well be the earliest lines in *The Prelude*:

and I would stand
Beneath some rock, listening to sounds that are
The ghostly language of the ancient earth
Or make their dim abode in distant winds.
Thence did I drink the visionary power. (1799 II 356–60).

The Wordsworth of Book V is looking back to spring 1798 as the period at which it had seemed possible to perceive directly the transcendental forces of nature . . . In effect he is saying, visionary power is inherent in the language I then used. (*BV* 224–5)

- 625–6 *circumfused . . . light divine*: In place of the spiritual 'presence' of *Tintern Abbey*, 'interfused' through the natural world, we have the enveloping light of imagination, described by Coleridge in *Dejection: An Ode* as 'This light, this glory, this fair luminous mist,|This beautiful and beauty-making power' (ll. 62–3).
- 627 *turnings intricate*: As of a winding road.
- 605 1805 630–7 follow this line in the final MS but are omitted by Wordsworth's executors.

Book Sixth

- 1 *Furness Fells*: Mountainous district of the south-western Lake District, including Coniston and Hawkshead.
- 5 *the fowler's lure*: lure used by falconers to bring back their hawks; almost certainly an allusion to Marvell's *Horatian Ode*, copied by Wordsworth into *MS W*, used for assembling the five-book *Prelude* of spring 1804; 'where when he first doth lure,|The falconer hath her sure' (ll. 96–7).
- 6 *Granta's cloisters*: Cambridge (Granta being the old name for the River Cam above Cambridge).
- 11 *Clothed . . . fern*: By common consent, one of two great lines added to the 1850 *Prelude*; cf. 1850 III 63, 'Voyaging through strange seas of thought alone'. *fern*: bracken.
- 17 *my own unlovely cell*: There is no reason to think that Wordsworth's room at St John's (now much altered) was anything but rather handsome.
- 23–5 *read more . . . More promising*: Cut in 1838–9; did the aging Wordsworth think he had been too generous to his undergraduate self?
- 25 *Two winters*: 1788–9, 1789–90.
- 26–8 *many books . . . perused*: Wordsworth draws learnedly on Francis Bacon, *Of Studies (Essays, 1597)*, in making his point that he pursued no settled

- academic reading: 'Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested.'
- 34-5 *some personal concerns. . . me*: Wordsworth was conscious of family pressure to do well in the University exams and become a Fellow of his College. His uncle, Christopher Cookson, had based a successful career on doing so, becoming tutor to the children of George III; Wordsworth's younger brother, Christopher, was to become a Fellow (and finally Master) of Trinity.
- 39 *A course of independent study*: For Dorothy's account of her brother's reading in 'Italian, Spanish, French, Greek and Latin, and English' (but never within the set course of mathematics), see III 371n.
- 42 *This bastard virtue*: Wordsworth fears to offend his relations by planning a course of independent study, so make a virtue of not doing so.
- 54 *Unbiased . . . unawed*: See III 245n.
- 55 *The poet's soul . . . time*: Wordsworth wrote his first major published poem, *An Evening Walk*, while he was an undergraduate.
- 58-60 *of which No few . . . life*: Wordsworth had published *An Evening Walk* (1793), *Descriptive Sketches* (1793) and *Lyrical Ballads* (in three editions, 1798-1802); his unpublished work was still more impressive, including *Salisbury Plain*, *The Borderers*, *The Ruined Cottage*, *Peter Bell*, the two-part *Prelude*, *Home at Grasmere*, many shorter poems (including *The Leech Gatherer* and *Intimations*), and now the sudden *Prelude* extension. Hopes for the future centred on composition of a philosophical section for *The Recluse* (which would never be completed), and a 'dramatic' section (*The Excursion*, planned by March 1804, published in 1814).
- 61 *this very week*: Wordsworth was 34 on 7 April 1804; Book VI had been started at the end of March, and was complete by 29 April.
- 50-2 *yet for me . . . Her dew is on the flowers*: A moving statement of faith, created in a revision of early 1832. Wordsworth must be aware as he writes of Coleridge's beautiful terms of praise in *Biographia Literaria*. Chapter 4 had singled him out as carrying the feelings of childhood into adult life, shedding an imaginative light on 'forms, incidents and situations, of which, for the common view, custom had bedimmed all the lustre, had dried up the sparkle and the dew-drops.'
- 67-9 Owen points to an appropriate borrowing from Milton, *Reason of Church Government* (Yale ed. I 810), 'I might perhaps leave something so written to aftertimes, as they should not willingly let it die.'
- 81 *our groves*: Gardens belonging to St John's, bordering the Cam, including the site now occupied by the Victorian fourth court.
- 90 *A single tree*: Connected by the poet's wording with the tree (doubtless in the Lake District) mentioned at *Intimations* 51-2: 'But there's a tree, of many one, | A single field which I have looked upon'.
- 91-100 *an ash . . . outlandish grace*: Reed points to Wordsworth's dependence on Erasmus Darwin, *The Botanic Garden* (1791), I iv 541-4:

Round her tall elm with dewy fingers twine
 The gadding tendrils of the adventurous vine;
 From arm to arm in gay festoons suspend
 Her fragrant flowers, her graceful foliage bend . . .

102-4 *The hemisphere . . . tread*: According to the account given in *Biographia*

- Literaria* chapter 14, it had been agreed during the planning of *Lyrical Ballads* that Coleridge was to contribute poetry of the supernatural, and Wordsworth 'to give the charm of novelty to the things of every day'.
- 128 *Delusion . . . incident*: Facetious allusion to *Winter's Tale* IV iv 124-5, 'a malady|Most incident to maids'.
- 129-34 *that overprized . . . simplicity and sense*: the practice of making Latin verses by piecing together phrases from classical authors. Coleridge, in *Biographia Literaria* chapter 1, sees the habit as leading to English 'translations of prose thoughts into poetic language', and recalls a conversation with Wordsworth that probably lies behind these lines.
- 142 *Indian*: Red Indian, as I 302, and elsewhere in Wordsworth.
- 124-8 *by what process led . . . without end*: Arrived at in revisions of 1832 and 1838-9. *Those immaterial agents*: the abstract truths of geometry.
- 150-7 *frequently I drew . . . God*: As in the *Quixote Dream* (V 49-139), geometry takes its place alongside poetry, both giving entrance to 'the one|Surpassing life' that is beyond space and time.
- 160-74 *one by shipwreck thrown . . . his feeling*: Drawn from a passage in John Newton's *Authentic Narrative* (1764) copied by Dorothy Wordsworth into *MS 18A* in 1798-9. Newton, slaveship captain turned evangelist, became Vicar of Olney and a friend of Cowper:

One thing, though strange, is most true. Though destitute of food and clothing, depressed to a degree beyond common wretchedness, I could sometimes collect my mind to mathematical studies. I had bought Barrow's *Euclid* at Plymouth . . . it was always with me, and I used to take it to remote corners of the island by the seaside, and draw my diagrams with a long stick upon the sand. Thus I often beguiled my sorrows, and almost forgot my feeling.

Newton seems to have been an influence both on Wordsworth's *Borderers* and on *The Ancient Mariner*.

- 189 *tenderness*: susceptibility to impressions (Johnson's *Dictionary*)
- 192 *melancholy . . . blood*: According to the ancient theory of humours (known to Wordsworth through Ben Jonson among others) melancholy was caused by black bile.
- 173 *fits of spleen*: gloom, dejection (not here associated with ill-nature).
- 193-6 *that loved . . . luxurious gloom*: Dorothy Wordsworth, aged 21, writes to Jane Pollard on 30 August 1793: 'the melancholy pleasure of walking in a grove or wood while the yellow leaves are showering around me, is grateful to my mind beyond even the exhilarating charms of the budding trees'. By 1818, Peacock in *Nightmare Abbey* feels that he is fighting a crusade against black bile and poetic affectation.
- 202 *'Good-natured lounging'* *Castle of Indolence*: (1748), stanza 15; Wordsworth draws upon Thomson's poem at III 546-9, and had written a witty imitation in 1802.
- 188-9 Wordsworth's exaggerated self-reproach belongs to 1838-9.
- 190 *works of art*: man-made beauties, as opposed to natural scenes.
- 209 *Dovedale*: Derbyshire beauty spot (Lucy Gray is said to have lived 'among the untrodden ways|Beside the springs of Dove').
- 212-13 *seemed another morn|Risen on mid noon*: Taken word-for-word from Adam's response to the approach of Raphael, *PL* V 310-11.

- 216-17 *Now . . . Restored to me*: Dorothy is first 'restored' to her brother at Penrith in the summer of 1787, having been living with cousins in Halifax since the death of their mother nine years before.
- 218 *A gift then first bestowed*: A pun on the name Dorothy; cf. Coleridge to Wordsworth, 23 July 1803, wishing that on their Scottish tour they could make do with a pony, 'and side-saddle for our sister, Gift-of-God'.
- 220-1 *that monastic castle . . . stream*: Brougham Castle, beside the River Emont near Penrith, is not ordinarily 'monastic' (Peele Castle, for instance, was built by Cistercian monks). Wordsworth perhaps means 'secluded'.
- 222-6 *A mansion . . . Inspired*: Wordsworth is attracted by Sidney's having written *Arcadia* for his sister, the Countess of Pembroke, but was misled (perhaps by Clarke, *Survey of the Lakes*, 1787) in thinking that Sidney had visited Brougham.
- 226 *dome*: building (Johnson gives the modern sense as secondary).
- 233 *Another maid*: Mary Hutchinson, Dorothy's close friend, whom William had known since childhood, and whom he married on 4 October 1802.
- 242-5 *o'er the Border Beacon . . . golden gleam*: Having revised the Penrith 'spot of time' (1799 I 296-327) during his recent work towards a *Prelude* in five books, Wordsworth now (April 1804) draws on lines connecting the Beacon and early love which, together with the 'spots of time' sequence, have been laid aside, and will not be encountered by the reader in the final text until XI 320-2:

Upon the naked pool and dreary crags,
And on the melancholy beacon, fell
The spirit of pleasure and youth's golden gleam . . .

- 248 *I seem to plant thee there*: Coleridge and Wordsworth met eight years later, in September 1795.
- 249 *Far art thou wandered . . . health*: Coleridge sailed for Malta aboard the *Speedwell* (note the pun in l. 256) on 9 April 1804, but was thought by the Wordsworths to have left on 22 March.
- 260 *gales Etesian*: Mediterranean winds (about which Wordsworth probably knew little); given the puns in this passage, Reed may be right to hear in 'Etesian' a 'near anagram' of Coleridge's phonetic spelling of his initials, 'Esteecce'.
- 255 *several*: separate.
- 261 An alexandrine, created in Wordsworth's final revisions, probably by mistake.
- 274-84 *Of rivers, fields . . . long exile*: Wordsworth weaves references to three of Coleridge's most personal poems, *Frost at Midnight* (1798), *Dejection* (the unpublished version, April 1802) and *To the River Otter* (1796) into an evocation of his time as a 'liveried' (uniformed) schoolboy at the 'Blue-coat School', Christ's Hospital, in the City of London. Coleridge's 'long exile' from his Devonshire birthplace, Ottery St Mary, began in September 1782, when he was nine. His father had died the previous year.
- 286-8 *scarcely had I . . . thither guided*: Wordsworth left Cambridge (settling for a BA without honours) in January 1791; Coleridge matriculated in October.
- 291-2 *What a stormy course . . . followed*: Coleridge began by winning a University prize; he was the most learned and distinguished undergraduate of his day,

and could well have been the most successful. Instead he left Cambridge in December 1794 without a degree. Under the influence of William Frend (tried by the University in 1792 for his 'subversive book' *Peace and Union*, and deprived of his Fellowship), Coleridge had become a Unitarian, and increasingly involved in the Cambridge political scene. He had also got into debt, talked of suicide, and (in December 1793) joined the army as a means of escape. Bought out by his family, he returned to the University, but during the summer vacation of 1794 met Robert Southey with whom he planned a commune (Pantisocracy – the rule of all) in Pennsylvania. His thoughts now on fund-raising, he turned to writing. When at the end of the year he left Cambridge the *Morning Chronicle* was publishing his *Sonnets on Eminent Characters* (heroes of the radical movement). In academic terms Cambridge had been a disaster, but the sonnets were good. Coleridge was launched on his career.

297. *still*: always, ever.

308-II *toils abstruse . . . words for things*: Wordsworth distinguishes between Coleridge's reading in medieval scholastic philosophy ('the schoolmen') and his excited personal idealism, in which language was used for its own sake, having (in Wordsworth's view) no stable basis. It is not clear whether Wordsworth refers to Platonism as the antecedent of Coleridge's Unitarian pantheism, or sees it in more general terms.

326 *battened on*: grew fat upon.

326-9 *But thou hast trod . . . regrets*: Though Wordsworth is attempting to praise and reassure, he clearly has in the back of his mind *Samson Agonistes* 597-8: 'My race of glory run, and race of shame [And I shall shortly be with them that rest' (*Samson Agonistes* 597-8).

333-4 *now to these . . . leads me*: Having in early March decided to break up the nearly completed five-book *Prelude* and work towards a longer poem, Wordsworth takes as his subject in Book VI the tour of France and the Alps made in the Cambridge long vacation of 1790. He is tracing his own wanderings to be in step with Coleridge, but in doing so he brings to his poem a new political aspect and new scope for exploration of the sublime. Wordsworth has laid aside for future use the Spots of Time (finally XI 257-388) and Climbing of Snowdon (finally XIII 1-65), but cannot have known at this stage in any detail where his poem was leading him.

338-42 *When the third summer . . . distant Alps*: Wordsworth and his Cambridge friend Robert Jones (from mountainous North Wales) set off 'staff in hand, and carrying each his needments tied up in a pocket-handkerchief, with about £20 apiece in [their] pockets' (*Memoirs* I 14).

344-5 *Nor entertained . . . dear*: Wordsworth (who should have been studying for his final exams) told no member of the family – not even Dorothy – before setting out.

346 'For nature then . . . To me was all in all' (*TA* 73-6).

347 *mighty forms*: shapes taken by the Alps in his imagination.

353 'Now stand you on the top of happy hours' (Shakespeare, Sonnet 16.)

354 *human nature seeming born again*: 'Few persons', Southey wrote to Caroline Bowles on 13 February 1824,

but those who have lived in it, can conceive or comprehend what the French Revolution was, nor what a visionary world seemed to open upon those who were

just entering it. Old things seemed passing away, and nothing was dreamt of but the regeneration of the human race.

357 *that great federal day*: 14 July 1790, first anniversary of the fall of the Bastille, was celebrated all over France as the Fête de la Fédération. Helen Maria Williams watched the King in Paris swear an oath of allegiance to the new constitution, and 'caught with enthusiasm the general sympathy':

It was the triumph of human kind, it was man asserting the noblest privileges of his nature, and it wanted but the common feelings of humanity to become in that moment a citizen of the world. (*Letters Written in France* (1790) 14)

360-1 *Southward thence We took our way*: Wordsworth kept no journal, but listed the places where he and Jones slept in their three months' journey, of 1,500 miles; through France, Switzerland, northern Italy, southern Germany and the Netherlands; see Donald Hayden, *Wordsworth's Walking Tour of 1790* (Tulsa, 1983).

372 *umbrage*: shade; cf. *Descriptive Sketches* 48, 'road elms rustling thin above my head'.

384-7 *Upon the bosom . . . rocks*: Wordsworth and Jones took a boat again on the Rhine, but the bulk of the tour was on foot. *Soane* the River Saône (anglicized as a monosyllable).

396 *great spouses*: The marriage of King and People; see 357n. above. Louis had no intention of keeping his oath. Shortage of money had forced him in May 1789 to summon the Estates General, which no French king had done since 1611. He now found himself forced (he hoped temporarily) to accept the position of constitutional monarch.

399-401 *some vapoured . . . saucy air*: In their joy the 'vapouring' (boastful) delegates resemble the drunken Caliban, Stephano and Trinculo, 'So full of vapour that they smote the air|For breathing in their faces' (*Tempest* IV i 172-3).

403-4 *Guests welcome . . . of old*: Not one of Wordsworth's closer parallels. Three angels visit Abraham in *Genesis* 1.15 to tell him that he is to have a son. Sarah, being 90, laughs; Isaac is duly born.

407, 413 The pleasure Wordsworth takes in the memory, and the infectiousness of his rhythms ('And round and round the board they danced again'), make it hard to believe with Reed that there is an ironic reference to dancing at the murder of General Dillon in 1792, or at the execution of Louis XVI.

409-12 *We bore a name . . . glorious course*: By the 'Glorious Revolution' of 1688 the English had replaced the unpopular Catholic monarch, James II, conferring sovereignty jointly upon Mary Stuart and her Dutch husband, William of Orange. In the process Parliament took steps to limit the sovereign's powers, setting up what to French eyes seemed an enviable constitutional monarchy.

411 *give us hail*: drink to us.

422 *rout*: party.

420-88 Drafted in early summer 1808 as *Tuft of Primroses* 509-69, worked up in *Prelude* MSS A and B, and inserted in the text of C, c. 1819. Behind these blank-verse accounts lies *Descriptive Sketches* 53-79, written in 1792,

two years after Wordsworth's visit to the Chartreuse with Jones on 4-5 August 1790.

- 422-6 *our eyes had seen . . . 'blameless inmates:* Wordsworth's claim that he and Jones saw soldiers at the Chartreuse in August 1790 has no basis in fact. It appears in *The Prelude* because: (1) Wordsworth when writing *Descriptive Sketches* in France, in summer 1792, includes a dramatization of the recent expulsion of the monks (carefully describing the section in his synopsis as 'Present state of the Grande Chartreuse'); (2) when drafting the *Tuft of Primroses* (his most forlorn attempt at *The Recluse*) it suited his theme of ruin and loss to play up the drama of the expulsion - 'Alas for what I see! the flash of arms . . .'; (3) it seemed pointless in working up the *Prelude* text to distinguish the events of 1790 and 1792 - more so as the 'military glare' was needed as introduction to nature's rebuke, ll. 431ff.
- 429 *silence visible:* Cf. Milton's 'darkness visible' (*PL* I 63).
- 430-5 Nature's rebuke in its original form includes a version of ll. 427-8:

'Stay your impious hand . . .
 Oh leave in quiet this embodied dream,
 This substance by which mortal men have clothed -
 Humanly clothed - the ghostliness of things
 In silence visible and perpetual calm.
 Let this one temple last! Be this one spot
 Of earth devoted to eternity!' (*Tuft of Primroses* 537-45)

- 436 *St Bruno:* Founder of the monastery, and of the Carthusian order, in 1084.
- 439 *sister streams of Life and Death:* The Guiers Vif and Guiers Mort, rivers below the monastery, referred to in *Descriptive Sketches* 73 as 'the mystic streams of Life and Death'.
- 440-1 *my heart|Responded:* Wording that first occurs in *MS D*, 1832; in previous versions ll. 441-71 (or their equivalent) are spoken by the voice of nature.
- 443 *Hail . . . time:* 'Black mists dissolve, break galling chains for ever!' (*MS C*).
- 464-5 *untransmuted shapes . . . inhabitants:* Mountains surviving unchanged from previous ages, and inhabiting the blue ('cerulean') upper air.
- 480 *lawns:* open space between woods (Johnson). *Vallombre* 'Name of one of the valleys of the Chartreuse' (note to *Descriptive Sketches*).
- 483-6 *In different quarters . . . storms:* 'Alluding to crosses seen on the tops of the spiry rocks of the Chartreuse, which have every appearance of being inaccessible' (note to *Descriptive Sketches*). Mountain-top crosses are still to be seen in the area.
- 487-8 *Yet then . . . insecure:* A striking revision of 1838-9; *MS C* and *D* fair copy read: 'From desperate blasphemers insecure'.
- 428 *A march . . . of military speed:* Dorothy comments wonderingly to Jane Pollard on 6 October 1790:

They have frequently performed a journey of thirteen leagues (thirty-nine miles, you know) over the most mountainous parts of Switzerland, without feeling more weariness than if they had been sauntering an hour in the groves of Cambridge.

- 437 *coverts:* hidden places.

- 443 *patriarchal dignity of mind*: Dignity such as that of the Old Testament prophets (Owen suggests the dignity of Adam and Eve in Paradise).
- 509-16 Inserted in 1832. Wordsworth was becoming increasingly conscious of 'evening shadows'.
- 448 *A green recess*: Shown to Dorothy and Mary by the poet on their Continental tour of 1820, and clearly having special associations for him. To Dorothy the 'shady deep recess' seemed 'the very image of pastoral life, stillness and seclusion' (*Continental Tour, Journals*, ed. E. de Selincourt, II 280).
- 452-61 *That day we first . . . realities*:

It is not reality that Wordsworth is reconciled to by the glacier, but a symbolic enactment of the potential in which as a poet he needed to believe. Mont Blanc, however beautiful, remains Mont Blanc, a 'soulless image' because it is itself and no more. The mountain represents stasis, the death of imagination, as opposed to stillness, which for Wordsworth contains the possibility of development, change, rebirth . . . The glacier at Chamouni was especially well designed to stir the living thought, release the poet from realities . . . Its 'dumb cataracts' may sound again, once more haunt the listener like a passion; its 'streams of ice' may flow again, frozen though they be; the 'five rivers broad and vast' may be motionless, stopped for ever in their course, but the poet's imagination perceives them still as waves, for ever ready to move on . . . (BV 191).

- 460 *Five rivers broad and vast*: As one might expect, Wordsworth in 1792 had seen the glacier in terms of the picturesque:

Five streams of ice amid her cots descend,
And with wild flowers and blooming orchards blend
(*Descriptive Sketches* 682-3).

- 473 *such a book*: the 'book' of nature, and of man in his primal state.
- 483 *The willow wreath*: Symbol normally of the lover's melancholy (as with Viola's 'willow cabin at [the] gate', *Twelfth Night* I v 256), here used to evoke the young poet's sorrows.
- 489-90 *an under-thirst* *Of vigour*: Among many examples of Wordsworth's sense of inner space, cf. 'Hushed, meanwhile, | Was the under-soul' (III 539-40).
- 495 *clomb*: climbed; see IV in.
- 507 *scruple*: hesitation.
- 523 *Translated by the feelings*: The peasant's answers are about the road; Wordsworth and Jones are concerned with the inference to be drawn.
- 524-5 Impressive as the juxtaposition is between Wordsworth's discovery that the Alps have been crossed, in l. 524, and his famous lines upon imagination (ll. 525ff.), this was not the sequence of composition. Rough pencil drafts on the tiny sheets of *MS WW* (beautifully reproduced, Reed I 356-7) show that Wordsworth originally sought to define his sense of anti-climax in the simile of the Cave of Yordas (finally VIII 711-27).
- 525-37 In August 1790, imagination (anticipated pleasure at crossing the Alps) had been disappointed. Now, almost fourteen years later, the power asserts itself, taking over the poet's mind as he writes, 'usurping upon' faculties that usually 'rule'; for an extended discussion, see *BV* 174-202, 'Usurpation and Reality: Spring 1804'. Citing Robert A. Brinkley (*WC* 1981, 122-

5), Owen suggests that 1850 may represent 'a real change of mind', in which Wordsworth tries to apply his lines on the grandeur of imagination to the feelings of 1790 rather than to his experience when writing *The Prelude* in 1804.

526 *the eye and progress of my song*: Wordsworth's elegant zeugma is modelled on *Much Ado About Nothing* IV i 229, 'the eye and prospect of my soul'. Rising before the poet's inner eye, the 'unfathered vapour' (a version of Coleridge's 'fair luminous mist' of imagination) halts the progress of the poem.

601 *but with a flash*: Wordsworth's use of the singular (as opposed to 1805 plural, 'flashes that have shown to us'), together with his removal of the 'visitings of awful promise', tends to make his experience seem unique and unsharable. In 1805, as in *Tintern Abbey*, the poet is one of us — we all 'see into the life of things'.

542 *something evermore about to be*: For Wordsworth the supreme value is not achievement, but aspiration; over the years his poetry gives form to 'an obscure sense|Of possible sublimity' (*Pedlar* Fragment, 1798); the feeling 'that we are greater than we know' (*Duddon* Conclusion, 1820).

543-6 *banners militant . . . reward*: The mind fights beneath 'the banners' (in the name) of 'effort, and expectation, and desire'. It cannot, therefore, win. In Blake's words, 'Energy is eternal delight' (*Marriage of Heaven and Hell*).

547 *access of joy*: Cf. the *Pedlar*'s 'high hour|Of visitation from the living God', glossed similarly as an 'access of mind' (*Pedlar* 107).

559 *rent*: ravine.

561-4 *The torrents . . . voice were in them*: Wordsworth has brought together impressive details from two different parts of *Descriptive Sketches*: 'Torrents shooting from the clear blue sky' (l. 130) and

Black drizzling crags that, beaten by the din,
Vibrate as if a voice complained within (ll. 249-50)

565/6 Inserted between these lines c. 1819, and forming part of the *Prelude* text for twenty years, until the revisions to *MS D*, are six magnificent lines:

And ever as we halted, or crept on,
Huge fragments of primeval mountain spread
In powerless ruin, blocks as huge aloft
Impending, nor permitted yet to fall;
The sacred death-cross, monument forlorn
Though frequent, of the perished traveller;

566-72 *The unfettered clouds . . . without end*: It may come as a surprise that Wordsworth at this apocalyptic moment writes with Pope in his thoughts — as well as the expected guides, Milton and Coleridge. Pope defines the Christian tradition from which Wordsworth has subtly departed (and in doing so throws light upon Wordsworth's most bizarre image of unity, 'blossoms upon one tree'):

All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
Whose body nature is, and God the soul

That (changed through all, and yet in all the same) . . .
 Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
 Glows in the sun, and blossoms in the trees . . .

(*Essay on Man* II 266-72)

Cf. V 560-2n.

- 568 *workings of one mind*: For the sake of Wordsworth's simile, the 'one mind' does not have to be divine, but in addition to Pope (ll. 566-72n. above), cf. the Unitarian poetry of Coleridge:

There is one mind, one omnipresent mind

Omnific; his most holy name is love. (*1796 Religious Musings* 114-5)

- 570 *Characters*: letters, handwriting, signs; according to Burnet's *Sacred Theory of the Earth* (1685) the Alps had been formed by the waters of the Flood; cf. Wordsworth's *Pedlar* revisions of spring 1798: 'the day of vengeance when the sea/Rose like a giant from his sleep and smote/The hills' (Butler 166-7). To the imagination, however, the features of the Ravine of Gondo suggest not merely past apocalypse, but the one to come.

- 572 *Of first, and last, and midst, and without end*: A line that perfectly invokes Wordsworth's independence of his predecessors. Milton in 1667 had correctly applied the same words to God - 'Him first, Him last, Him midst and without end' (*PL* V 165). Coleridge had echoed them in 1795 in a passage written for Southey's *Joan of Arc*, that defines the appropriate use of man's God-given powers:

Him first, Him last, to view

Through meaner powers and secondary things

Effulgent, as through clouds that veil his blaze.

Dealing in the numinous, not the specifically Christian, Wordsworth (fully aware of Milton and Coleridge) leaves out the references to God.

- 573 *an Alpine house*: Wordsworth and Jones spent the night of 17 August 1790 at the Spittal (inn, lodging-house) of Gondo.

- 579 *innocent sleep Macbeth*: II ii 33-4, 'innocent sleep,|Sleep that knits up the ravelled sleeve of care'.

- 587 *Locarno's Lake*: Lake Maggiore.

- 592 *Abyssinian privacy*: 'Into this part of the globe', the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (3rd ed. 1797) wrote of Abyssinia, 'the admission of travellers has been supposed extremely difficult, and their return from thence almost impracticable'. Wordsworth may have in mind the Happy Valley of Johnson's *Rasselas*, which had rather too much 'Abyssinian privacy'.

- 592-5 *I spoke . . . roofed with vines*: See *Descriptive Sketches* 80ff.:

More pleased my foot the hidden margin roves

Of Como, bosomed deep in chestnut-groves . . .

The viewless lingerer, hence, at evening sees

From rock-hewn steps the sail between the trees,

Or marks, mid opening cliffs, fair dark-eyed maids

Tend the small harvest of their garden-glades . . .

- 622–4 *by report misled . . . from ours*: The hour is sounded, followed by the quarters (in each case a single bell): 1.45 would therefore sound like 4.00 a.m. *report*: sound, message.
- 631 *bewildered*: lost in the wilds (be-wild-ered).
- 636 *a dull red image of the moon*: The moon's red image is seen in *Descriptive Sketches* 219–20 by the unfortunate Grison gypsy.
- 643–4 *insects . . . woods*: 'And insect buzz that stuns the sultry woods' (*Descriptive Sketches* 224).
- 645 *more by darkness visible . . . than*: When is an oxymoron not an oxymoron? Answer: when you alter the syntax. In Wordsworth's playful allusion to *PL* I 63 (imitated at 1850 429 above), it is not that the darkness is visible, but that shapes are visible as the result of themselves being dark.
- 661–72 *Let this alone . . . worship*: Wordsworth had shown a similar anxiety in *Descriptive Sketches* not to be taken for a picturesque traveller: 'I had once given to these sketches the title of picturesque, but the Alps are insulted in applying to them that term' (note to l. 347). The case is more complex than Wordsworth makes it sound; he had learned much from the picturesque tradition (see XI 152–7n.).
- 667 *a mean pensioner*: one who ungenerously draws pleasure and makes no (imaginative) return.
- 672–80 *whate'er I saw . . . circuitous*: Experience of the Alps is seen as flowing into the larger river of the poet's education by bringing out in him the qualities of grandeur and tenderness (the sublime and beautiful again) – the first directly (through response to the mountains); the second by a more subtle process.
- 684–5 *the nations hailed . . . expectancy*: the new political order for which they had waited so long.
- 688–9 *the Swiss exulting . . . neighbours*: As the oldest republic in Europe, Switzerland rejoiced that France too should have achieved a measure of political reform (the setting up of a republic was not contemplated by the French themselves in 1790, and didn't take place till September 1792).
- 691 *the Brabant armies*: armies of the short-lived Belgian republic, suppressed by Leopold II in December 1790.
- 693 *scarcely of the household . . . life*: hardly grown up.
- 699 *proper*: own (French *propre*).

Book Seventh

- 1–56 Written originally as an introduction to Book VIII in early October 1804, when Wordsworth returned to work on *The Prelude* after a break during the summer months. For the somewhat complicated circumstances (and for speculations as to the dating of VII as a whole), see Introduction.
- 3 *the city's walls*: See I 1–54n. and 8n. The note at this point in the first edition – 'The city of Goslar, in Lower Saxony' – is unhelpful and not written by Wordsworth.
- 4–13 *I sang . . . last primrose-time*: Giving the impression that the Glad Preamble (1805 I 1–54) had been his starting-point, Wordsworth distorts the sequence of *Prelude* composition, yet contrives to give a broadly accurate picture. The two parts of the 1799 poem (which in truth preceded the

- Preamble) are represented in the 'short-lived transport' and the 'flowing awhile in strength', and the three-year gap in *The Prelude's* composition, December 1799-January 1804 ('a little space|Before last primrose-time') is correctly marked. 1850's late emendation of 'Five years' in line 1 to 'Six changeful years' has the effect of misdating the Preamble, but correctly taking the origins of *The Prelude* back to 1798.
- 5 *dithyrambic*: fervent, wild.
- 8 *Scafell*: Locally pronounced 'Scawfle' (note the scansion), and often regarded as the Lake District's highest mountain, though Scafell Pike is slightly taller. *Blencathra*: Chosen for the beauty of its name, and its imposing presence (seen from the road to Keswick and Coleridge).
- 14-20 *assurances . . . hindrance*: Wordsworth had at first assured himself that he could complete *The Prelude* in five books for Coleridge to take with him to the Mediterranean. Then in March (see Introduction) he had decided to work towards a larger poem and doubtless set himself further targets. In the first six months of the year he had written extraordinarily fast. One 'outward hindrance' during his summer lay-off (July-September) had been the birth of his daughter Dora on 16 August.
- 30 *their rough lord . . . surly north*: Modelled on Thomson's 'surly Winter', *Seasons* I 11-12: 'And see where surly Winter passes off|Far to the north, and calls his ruffian blasts . . .'
- 39-41 *A glow-worm . . . Clear-shining*: For the value Wordsworth set on glow-worms, and their 'small circles of green radiance' (*Evening Walk* 278), see especially *Among All Lovely Things My Love Had Been* (April 1802).
- 50-3 *my favourite grove . . . poet's task*: Wordsworth experiences afresh the 'mild creative breeze' of the Preamble (I 43), but does so now in the setting of Grasmere. He composed frequently in the Ladywood fir-grove near Dove Cottage, and valued it especially for its associations with his brother John; see *When to the Attractions of the Busy World* (1800).
- 57-9 *Returned . . . gonnèd students*: By spending his final long vacation on a tour of the Alps Wordsworth had forfeited any chance of academic success. He returned to Cambridge in October 1790, and took a BA without honours in January 1791.
- 62 *unfenced regions*: commons; cf. Young, *Night Thoughts* V 740-1: 'Our needful knowledge, like our needful food,|Unhedged, lies open in life's common field . . .'
- 63-5 *Yet undetermined . . . time*: The true reason why Wordsworth seemed to have a little time was that his family expected him to go into the Church, which he couldn't do until he was 23.
- 72-4 *at least two years . . . visitant*: Reed conjectures that Wordsworth first visited London at the end of summer 1788 (*Chronology of the Early Years* 81n.).
- 78 *abroad*: outside, away from home.
- 80 *affections*: emotions.
- 85 *Alcairo*: ancient Memphis; De Selincourt points to *PL* I 717-19:

Not Babylon

Nor great Alcairo such magnificence

Equalled in all their glories . . .

- Persepolis*: Ancient capital of the Persian Empire, sacked by Alexander the Great; cf. Marlowe, 'Is it not passing brave to be a king, | And ride in triumph through Persepolis?' (*Tamburlaine I* 717-18).
- 86 *report by pilgrim friars*: Wordsworth has in mind *Purchas His Pilgrimes* (1625), which in 1797 had provided Coleridge with the opening words of *Kubla Khan*.
- 94-7 *among our flock . . . traveller*: Philip Braithwaite, who became schoolmaster at Far Sawrey, near Hawkshead, and was visited by Wordsworth in old age (*Wordsworth's Hawkshead* 39-46).
- 103 *vanity*: fantasy.
- 110 *equipages*: Perhaps 'carriages with attendant servants' (Norton), but more probably 'retinues', as in life's 'equipage', *Intimations* 105.
- 114-17 *young Whittington . . . Articulate music*: A dual reference: to the legendary Richard Whittington who as a boy heard the bells of St Mary-le-Bow ring out: 'Turn again Whittington, | Thou worthy citizen, | Lord Mayor of London'; and to Coleridge, who as a boy in Devonshire heard the bells ring 'all the hot fair-day . . . | Most like articulate sounds of things to come' (*FM* 35-8).
- 119-20 *by simple faith . . . love*: A change of meaning perhaps, but clearer than 1805.
- 121-83 A sequence that is very heavily revised in the 1830s. The extent of Wordsworth's cutting is not evident at a glance, as there are considerable insertions too.
- 123 *Vauxhall and Ranelagh*: London pleasure-gardens, offering balls, masquerades, fireworks etc. Vauxhall, in Lambeth, was larger and more popular; Ranelagh, in Chelsea, charged half a crown admission (five shillings on fireworks-nights) and had a rotunda where Mozart once played.
- 130 *Whispering Gallery of St Paul's*: Gallery round the inside of the dome, famous for its acoustic effects. A whisper comes full circle.
- 131 *Giants of Guildhall*: Carved wooden figures of Gog and Magog (1708), destroyed in the London blitz in 1940 (and unimpressively replaced after the war).
- 132 *Bedlam . . . gates*: Famous London mental hospital, demolished in 1814, whose name (a corruption of Bethlehem) has entered into the language. The figures, representing forms of madness, were carved c. 1680 by Caius Gabriel Cibber, father of Pope's hero in the 1743 *Dunciad*; hence the reference to 'Cibber's brazen brainless brothers' (*Dunciad* I 32).
- 133-41 Inserted in *MS C* c. 1819.
- 135 *Monument*: 202-foot stone column erected by Wren at the point where the Fire of London started in 1666.
- 141 *keen and lively pleasure*: The view that Wordsworth disliked London derives from a series of untypical comments made in 1800, see ll. 700-4n. below. In fact he was delighted as a young man by its colour and bustle, and enjoyed his later visits.
- 144 *prescriptive*: established.
- 149-50 *thou monstrous ant-hill . . . world*: Wordsworth's exuberant image is introduced in *MS D* of 1838-9, condensing the original transition of 1805.
- 154-243 As Reed suggests, Wordsworth is drawing on the magnificent and mischievous letter that Lamb wrote to him on 30 January 1801 about the pleasures of city life:

I have passed all my days in London, until I have formed as many and intense local attachments as any of you *mountaineers* can have done with dead nature. The lighted shops of the Strand and Fleet Street; the innumerable trades, tradesmen and customers; coaches, wagons, playhouses; all the bustle and wickedness round about Covent Garden; the very women of the town, the watchmen, drunken scenes, rattles – life awake, if you awake, at all hours of the night; the impossibility of being dull in Fleet Street; the crowds, the very dirt and mud, the sun shining upon houses and pavements; the print-shops, the old-book stalls, parsons cheapening books; coffee-houses, steams of soups from kitchens, the pantomimes – London itself a pantomime and a masquerade – all these things work themselves into my mind and feed me without the power of satiating me. The wonder of these sights impels me into night walks about her crowded streets, and I often shed tears in the motley Strand from fulness of joy at so much *life*.

- 160 *Still*: always.
- 162 *chariots*: carriages of pleasure, or state (Johnson).
- 164 *scavenger*: street, or crossing, sweeper, needful when roads were muddy and ladies wore long dresses.
- 165 *hackney-coaches*: coaches for hire inside London, opposed by Wordsworth to the long-distance coaches (Royal Mails among them) of the next line.
- 167 *drayman's team*: matched horses pulling a dray (low-sided cart) probably carrying beer barrels.
- 170 *punctual*: at a certain point (*Latin* punctus).
- 182 *Boyle*: Robert Boyle (1627-91), chemist, founder-member of the Royal Society.
- 183 *some Scotch doctor*: James Graham (1745-94) was a confidence trickster who set up a Temple of Health at the Adelphi in London in 1779. Among other remedies customers were offered ethereal medicines, milk and earth baths, and a 'celestial bed' to cure sterility at £50 a night. Wordsworth in his satirical *Imitation of Juvenal* (1796) referred to Graham as 'great high-priest' in 'Health's own temple', but doubted 'If on the couch celestial gold can shed|The coarser blessings of a peasant's bed' (Oxford I 306).
- 188 *tracts of thin resort*: areas where there were fewer people.
- 190 *raree-show*: peep-show carried in a box.
- 198 *thrilled*: pierced (as in 'nostril', where the nose is thrilled).
- 199 *cries*: Hawkers' proclamations of wares to be sold in the street (Johnson). London cries were famous as the subject of aquatinted costume-studies by Francis Wheatley and others.
- 200 An octosyllabic line, created during the copying of *MS A* in 1805-6, and persisting (presumably unnoticed) until revisions of 1832 produced the 1850 reading.
- 202-4 *privileged regions . . . gardens green*: The Inns of Court; Wordsworth seems to have lived with his brother Richard at Staple Inn at the end of 1792, and with the elder Basil Montagu at Gray's Inn early in 1795 (*Chronology* I 138, 163).
- 209 *Here files of ballads . . . dead walls*: De Selincourt draws attention to Mary Cowden Clarke's recollection in *My Long Life* (2nd ed. 2-3) of ballads for sale, c. 1815, at Cumberland Gate (now Marble Arch): 'The railing adjacent to the gate was at that period (about 1812) permitted to be strung

with rows of printed old-fashioned ballads, such as *Cruel Barbara Allen*, etc.' *dead*: blank, windowless.

213-14 *That - fronted . . . masquerade*: The advertisement to which Wordsworth points is 'in disguise' - designed to tempt the viewer with its 'most imposing' opening word. *MS X* reveals the secret withheld in later texts: "'Inviting" is the leading word, a bait [Which cannot be resisted]' (Reed II 324). 'Imposing' has an elegant double meaning: 'impressive' and 'deceitful'.

216-20 *Behold a face . . . arms*: Samuel Horsey, 'King of the Beggars', is vividly described by Lamb in *A Complaint of the Decay of Beggars in the Metropolis*, *Elia* 270-1:

a well-known figure, or part of the figure, of a man, who used to glide his comely upper half over the pavements of London, wheeling along with most ingenious celerity upon a machine of wood . . . He was a grand fragment, as good as an Elgin Marble . . . the man part of a centaur from which the horse-half had been cloven in some dire Lapithan controversy.

226 *field-ward*: Towards the country, still in walking distance (Paddington, for instance, was an outlying village in 1804). *decency* modesty, propriety (implying behaviour suited to one's place in an ordered society).

229 *images*: statuettes, presumably of the Virgin Mary and the Saints.

242 *Lascars*: From the East Indies.

243 *negro ladies . . . gowns*: 'Negro' was not a disparaging term at this period. Wordsworth's sympathy for the sufferings of black people is seen in the sonnets of 1802, *To Toussaint L'Ouverture* and especially *We Had A Fellow Passenger*: 'She was a negro woman driven from France, | Rejected like all others from that race . . .'

248-9 *mimic sights . . . reality*: Representations, such as the panoramas that were a novelty at the end of the eighteenth century (ll. 256-64) or models of famous places (ll. 265-79).

252-3 *subtlest craft . . . purest ends*: imaginative creation.

256-61 *the painter . . . pinnacle*: Thomas Girtin's *Eidometropolis* (on view when Lamb was showing Wordsworth and Dorothy the sights of London in September 1802) was 9 feet high and 216 feet in circumference, and painted from a rooftop near Blackfriars Bridge. It was last heard of in Russia.

257 *circumambient*: surrounding (Latin *circumambeo*, to go round).

258 *pencil*: paintbrush (normal eighteenth-century usage).

260 *commissioned spirits*: The spirit who comes immediately to mind - Satan - had no 'commission' (authority) to place Christ upon a pinnacle.

265 *more mechanic artist*: craftsman.

275-6 *Of Tivoli . . . every tree*: Following Maxwell, the two-line version from *MS C* has been preferred to the three lines of *A* (Reed 275-7), which were first left incomplete, then inconclusively revised (Norton at this point is a composite). Wordsworth would have known that Horace, whose Sabine farm was at Tivoli, associated the grotto there with the sibyl Albunea (*Odes* I vii 10-15). The temple, much painted by eighteenth-century British artists at Rome, is dedicated to Vesta.

288 *Half-rural Sadler's Wells*: Sadler's Wells avoided the licence and controls to

which London theatres were subject, by being in 'half-rural' Islington, three miles north.

- 291 *mauger*: despite (French *malgré*). Regarded by Johnson as archaic, and not elsewhere used by Wordsworth, who perhaps thought it appropriately theatrical: *Twelfth Night* III i 153, 'mauger all thy pride'.
- 293 *rope-dancers*: A print of Sadler's Wells in 1795 depicts 'TIGHT ROPE DANCING by Mr Richer, whose elegant and admired performances will be relieved and contrasted by the comic dances of Mr Dubois, as Clown of the Rope'; Harry Bearol, *Theatre Notebook* (1951-2) VI 12-14.
- 294 *posture-masters*: contortionists *harlequins*: clowns, traditionally in parti-coloured costume. The bluetit of *Kitten and the Falling Leaves* (featuring the infant Dora Wordsworth in autumn 1804) is 'Lithest, gaudiest harlequin, | Prettiest tumbler ever seen (ll. 72-3).
- 298 *the laws and progress of belief*: An early expression of the Romantic interest in dramatic illusion, leading to Coleridge's famous definition of 'that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment that constitutes poetic faith' (*Biographia Literaria* chapter 14).
- 306 A quotation from Samson's (and Milton's) lament for his blindness, *Samson Agonistes* 86-9:

The sun to me is dark
And silent as the moon
When she deserts the night,
Hid in her vacant interlunar cave.

- 307 *and faith must needs be coy*: Faith has to be 'coy', submissive, if it is to accept such trickery (1850 neatly removes the awkwardness of 1805).
- 310 *here*: At Sadler's Wells.
- 288 '*forms and pressures of the time*': An appropriate, if inexact, quotation from *Hamlet* III ii 22-4, where the Prince gives his instructions to the Players: 'hold . . . the mirror up to nature', 'show virtue her own feature; scorn, her own image; and the very age and body of the time, his form and pressure'. *pressure*: stamp, impression (and therefore, 'image'), as on a coin.
- 312 *Thespian times*: the period of Thespis, Greek tragedian of the sixth century BC.
- 314-26 *some domestic incident . . . marriage bonds*: The 'daring' (presumptuous) brotherhood at Sadler's Wells had on 25 April 1803 put on 'an operatic piece in rhyme' by Charles Dibdin, called *Edward and Susan*, based on a 'domestic incident' in the Lake District. In October 1802, Mary Robinson, daughter of the innkeeper at Buttermere, had married the Hon. Augustus Hope, a Scottish MP and brother to the Earl of Hopetown. Or so it was believed when Coleridge wrote the first of his five articles on the subject for the *Morning Post*. Then it came out that Mary had been deceived, Hope was plain John Hatfield, and the marriage was bigamous. On their walking tour of Scotland, Wordsworth, Coleridge and Dorothy contrived to be present in Carlisle in August when Hatfield was condemned for forgery, then a capital offence (*Journals* I 196). Coleridge (full of righteous indignation, and rather too interested in the wickedness that had been displayed) went to see him in his cell. Hatfield was hanged in September.

De Quincey gives a fascinating and largely credible account of the affair (*Recollections* 66-73).

318 *doubtless treated with irreverence*: The play had been seen in June 1803 by Southey (who slept), Lamb (who laughed), and Mary Lamb, who wrote to the Wordsworths wittily describing the evening's entertainment.

322 *'a bold bad man'*: Applied by Spenser to the magician Archimago: 'A bold bad man that dared to call by name|Great Gorgon, Prince of Darkness and dead night' (*FQ* I i stanza 37).

328-9 *When first we saw . . . unheard of*: Wordsworth and Coleridge were waited on by Mary Robinson at the Fish Inn, Buttermere, on 11 November 1799. They could have heard of her by this time had they read Budworth's *Fortnight's Ramble To The Lakes* (1792), where her praises are sung, pp. 202-4.

332 *mien*: manner, looks.

341-5 *For we were nursed . . . stream*: The River Cocker flows from Buttermere to Wordsworth's birthplace, Cockermouth. The poet's sense of himself and Mary as therefore linked in childhood is expressed (tenderly and a little facetiously) through a quotation of *Lycidas* 23, 'For we were nursed upon the self-same hill'. *several* separate.

349 *thy image rose again*: Cf. *TA* 62, 'The picture of the mind revives again', and the rising up of imagination at VI 525-9.

354-5 *Beside the mountain-chapel . . . infant*: Wordsworth could certainly have had local knowledge, but it is odd that his is the only reference to Mary's having had a child by Hatfield. Despite the seeming implication of 'This memorial verse', Mary herself lived on at Buttermere, and on 8 March 1808 (when she was 30) married a local farmer. Perhaps Wordsworth in consigning her to a limbo of the imagination was attempting to distract the curious. De Quincey recalls her as continuing to wait at table, and becoming 'disagreeable' as the result of visitors' attentions.

368-9 *to deal about|Articulate prattle*: make baby-talk.

374 *had been*: would have been.

378 Discarded *MS X* reading (1804): 'A miracle, an infant Hercules'.

387 *treated*: given treats; cf. 'tis a pretty baby-treat' (*Kitten and the Falling Leaves* 41).

397-8 *those who walked . . . fiery furnace*: Shadrak, Meshak and Abednego, 'upon whose bodies', when Nebuchadnezzar had them cast into the furnace, 'the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed' (*Daniel* 3.27).

398-405 *He hath since . . . abasement*:

The boy amid his fruit and glasses, oaths and indecent speech, has achieved what the child of the Ode cannot achieve, travelling as he does 'daily farther from the east'. Stopped in his perfection, as the Virgin of Michelangelo's *Pietà* is stopped in hers, he represents the power of imagination over time. (*BV* 301-2)

MS C: shows that Wordsworth replaced this great imaginative poetry with a version of 1850 370-6 as early as c. 1819.

374 *preferred*: brought forward, raised to heaven.

412 *little more than three short years*: Wordsworth, who was in London early in 1791, harks back to autumn 1787 when he travelled south for the first time, to enter Cambridge. 1850, 'Four rapid years', alters little.

- 434 *The sorrow of the passion*: The sadness of his feelings.
 406 *By Siddons . . . power*: Sarah Siddons (1755-1831), sister of Charles Kemble, and the greatest actress of her day, was at her peak in the 1790s. Dorothy Wordsworth saw her twice in early December 1797 (see letter to Christopher); Wordsworth nowhere records having seen her, but presumably did.
 440 *lustres chandeliers*
 459-60 *and makes them|Prate somewhat loudly*: 'Thy very stones prate of my whereabouts' (*Macbeth* II i 58). *prate* speak.
 470-3 *sportive and alert . . . rustling leaves*: Clearest of the links between Book VII and *Kitten and the Falling Leaves* (c. late October 1804); see Introduction and 294n., 387n. above.
 478 *girlish*: innocent, naïve.
 490-5 *in itself|Humble . . . sustained*: A version of *Pedlar* 76-81 of February 1798:

things though low,
 Though low and humble, not to be despised
 By such as have observed the curious links
 With which the perishable hours of life
 Are bound together, and the world of thought
 Exists and is sustained.

- The substitution of 'props' (1805) for 'links', and 'Rest on each other' (1805) for 'Are bound together', removes the original Hartleyan implication of beneficial 'chains' of association at work within the mind; cf. III 167n. above.
 505 *obsequious*: obedient.
 506 *suburbs of the mind*: 'Dwell I but in the suburbs|Of your good pleasure?' (*Julius Caesar* II i 285-6).
 507-15 *If aught . . . solitude*: By a paradox, 'real grandeur' is to be found (if at all) in moments when the 'gross realities' of the theatre (actors, scenery) that are bodying forth (making 'incarnate') the world of Shakespeare's imagination (see 1850 484) provoke the mind through their very clumsiness to recognize its own intuitions. 1850 477-80 admits the possibility that acting will at times rise 'to ideal grandeur'.
 517 *titled higher*: with a higher reputation.
 522 *tongue-favoured men*: Cf. Milton's 'Tongue-doughty giant', Harapha (*Samson Agonistes* 1181).
 525-6 *One of whose name . . . Familiarly*: William Pitt, Prime Minister 1783-1801, 1804-6.
 526-8 *a household term . . . Harry talks of*: *Henry V* IV iii 51-5:

Then shall our names,
 Familiar in his mouth as household words -
 Harry the King, Bedford and Exeter,
 Warwick and Talbot, Salisbury and Gloucester -
 Be in their flowing cups freshly remembered.

Dorothy records the emotion she felt in reading the play to Wordsworth in the orchard at Dove Cottage on 8 May 1802.

- 531-2 *hath yoked . . . his car*: proposes to take a long time. Aurora, Goddess of the Dawn, rises from the sea in her chariot, ('car') at daybreak. A further

classical reference, to the Hours (Horae), goddesses of the seasons, seems unlikely.

- 538 *He winds . . . horn*: keeps talking; various heroes from Roland to Astolpho do blow horns, but the chief reference seems to be a facetious one to the gnat of *Lycidas* 28, 'What time the grey-fly winds her sultry horn'.
- 539 *Words follow words . . . sense*: Wordsworth mimics the elegance, and the balanced phrasing, of Pope, in a line satirizing the orator's reliance on mere form; cf. 1850 IV 372.
- 512-43 As Maxwell puts it, 'The praise of Burke is perhaps the most striking single example of insertion in later revision [*MS D* 1832] of sympathies alien to the earlier Wordsworth. The answer to the rhetorical question of ll. 540-3 would seem to be "Yes".' In *Reflections on the French Revolution*, published in November 1790, Burke denounced the still peaceful and constitutional French leadership in terms of 'plots, massacres, assassinations'. Two months later, in *Letter to a Member of the National Assembly*, his paranoia took a more extreme form: power in France was 'guided by the prudence of litigious attorneys and jew-brokers . . . by shameless women of the lowest condition' (p. 3). The Assembly was conspiring to subvert the 'principles of domestic trust and fidelity' by propagating the values of Rousseau's *Nouvelle Héloïse* (a book, be it said, of impeccable morality).
- 514-15 *bewildered men . . . guides*: The group to which (by implication) Wordsworth himself would have belonged. In point of fact, in the early 1790s he had been neither 'confused' nor inclined to listen to Burke. He was a committed republican and admirer of the Revolution. Those dismissed as 'boastful guides' would include Price (*Discourse of the Love of our Country*, 1789), Paine (*Rights of Man*, 1791-2) and Godwin (the first edition of whose *Political Justice* [1793] is committed to the Revolution).
- 520 *stag-horn branches*: At a certain stage the top branches of an English oak tend to die back, the tree forming a second crown from growth sent out lower down the trunk. Through this new foliage older branches protrude, stag-horn-like, because the wood is so hard that they become seasoned instead of rotting.
- 527-8 *the vital power . . . Custom*: An aspect of Burke that Wordsworth, with his consistent belief in community, would always have been drawn to.
- 530 *the allegiance to which men are born*: Allegiance to the monarch, or to a constitution agreed in the past. With Price and Paine, Wordsworth had as a young man refused to accept that future generations could be bound by past decisions. Burke was especially concerned to defend the binding power of the settlement of 1688 that established British constitutional monarchy (while denying that kingship had actually been conferred).
- 531 *froward multitude*: wayward, undisciplined. Wordsworth comes near to recalling Burke's notorious reference to the lower classes in *Reflections* as 'the swinish multitude'.
- 533-4 *the winds . . . chain*: Aeolus, god of winds, kept them chained in a cave. Owen points to Burke's quotation in *Reflections* of *Aeneid* I 140-1 '*Illa se jactat in aula|Aeolus et clauso ventorum carcere regnet*' ('In that hall let Aeolus lord it, and rule in the barred prison of the winds').
- 538-9 *Wisdom . . . in armour*: Athena, representing wisdom, springs at her birth fully armed from the head of Jove.

- 540 *Synod: Parliament.*
- 540-3 *Could a youth . . . uninspired:* Wordsworth's use of the rhetorical question enables him to avoid saying outright that he was himself as a young man inspired by Burke. Haydon's *Diary* quotes him as saying on 23 May 1815: 'You always went from Burke with your mind filled, from Fox with your feelings excited, and from Pitt with wonder . . . at his having had the power to make the worse appear the better reason.'
- 544-50 Inserted in 1838-9 to replace 1805 544-6 and offer a positive view of the Church before the satirical portrait that follows.
- 546-65 Based on Cowper's portrait of the theatrical preacher, *Task* II 430-54, already a model for the Infant Prodigy of Book V (see V 350n.).
- 550 *lead his voice . . . maze:* Maxwell points to Milton, *L'Allegro* 142, 'The melting voice through mazes running'.
- 558-65 *he who penned . . . flock:* Wordsworth has his fashionable preacher refer to three popular works of the late eighteenth century: Solomon Gessner's *Death of Abel* (1758, translated by Mary Collyer 1761), Edward Young's *Night Thoughts on Life, Death and Immortality* (1742-5, quoted in *Tintern Abbey*), and James MacPherson's epic 'translations' *Fingal* and *Temora* (1762-3), sited in north-west Scotland ('Morven') and allegedly from the Celtic poet Ossian. Eloquence in Wordsworth's final image is a shepherd's crook entwined with 'flowers' culled from other men's writings.
- 568 *conventicle:* meeting-place, nonconformist place of worship.
- 570 *With fondness . . . pedestal:* Read: by fondness . . . (1850 clarifies the meaning).
- 576 *candidates for regard:* things, or people, to observe.
- 588 *in parade:* on show.
- 591 *the schools:* academic disciplines, faculties at a university.
- 598-625 Wordsworth's vignette of the workman's love for his child is transferred from Book VIII in the final *Prelude* revisions; for the lines in their earlier form, see 1805 VIII 837-59. Ll. 619-25 were added during the reshuffle.
- 621 *That huge fermenting mass:* London.
- 596-7 *'The face . . . mystery':* In contrast to Wordsworth's return to the rural community of Hawkshead in 1788: 'The face of every neighbour whom I met|Was as a volume to me' (IV 58-9).
- 601-2 *A second-sight procession . . . still mountains:* Wordsworth has in mind the Lake District tradition of 'horsemen-shadows winding to and fro', about which he had first written, *Evening Walk* 183-8.
- 606 *neither knowing me, nor known:* A biblical usage, cf. *Job* 7.10, 'neither shall his place know him any more', and *Ruined Cottage* 144, 'And their place knew them not'.
- 607 *far travelled in such mood:* Both 'far-travelled, while experiencing such a mood', and 'far travelled into a mood of this kind'.
- 615-16 *My mind did . . . waters:* A powerful image of the day: the Industrial Revolution depended on mill-wheels turned 'by the might of waters'.
- 616-19 *and it seemed . . . universe:* In some ways still more impressive is Wordsworth's original draft in *MS X* (c. November 1804):

and I thought

That even the very best of what we know

Both of ourselves and of the universe,
 The whole of what is written to our view,
 Is but a label on a blind man's chest. (Reed I 485)

620-2 *on the shape . . . another world*: Comparison with the benign admonishment of the Leech Gatherer ('a man from some far region sent|To give me human strength and strong admonishment', ll. 118-19) points up the London-beggar's threatening anonymity:

There is no comfort this time in the admonishment; the world across the border is suddenly alien . . . Lulled by the second-sight procession that he has created to render tolerable the endless stream of passers-by, conserve his own identity as an artist, Wordsworth is taken completely by surprise. What if his own life and work - *The Prelude* is after all 'the story of the man and who he was' - could be seen by some remote and dispassionate wisdom as 'but a label on a blind man's chest'? (BV 306)

628-30 *the solemnity . . . stands still*: The stillness that Wordsworth celebrates in his *Sonnet on Westminster Bridge*: of September 1802.

638-9 *The feeble salutation . . . woman*: A prostitute soliciting; accepted by Lamb the city-dweller as merely part of 'the bustle and wickedness' of Covent Garden (letter to Wordsworth, quoted ll. 154-243n. above).

649-51 *the fair . . . St Bartholomew*: Four-day London street-fair, celebrated in Jonson's play (*Bartholomew Fair*, 1615) and visited by William and Dorothy, with Lamb as guide, in September 1802. The fair, held at Smithfield where Protestant martyrs were burned in the reign of Queen Mary (1553-8), typifies for Wordsworth the anarchy of city life.

652 *finished to our hands*: comes to hand ready-made, requiring no additions of the imagination.

656-8 *she shall lodge . . . platform*: Wordsworth, who throughout Book VII has taken a spectator's (or painter's) view of the colour and bustle of London, now wishes to stand above the fair, offer his readers an aerial panorama.

658-61 *What a hell . . . Monstrous*: Consciously evoking Milton's Hell, where 'nature breeds,|Perverse, all monstrous, all prodigious things' (*PL* II 624-5).

687 *phantasma Julius Caesar*: II i 65, 'Like a phantasma or a hideous dream'.

673 *hurdy-gurdy*: stringed instrument; but played with a rosined wheel rather than a bow.

674 *salt-box*: Self-explanatory; a common musical instrument of the time.

681 *The horse of knowledge . . . pig*: Owen points to a 'mare that tells money' seen by Pepys at Bartholomew Fair on 1 September 1668 and a later 'Arabian pony, who performs the most surprising things with cards'. Toby the Sapient Pig, exhibited in London in 1817, 'could spell, read, cast accounts and play cards', not to mention reading people's thoughts, 'a thing never heard of before in an animal of the swine race'.

685 *wax-work*: Madame Tussaud's horrifying collection, made in Paris during the Reign of Terror, came to London in 1802 and is still on show.

688-9 *all Promethean thoughts . . . dulness*: Prometheus made man out of clay; man when he tries to be similarly inventive produces mere anarchy. 'Dulness' would bring the apocalyptic chaos of Pope's *Dunciad* appropriately to mind.

- mill: factory.
- 695–6 *a type not false . . . itself*: As a 'type', or emblem, of the city, Bartholomew Fair is in contrast to the sublime landscape of the Simplon Pass, characterized by 'types and symbols of eternity' (VI 571).
- 700–4 *The slaves . . . end*: Drawn from a passage drafted for *Michael* in 1800, no doubt in an attempt to rationalize the behaviour of Luke in 'the dissolute city'; rightly cut in Wordsworth's final revisions (1839 or later).
- 709–12 *him who looks . . . the whole*: Cf. II 220–6, addressed to Coleridge, to whom 'the unity of all hath been revealed'.
- 745–53 *Think how . . . clouds*: Among Wordsworth's final insertions.
- 721–9 *to the mind . . . relation*: A revised version of *Pedlar Fragment, In Storm and Tempest* 23–31 (early February 1798); Wordsworth had adapted the first 20 lines of the Fragment for *The Prelude* as 1799 II 252–71 (1805 II 322–41) five years before.
- 724 *measure*: stature. *prospect*: internal landscape (the mountain has been internalized, first in its stability, then in its changefulness).
- 738 *meagre lines and colours*: A reflection of Wordsworth's attitude in the last 40 lines, not of Book VII as a whole.

Book Eighth

- 1–61 A version of Book VIII (consisting of ll. 75–661 and other material discussed in the Introduction) is present in *MS Y* and seems to have been composed in October 1804, before the writing of VII. Ll. 1–61, however, were written after VII was finished. Grasmere Fair is introduced as a parallel to London's Bartholomew Fair (VII 648–94) and a way into the already composed studies of the shepherd's life in VIII. For the original opening of VIII, see VII 1–56.
- 1–5 *What sounds . . . green field*: Helvellyn (3,118 feet) looks down on Grasmere's tiny annual fair, described by Dorothy Wordsworth in her *Journal* of 2 September 1802.
- 21 *byre*: cowshed *kine*: cows (the archaic plural, as in Joseph's dream of the seven fat and seven lean kine, *Genesis* 41.2ff.).
- 20 *traffic*: sale.
- 22 *chaffering*: bidding, haggling.
- 24 *bleat the flocks*: A mannerism of eighteenth-century descriptive poetry; cf. Thomson, *Seasons* III 719, 'Vanish the woods'.
- 32–3 *a speech-maker by rote . . . raree-show*: The peep-show's owner knows by heart the speeches used to heighten each scene in turn.
- 34 *mountebank*: 'A doctor that mounts a bench in the market and boasts his infallible remedies and cures' (Johnson). Wordsworth may already be drawing on Joseph Cottle's *Malvern Hills* (1798) as he does in the 1850 revisions; see 1850 48–52n. below.
- 35 *wain*: wagon.
- 36–43 *But one is here . . . restlessly*: Wordsworth's charming vignette of the 'sweet lass of the valley' takes its cue from the more open eroticism of Ben Jonson. Farmers in *To Penshurst* (1616) 54–6 send produce

By their ripe daughters, whom they would commend
 This way to husbands; and whose baskets bear
 An emblem of themselves in plum or pear.

45-55 Added 1838-9, when Wordsworth and Mary (the 'ancient wedded pair' of l. 46) would have been nearly 70.

48-52 'These lines are from a descriptive poem — *Malvern Hills* — by one of Mr. Wordsworth's oldest friends, Mr Joseph Cottle' (note to first edition). Wordsworth had told Cottle the poem was a favourite, and praised the quoted passage as 'super-excellent', in a letter of 27 January 1829. Cottle's lines come from a description of a Whitsun holiday, which Owen suggests may have influenced a number of Wordsworth's detailed observations.

47-8 *the recess* . . . *Magnificent*: A case of Wordsworth being more Miltonic than Milton. Two echoes are linked from *Paradise Lost* Book II ('this vast recess', l. 254, and 'heaven's whole circumference', l. 353), and a Miltonic construction is used in the placing of the noun between two Latinate adjectives ('Circumambient world | Magnificent').

55-61 *them the morning light* . . . *abode*: Wordsworth is reworking a tender passage of Thomson's *Spring*, addressed to 'generous minds', responsive to 'the presence of God in his creation':

For you the roving spirit of the wind
 Blows spring abroad; for you the teeming clouds
 Descend in gladsome plenty o'er the world;
 And the sun sheds his kindest rays for you,
 Ye flower of human race! (*Seasons* I 887-91)

62-74 *With deep devotion* . . . *playmates*: Not part of the main sequence of *MS Y*, which corresponds broadly to Book VIII, but drafted on spare paper near the beginning of the MS. The backward look at London (l. 63) suggests that the lines were composed, or adapted, to form a transition when, c. late November 1804, Book VIII was fitted with its new opening section (ll. 1-61).

64-119 Cut in 1838-9, after extensive attempts at revision, ll. 64-119 (containing two perfect 'spots of time': the floating island and the shepherd and his dog) are a major loss to the 1850 text. It is not clear where Wordsworth's dissatisfaction lay.

75 *complacency*: contentment (without the modern implication of self-satisfaction).

84 *exhalations*: mists, vapours.

86 *Redounding*: overflowing. *vehement* forceful, active.

93-8 *above my head* . . . *island*: As in the episodes of the *Stolen Boat* and the *Waiting for the Horses* (see 1799 I 84n. and 353-5n.), Wordsworth is recalling a scene first treated in his ambitious schoolboy poem *The Vale of Esthwaite* (1786-7):

And on yon summit brown and bare
 That seems such an island in the air
 The shepherd's restless dog I mark . . . (Oxford I 270, 13-15)

- 100-1 *A little pendant area . . . forward*: The inhabitants of Wordsworth's aerial island achieve a stillness and a peace that is the opposite of Claudio's horrifying fantasy of being

imprisoned in the viewless winds,
And blown with restless violence round about
The pendant world. (*Measure for Measure* III i 125-7)

Shakespeare's vision (in this case) is of death as a perpetual restless violence, Wordsworth's (characteristically) is of life stopped in a moment of transcendent calm. (*BV* 289-90)

PL X 313, 'a ridge of pendant rock', may also have contributed to Wordsworth's image.

- 113 *pervious*: passable (Latin *per*, through, and *via*, way).
- 117-19 *that deep farewell . . . regions*: Wordsworth brings these Hawkshead reminiscences to an end with an allusion to the Coniston episode, 1799 II 140-78 (dropped from 1805 Book II), which had itself been based on *The Vale of Esthwaite*.
- 119-43 A paragraph that, as De Selincourt pointed out, is strongly reminiscent in style, construction and phrasing of *Paradise Lost* IV 208-47 (and related passages), while drawing its material from Barrow's *Travels in China* (1804).
- 121-2 *tract more exquisitely fair|Than*: Cf. Milton's dispraising of other paradises by comparison with Eden: 'Not that fair field|Of Enna' (*PL* IV 268ff.), 'Spot more delicious than those gardens feigned . . .' (IX 439ff.).
- 122-3 *that paradise . . . or Gehol's famous gardens*: Barrow who had accompanied the ambassador, Lord Macartney, to China, 1792-4, shows that 'Paradise of Ten Thousand Trees' is the Chinese name for Gehol's gardens. On p. 34 of Barrow, Wordsworth would have noticed a comparison between the western part of Gehol and the grounds of Lowther Castle on Ullswater.
- 127 *China's stupendous mound*: As Owen points out, Barrow refers to the Great Wall as 'a mound of earth cased on each side with bricks or stone'.
- 128 *boon nature's lavish help*:

Flowers worthy of Paradise, which not nice art,
In beds and curious knots, but nature boon
Poured forth profuse . . . (*PL* IV 241-3)

- 130-1 *domes|Of pleasure*: An appropriate allusion to the 'stately pleasure-dome' of *Kubla Khan*.
- 134-7 *foliage taught to melt . . . pursued*:

sweet interchange
Of hill and valley, rivers, woods and plains,
Now land, now sea, and shores with forest crowned,
Rocks, dens, and caves (*PL* IX 115-18)

Obsequious: obedient.

- 152-8 *Man free . . . grace*: After the extravagant claim that the Lake District landscape breathes the 'fragrance' of humanity, Wordsworth offers his social ideal of the independent yeoman-farmer, or 'statesman' (Michael for instance), working his own land in his own time. *native*: natural.

- 156-8 *still followed* . . . *grace*: Simplicity, beauty and grace make up man's 'train', attend upon him though unasked, in the paradise of Wordsworth's boyhood.
- 158/9 *MS Y*: at this point includes the 240-line sequence 'We live by admiration and by love' (*Reed* II 378-88, Norton *Prelude* 500-5), interesting not least because it includes at one point an outright rejection of man in favour of nature:

If upon mankind
He looks, and on the human maladies
Before his eyes, what finds he there to this
Framed answerably? What but sordid men
And trivial occupations and desires
Ignoble and depraved! Therefore he cleaves
Exclusively to nature . . .

'I admire human nature', Keats wrote to Haydon on 22 December 1818, 'but I do not like *men*. I should like to compose things honourable to man – but not fingerable-over by *men*.'

- 111-20 A case in which 1850 has usefully reduced and tautened the earlier text (1805 159-73).
- 160 *frame*: layout, landscaping.
- 162 *transport*: joy.
- 173 *these two principles of joy*: the 'common haunts of the green earth' (l. 166; effectively, nature) and 'ordinary human interests' (l. 167; man, human-heartedness). *principle*: source; as at II 465, 'A never-failing principle of joy'.
- 181 *Illustrated*: Stressed by Wordsworth on the second and fourth syllables (the word meaning, in origin, 'to throw lustre upon').
- 183-5 *Not such . . . golden age*: Not literary shepherds, such as those of Greek and Latin pastoral.
- 129-32 *Not such as Saturn . . . golden age*: Saturn was held to have founded the golden age in Latium (Italy), after being deposed by Jove.
- 187-90 *As Shakespeare . . . king*: Phoebe in *As You Like It* sighs for the 'false Ganymede' (Rosalind, dressed as a man) after the court of Duke Senior has been exiled to Arden (cf. the elaborations of 1850). Florizel and Perdita in *The Winter's Tale* are not merely king and queen of the sheep-shearing feast, but heirs to Bohemia and Sicilia.
- 191-9 *Nor such as Spenser fabled . . . kirk-pillars*: Lines suggested by the *May Eclogue* in Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar*.
- 193-4 *maids at sunrise . . . maybush*: The custom of going 'a-maying' – cutting and bringing home branches of the maybush (hawthorn) or other blossom on May Morning – is said to have lasted in parts of England until the early nineteenth century.
- 198 *the maypole dance*: Maypoles were taken down by Act of Parliament in 1644, and though they were replaced when the monarchy was restored in 1660, the custom seems to have been weakened.
- 198-9 *flowers that decked . . . kirk-pillars*: Spenser, *May Eclogue* 11-13:

home they hasten the posts to dight [decorate]
 And all the kirk-pillars ere daylight
 With hawthorn buds and sweet eglantine [muskrose]

kirk: church.

202-3 *To drink . . . garlands*: Well-dressing, like the maypole, was a survival of an ancient fertility rite. 1850 'sainted well' (for 1805 'favourite') is not inappropriate, however, as the custom became assimilated into Christian tradition.

209 *substantial*: essential, to do with substance.

209/10 *MS Y*: preserves an additional line, 'Set off by nature's weekday help alone'.

211-13 *images of danger . . . forms*: An emphasis on the sublime returns as Wordsworth's thoughts go back to childhood experience. 'Awful powers and forms' cannot (should not) be defined, but 'forms' are doubtless of landscape, and 'powers' are most easily seen in terms of the personified educational forces of 1799 Part I.

221 *my household dame*: Ann Tyson, Wordsworth's landlady at Hawkshead (see IV 17n.).

222-311 The Matron's Tale, composed during Wordsworth's work on *Michael* in autumn 1800, is incorporated in *The Prelude* in *MS Y* (October 1804) and cut before the copying of *MS C* (c. 1819). In *MS Y* the lines are introduced as

A story of a child, a shepherd boy,
 Whose perilous adventure pleased me much
 To hear while I myself was yet a child.

229-44 *Dove Crag . . . the winds*: Maxwell gives an exhaustive account of the mountain region near Grasmere searched by the shepherd and his son:

Dove Crag Above Ambleside, between the Rydal Valley and Dovedale. Deepdale runs parallel to Dovedale, to the north, with Brotherswater between. Fairfield is to the north-west. Between it and Dove Crag is Hart Crag, not, as on modern maps, Arthur's Seat (Stone Arthur is a lower hill to the south-west, just above Grasmere). St Sunday's Pike (or Crag) is to the north-east, between Deepdale and Grisedale. Seat Sandal (l. 237) is due west of Fairfield, with Grisedale Tarn between. Helvellyn is more than two miles due north, with Striding Edge to the east. Russet Cove (properly 'Ruthwaite', pronounced 'Ruthet') is to the south again, a little further east, on the way back to Grisedale Tarn.

241 *coves*: sheltered recesses in the hills.

245 *devious*: intricate, complicated.

255-7 *he will return . . . mother's side*: Hill-sheep are 'heafed' (from Anglo-Saxon 'heafod', a head) to the area where they are born. They will then return to it instinctively, and (it is always said) do not thrive if moved any distance away from it.

259 An octosyllabic line that persists through *MSS Y, A* and *B*, though almost certainly unintended. Wordsworth composed by ear, often dictating his verse. In most cases he probably corrected octosyllabics (a foot too short for the *Prelude's* iambic pentameter) and alexandrines (a foot too

- long) when he noticed them, but maybe there were some that he allowed to stand.
- 261-2 *that unfenced tract . . . farm belonged*: Farms in mountainous and moorland regions of Britain have typically a few low-lying fields, enclosed and ploughable, together with the right to a very much larger 'sheep-stray' on which their sheep (mostly) remain despite the absence of walls.
- 284-5 *Thrice did he . . . brink*: Even in so unliterary a poem as the *Matron's Tale*, Wordsworth is tempted by the convention of thrickness; cf. the death of Dido in *Aeneid* IV 690-2, parodied by Pope in the sylph's attempt to prevent the rape of Belinda's lock: 'thrice they twitched the diamond in her ear, Thrice she looked back, and thrice the foe drew near' (*Rape of the Lock* III 137-8).
- 298 *kite*: Large fork-tailed hawk, now so rare in Britain that it has had to be reintroduced.
- 312-15 *Smooth life had flock . . . shores*: The River Galesus, in Calabria, is celebrated in Horace's *Septimi, Gades* (*Odes* II vi) of which Wordsworth had written a free imitation c. 1791, and in Virgil, *Georgics* IV 126.
- 316-19 *Smooth life*: The waters of River Clitumnus (also in Calabria) were held to be so pure that they whitened the fleeces of sheep feeding on the banks, making them ready for sacrifice (*Georgics* II 146-8).
- 321-3 *cool Lucretilis . . . tutelary music*: Horace, *Odes* I xvii 5-14, provides the source of Wordsworth's allusion to Pan, pipe-playing god of pastoral life, in his 'tutelary' role as protector of flocks on the brows of Lucretilis (Monte Genaro, near Horace's farm). *thrilling* piercing, penetrating.
- 325 *pastoral tract*: region grazed by sheep; Wordsworth has in mind the plain south of the Harz mountains, across which he and Dorothy walked after leaving Goslar on 23 February 1799.
- 340 *hold*: sheltered or protected spot.
- 341 *strait where passage is*: narrow place, pass; Wordsworth originally wrote 'pervious strait', a repetition of l. 113 above. The 1805 reading is in effect a translation.
- 348-9 *the melancholy walls . . . imperial*: As Wordsworth points out in the Fenwick Note to *Written in Germany*, Goslar (where he wrote *Was It For This* and 1799 Part I) 'retains vestiges of ancient splendour' from the time when 'German emperors of the Franconian line' held court there. The first Imperial Diet was held at Goslar in 1009; 789 years later, Wordsworth, protected from the extreme cold by 'a dogskin bonnet', such as German peasants wore, composed daily on the ramparts.
- 353 *Hercynian*: Harz; Wordsworth and Dorothy left Goslar on 23 February 1799, en route for Göttingen where they visited Coleridge before returning to England. Though they certainly walked through the Harz Forest, there is no record of their movements.
- 361 *Sagacious*: wise, alert.
- 365 *A toilsome burden*: Of hay.
- 368 *enclosures won . . . waste*: 'intakes', mountain-ground that has been cleared and fenced.
- 371 *office*: job, way of life.
- 238-51 *When . . . day's march*: Poetic elaboration of 1805 379-85.
- 246 *protending*: stretching out.
- 387 *A freeman*: Cf. the Lake District shepherd of *Home at Grasmere* 441-3, who

is 'a servant' only 'Of the fireside or of the open field, | A freeman, therefore sound and unenslaved'.

390 *native man*: natural man (effectively 'the nature of man').

392-5 *Have felt . . . Presiding*: For the strange status attained by shepherd solitaries in Book VIII see ll. 410-14n. below. *genius*: tutelary spirit ('Henceforth thou art the genius of the shore', *Lycidas* 183).

397 *Seeking the raven's nest*: Cf. the boy Wordsworth as 'plunderer . . . In the high places' (I 333-50).

398-402 *on rainy days . . . Greenland bears*: Based on Thomson, *Seasons* III 725-7:

Seen through the turbid air, beyond the life

Objects appear . . . o'er the waste

The shepherd stalks gigantic . . .

408 *Above all height*: As Maxwell points out, applied by Milton to God the Father (*PL* III 58).

408-10 *an aerial cross . . . worship*: Wordsworth had alluded to 'crosses seen on the tops of the spiry rocks of the Chartreuse' in a note to *Descriptive Sketches* 71; see 1850 VI 483-6n.

410-14 *Thus was man . . . human nature*:

The shepherds chosen to show how the poet came to feel 'Love human to the creature in himself' (VIII 77) do nothing of the kind. They are symbolic figures . . . Wordsworth may claim

thus my heart at first was introduced

To an unconscious love and reverence

Of human nature . . .

but there is no reason why we should believe this when it follows the accurate statement, 'Thus was man | *Ennobled outwardly* before mine eyes'. The shepherds take hold of the imagination because they are so removed from the human normality they are supposed to exemplify. (*BV* 282)

417 *creature*: created being.

420-2 *Corin . . . Phyllis*: Stock pastoral names. *coronal*: circle (literally 'garland') of dancers.

423 *for the purposes of kind*: by nature.

432 *the dead letter*: fact, actuality.

432-7 Reed draws attention to Wordsworth's condensing of biblical allusions, 'including ones to *II Corinthians* 3.6, *Ephesians* 1.3, *Leviticus* 26.1, *Deuteronomy* 5.8, and *Isaiah* 44.9-20.'

449 An alexandrine that persists through all revisions - not likely to have been intended in the first instance, but quite possibly noticed by Wordsworth later, and accepted.

471 *the . . . temple's heart*: the soul (synonymous with 'nature's holiest places', X 878).

472-5 *Yet do not deem . . . really so*: The most lame of all Wordsworth's transitions. 1850 is much to be preferred.

476-8 *Nature herself . . . animal activities*: Cf. 'The coarser pleasures of my boyish

days,|And their glad animal movements all gone by' (*TA* 74-5) and II 206-8 above, 'nature, intervenient till this time|And secondary, now at length was sought|For her own sake.'

483-5 *three and twenty summers* . . . *Subordinate to her*: Wordsworth in this account dates his coming to hear 'The still sad music of humanity' (*TA* 92) to 1793, the year of his first visit to Tintern. 1850 'two-and twenty' dates it to summer 1792 and the learning of political awareness in revolutionary France.

485-6 *awful forms|And viewless agencies*: awe-inspiring natural shapes ('The mountain's outline and its steady form') and invisible influences.

507 *'Mid tossing . . . boats'*: From 'I'll never love thee more', by James Graham, Marquis of Montrose (hanged, drawn and quartered, and distributed round the Commonwealth, by Cromwell in 1650), ed. James Watson, *A Choice Collection of . . . Scots Poems*: (3 vols, 1706-11).

521 *A wilfulness of fancy*: The fancy is seen in terms of literary extravagance, largely of the Gothic.

527 *charnelhouse*: Shed where bones were stacked when (in Donne's words) a grave was opened, 'Some second guest to entertain'. The practice of reusing graves persisted well into the nineteenth century.

542 'Through most fantastic windings could I trace' (*MS Y*).

544-59 *when the foxglove . . . ground*: Under the heading of fancy Wordsworth beautifully evokes the sentimental episodes found in his early poetry, and imitated originally from Thomson. The beggar-woman who dies with her infants in *An Evening Walk* had been fancifully introduced by a comparison with a happy family of swans.

556 *lorn*: Correctly a past participle meaning 'lost', but treated in the eighteenth century as a poetic contraction of 'forlorn'.

556-9 *while her little ones . . . ground*: Cf. *Evening Walk* 255-8:

Oft has she taught them on her lap to play
Delighted, with the glow-worm's harmless ray
Tossed light from hand to hand; while on the ground
Small circles of green radiance gleam around.

567 *Glistered*: gleamed; 'How he glisters|Through my rust', *Winter's Tale* III ii 167-8.

583-5 *Thus sometimes . . . imagination*: As in the 1800 note to *The Thorn* (earliest distinction between fancy and imagination in either Wordsworth or Coleridge) imagination is seen as 'the faculty which produces impressive effects out of simple elements', and is thus allied to superstition.

590-1 *this power . . . passions*: Fancy, which for Coleridge is mechanical ('a mode of memory emancipated from the order of time and space'), is for Wordsworth an expression of emotion, and therefore has a value that Coleridge never conceded.

592 *adulterate*: impure, because lacking the unifying power of imagination (fancy brings together the dissimilar, and enjoys the dissimilarity).

604-5 *a real solid world . . . Of images*: Only Wordsworth could have applied the terms 'real' and 'solid' to images stored up within the mind; cf. *Pedlar* 30-3:

deep feelings had impressed
 Great objects on his mind with portraiture
 And colour so distinct that on his mind
 They lay like substances . . .

- 605-10 *did not pine . . . knowledge*: For an earlier passage on Coleridge's deprivation as a city child (doubtless his own assessment) see VI 308-11 and n. The joining and disjoining that take place result not from fancy, but from the lack of steadying imaginative knowledge.
- 616-23 *Meanwhile the man . . . flight*: Wordsworth's reflections at the time of writing (October 1804) seem scarcely more sympathetic, or less self-indulgent, than the fancies of his youth (ll. 610-16).
- 451 *Nor shall we not be tending*: The clumsy, but deliberate, double negative that Wordsworth and Coleridge inherited from Milton; cf. *PL* II 396, 'Nor could his eye not ken'.
- 458-75 A version of the Coniston episode, 1799 II 140-74, shortened by omission of the central section (ll. 145-56), but with new introductory lines (1850 451-8). The episode had been left out of *The Prelude* when Wordsworth created 1805 Book II in January 1804; it is inserted in Book VIII in 1832, though the text of 1850 is not established until the poet's final revisions.
- 459 *Thurston-mere*: Lake Coniston.
- 460-2 *With length of shade . . . cloister*: As Owen points out, the trees beside Coniston are so described both in *The Vale of Esthwaite* and in Wordsworth's *Guide to the Lakes*:
 those aged sycamores which once bordered the bay and promontory, and in such a manner stretched their boughs over the margin of the lake that a boat might have moved under their shade as along a cloister. (*Prose Works* II 307-9)
- 466 *high eastern hill*: An allusion to *Hamlet* I i 166-7: 'But look the morn, in russet mantle clad, | Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastward hill'.
- 468-75 1799: II 166-74, heavily revised and cast into direct speech. Wordsworth could not insert the lines he had actually written aged sixteen for *The Vale of Esthwaite* (published in 1815 as *Dear Native Regions*) because they were in octosyllabic couplets.
- 624-31 *There came a time . . . life and joy*: In 1799 II 435-64 perception of the One Life is ascribed to Wordsworth's 'seventeenth year', in 1805 III 121-67 it belongs to his first year at Cambridge; here Wordsworth prefers to leave the chronology vague.
- 480 *a vital pulse*: A scaling down of 1805; 'The pulse of being'.
- 487-8 *though born | Of dust . . . worm*: Lines of 1838-9 that offer not only pious self-abasement, but a major theological change. In 1805 man had been kindred to all forms of creation, because all were permeated by the presence of God; in 1850 he is 'kindred to the worm' (which will presently eat him) because his existence ('born of dust') is similarly corporeal.
- 647 *the impersonated thought*: Wordsworth's anticipations had embodied ('personated') an unreal concept of what human life would be like. L. 648 provides a gloss.
- 648 *kind*: human nature.
- 650-1 *as at large . . . set forth*: In Book III.

- 666 *essayed*: attempted.
- 522 *one*: Owen points out that Wordsworth's 'grammar has become vague' as the result of revision, and suggests that 'some such phrase as "I became", parallel to "I was led" (l. 519), must be understood before "one"'.
/
- 677 *end*: purpose, divine intention.
- 680-1 *Erewhile . . . played . . . mantle*: Interesting both for the impression Wordsworth gives of lightheartedness in Book VII's treatment of London (see ll. 689-710n. below); and for another playful allusion to *Lycidas*, where Camus (the River Cam) has a 'mantle hairy . . . enwrought with figures dim' (ll. 104-5). Milton's facetiousness in *Lycidas* licenses Wordsworth's.
- 683 *inquisition*: enquiry, curiosity.
- 689-710 *Never shall I . . . thing divine*: The incongruity of Wordsworth's first entry into London coming after a whole book describing his experience there is the result of Book VII having been composed (c. November 1804) after the *MS Y* drafts of VIII in October. Ll. 678-89, looking back to the London book, must have been composed after VII had been completed. They are not present in *MS Y*, and were presumably inserted while Wordsworth was cutting down his drafts to form Book VIII.
- 694 *itinerant vehicle*: Presumably a stage-coach.
- 695 *vulgar*: ordinary, undistinguished.
- 700-2 *great God . . . sway*: Though the experience of entering London is of course a mental one, Wordsworth ascribes to the city a power of its own, the result of its age and history.
- 711-27 Wordsworth's epic simile of the cave had been originally drafted for Book VI (late March 1804) to evoke the anti-climax of crossing the Alps unawares. *MS WW* shows that it preceded the lines on imagination (VI 525-48).
- 713 *grotto of Antiparos*: It is not clear how Wordsworth knew of the cavern on the Aegean island of Antiparos. According to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (3rd ed. 1797), however, it is 120 yards wide and 60 high, and 'accounted one of the greatest natural curiosities in the world'.
- 713-14 *den Of Yordas*: Limestone cave near Ingleton in West Yorkshire, visited by Wordsworth and his brother John in May 1800. Reed points to a 'terrific description' of the cave in an appendix to the sixth edition (1796) of West. The 1850 reference to Yordas as 'that Danish Witch' is perhaps Wordsworth being fanciful.
- 716-17 *sees, or thinks | He sees*: A direct translation of Virgil, *Aeneid* VI 454 ('*aut videt, aut vidisse putat*') from the poignant account of Aeneas's meeting with Dido in the Underworld. Readers would have recognized the allusion (as they would Milton's, at *PL* I 783-4), and seen its appropriateness as Wordsworth constructs his most elaborate Virgilian simile.
- 724 *works*: seethes. Applied earlier to the mind (I 419) and to the sea (I 501), 'seethes' has for Wordsworth important associations of creative restlessness.
- 727 *lifeless as a written book*: For Wordsworth, as for Blake, stasis is death to the imagination; cf. *Marriage of Heaven and Hell* plate 15, where 'living fluids' (imaginative materials, still creative and flexible) are cast into the void, 'and [take] the forms of books and [are] arranged in libraries.'
- 729 *quicken*: enlivening, coming to life.

734 *magician's airy pageant*: 'like this insubstantial pageant faded' (*Tempest* IV i 155); one of Wordsworth's many references to Prospero.

735 *embodying... pressure*: As at 1850 VII 288, a recollection of *Hamlet* III ii 22-4, 'show... the very age and body of the time, his form and pressure'. *pressure* imprint.

749 *emporium*: market; for Cowper *Task* III 835-7, London was

resort and mart of all the earth,
Chequered with all complexions of mankind
And spotted with all crimes...

749-51 *chronicle at once... living residence*: London is valued by Wordsworth for its immense concentration of human emotion. So many lives have been lived there — some of them 'chronicled' (kept fresh in the city's history), most 'buried' — and so many are now being lived. *home|Imperial*: London is at once the centre of a growing empire and 'imperial' in its own dimensions.

755 *craved for power*: For imaginative power, that is.

763 *punctual*: restricted to a point (Latin *punctus*).

612-14 *monuments... In earth*: It sounds as if Wordsworth in this late revision is thinking of megalithic stone circles, as he is in the reference inserted at 1850 II 101-2.

771 *popular*: republican, governed by the people (Latin *populus*).

772 *magnanimous*: great of soul (Latin again).

775-6 *their humanizing soul... incidents*: English history both lacks the ideals of Greece and Rome and excludes the details of day-to-day existence that might have given it humanity.

620 *their*: Ungrammatical as the result of cutting 1805 772-3. De Selincourt suggests an emendation to 'its' (which could then refer back to 'history').

786-92 *not seldom... nursed*: Because it acts upon Wordsworth's imagination, London is unexpectedly comparable to the natural world. It is 'thronged with impregnations' of the mind, just as the Cumbrian landscape is 'impressed' with associations of 'danger and desire' stored up in boyhood (I 494-501).

802-4 *Neither guilt, nor vice... Nor all the misery*: Wordsworth is rewriting his statement of faith in nature, *TA* 129 ff.: 'neither evil tongues,|Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men...|Shall e'er prevail against us...'

815-16 *seemed brighter... counterview*: An example of Wordsworth's painterly sense of *chiaroscuro*.

819-23 *'in the east... heavenly fraught'*: *PL* XI 203-7, with slight adaptation; Michael descends to tell Adam and Eve of God's judgement on their trespass. *orient* lit up as by the sunrise. *fraught*: burdened, freighted.

824-7 *Add... unity of man*: Lines that read most incongruously after the emphasis on London *dis*-unity at the end of Book VII. It was presumably Wordsworth's sense that London could not be brought under the heading of the unity of man that led him (after completing the drafts of VIII in *MS Y*) to go on and give it a book of its own. Portraying it in VII as an Underworld, he was able to express both the attractiveness of its colour

- and movement, and the threat he felt in its swallowing up of identity and community.
- 837–59 Transferred to Book VII in Wordsworth's final revisions, becoming 1850 VII 598–625.
- 841 *foil*: contrast; a reminder of Wordsworth's true response to London. Tenderness is 'set off by foil'. Man is not unified.
- 860–70 Drafted in early spring 1804 alongside materials that contributed to Book IV.
- 680 'busy hum': 'Towered cities please us then, | And the busy hum of men . . .' (*L' Allegro* 117–18).

Book Ninth

- 1–17 No drafts survive, but the bulk of Book IX seems to have been written c. April–May 1804. Ll. 1–17 are added at a later stage, after the composition of Books VIII and VII in October–November, when Wordsworth has a sense of the final shape of his poem. Looking back over the course of his work, he finds in the image of the river (recurrent since the Derwent's flowing along his dreams in the opening lines of *Was It For This*) the means of asserting an organic unity for his poetry. The river 'is an image at once of the poem, and of the mind that is the subject of the poem, and of the poet's mind that is controlling, and failing to control, the narrative' (*BV* 233).
- 5 *Turns and will measure back his course*: In constructing his epic simile Wordsworth models himself on the beginning of Book III of Cowper's *Task*:
- As one who, long in thickets and in brakes
Entangled, winds now this way and now that
His devious course uncertain . . .
- 8 *motions retrograde*: backward movements.
- 9–16 Introduced in *MS D* 1832.
- 10 *precipitate*: expedite, get ahead with.
- 13–17 *the argument . . . in itself*: As he moves on into his 'argument' (theme) of political involvement, Wordsworth invites a comparison with *Paradise Lost*, warning of material ungenial and forbidding, as Milton (at the beginning of *his ninth book*) warns of the impending Fall:
- No more of talk where God or angel guest
With man, as with his friend, familiar used
To sit indulgent . . .
- I now must change
Those notes to tragic; foul distrust, and breach
Disloyal on the part of man . . . (*PL IX* 1–7)
- 31 Wordsworth seems to have spent only four months (January–May) in London during 1791; much of the year was spent in Wales.
- 36–9 *Led thither . . . Loire*: Cf. Dorothy to Jane Pollard, 7 December 1791:

William is I hope by this time arrived at Orleans, where he means to pass the winter for the purpose of learning the French language, which will qualify him for the office of travelling companion to some young gentleman, if he can get recommended.

- 36 *scrip and staff*: Obviously there is poetic licence as Wordsworth in this revision of c. 1819 portrays himself and Jones with pilgrim's wallet and staff. His letter to Dorothy of 16 September 1790, however, shows that in the Alps they had bundles 'upon [their] heads, with each an oak stick in [their] hands'.
- 42-6 *each spot . . . Geneviève*: Once again echoing Milton ('City of old or modern fame', *PL XI* 386), Wordsworth takes his reader to areas of Paris especially associated with the Revolution: the Champs de Mars, where Louis XVI on 14 July 1790 had sworn allegiance to the new Constitution (see VI 357n.); the Faubourg St Antoine, a working-class suburb near to the now dismantled Bastille; Montmartre, revolutionary meeting-place to the north; the church of Ste Geneviève on the Left Bank, where Mirabeau was buried in April 1791 (renamed the Panthéon after Voltaire and Rousseau were brought there for reburial as prophets of the Revolution);
- 47 *The National Synod and the Jacobins*: Wordsworth told his brother Richard on 19 December 1791 that he had been 'at the National Assembly, introduced by a member'. The Jacobin Club (Society of Friends of the Revolution), whose members dominated the Assembly with their eloquence, held its meetings in a monastery in the Rue St Jacques. At this stage Brissot and the Girondin group were members alongside Robespierre (who would send them to the guillotine in October 1793).
- 50-1 *The Arcades . . . Orleans*: The courtyard of the Palais Royal was lined on three sides with shopping arcades.
- 56 *hubbub wild*: Satan as he approaches the realm of Chaos in *Paradise Lost* Book II is met by 'a universal hubbub wild|Of stunning sounds and voices all confused' (ll. 951-2).
- 63-71 *Where silent zephyrs . . . felt*: The Bastille, royal fortress and prison, symbolic of the tyranny of the Ancien Régime, had been sacked on 14 July 1789, and later dismantled. Now poetic 'zephyrs' (breezes more often to be found sporting with curls) sport with its dust. The sense of incongruity reflected in Wordsworth's language is heightened by memories of himself as the posturing tourist, unconcerned by the grandeur of political events.
- 68 *incumbences*: moods of thoughtfulness, broodings.
- 78-80 *the Magdalene . . . tears*: Baroque painting of the penitent St Mary Magdalen, by Charles le Brun (1626-90), displayed (to sounds of religious music, according to Legouis) at the Carmelite convent in the Rue d'Enfer. Now at the Louvre.
- 81 *my more permanent residence*: Orleans; not always distinguished in the *Prelude* narrative from Annette Vallon's native town of Blois.
- 97 *the master pamphlets*: English pamphlets that Wordsworth had read before his arrival on the French political scene, presumably including Paine's *Rights of Man* Part I and other replies to Burke's *Reflections on the French Revolution* (November 1790).
- 103 *organs of the public power*: political groups.
- 109-11 *the first storm . . . quiet*: It is often forgotten that the Revolution was

peaceful for three years between the fall of the Bastille in July 1789 and the events of 10 August 1792 leading to the imprisonment of the King.

- 116 *Routs*: parties.
- 118 *Sequestered*: isolated.
- 125 *patriot*: revolutionary
- 129 *the city*: Blois now, rather than Orleans; see 81n. above.
- 131 *seasoned*: In blood.
- 132-7 *mèn well-born . . . done*: In spring 1792 the French Army was still staffed by royalist officers, in sympathy with the Austrians against whom (from 20 April) they were supposedly fighting. Austrian troops were waiting on the Rhine, and Marie Antoinette's brother, the Emperor, had declared his intention of restoring Louis to absolute power ('undoing what was done').
- 136 *Save only one*: The exception was Michel Beaupuy, who converted Wordsworth to the revolutionary cause; see ll. 294ff. below.
- 147 *temper*: disposition, character.
- 150 *port*: carriage, bearing.
- 156-7 *At the hour, | The most important of each day*: Wordsworth's syntax suggests he may be thinking in French: '*A l'heure, la plus importante, du jour*'.
- 176-7 *Oh, laughter . . . now is*: The historian's 'page' would bring ridicule upon itself by attempting to describe the complexities of the contemporary situation.
- 179 *Carra, Gorsas*: Journalist deputies of the National Assembly, and members of the Girondin group with whom Beaupuy and Wordsworth were in sympathy. Carra was guillotined on 31 October 1793, Gorsas on the 7th. The story told by Carlyle (*Reminiscences, Everyman*, London, 1972, 532) of Wordsworth's witnessing Gorsas' execution, on an otherwise unrecorded visit to France, is attractive, and beloved of biographers; but in the highest degree unlikely. England and France had been at war for eight months, Wordsworth's French cannot have been perfect, he had no money, and was not by nature a Scarlet Pimpernel. Had either love (a clandestine visit to Annette Vallon) or politics lured him to Paris in October 1793, we should not have to rely for evidence on a conversation alleged to have taken place fifty years later.
- 184-91 *The men . . . depart*: La Fayette actually called on royalist officers to emigrate so as to clarify the situation. By April 1792 more than half had deserted.
- 188 *foreign foes*: At this stage Austria and Prussia; England entered the war in February 1793.
- 202 *polity*: government.
- 213 *orders and degrees*: social distinctions, either conferred or inherited.
- 222-6 *It was my fortune . . . blood*: It should be said that Wordsworth, though 'born in a poor district' (l. 218) was born also in a large and handsome house, his father being agent to one of the most powerful landowners in the kingdom.
- 226-36 *Nor was it least . . . industry*: As in his comments on the Lake District at ll. 222-6, Wordsworth is overstating his claim to have experienced egalitarianism. Cambridge in the late eighteenth century had little resemblance to a republic. The scholars and gentlemen of l. 233 wore different clothes, and led very different lives. Scholars were intent on bettering themselves, first within the University, and then within the Church; by contrast,

- high-ranking undergraduates had no need to bother with 'talents and successful industry' and, because of the system of ecclesiastical patronage, were frequently in a position to bestow favours on their tutors (Ben Ross Schneider Jr, *Wordsworth's Cambridge Education* 21–4).
- 233–5 *subservience . . . sovereignty*: A careful removal, in 1832, of the pantheist implications of *i.1805*, where nature shares in the sovereignty of God.
- 241 *sanction*: confirm.
- 254 *A gift . . . soon*: Wordsworth's case was perhaps little different from that of many English people (William Pitt among them) who welcomed the Revolution at its outset because it seemed that the French were catching up — achieving the constitutional rights that had been gained a hundred years earlier by the English 'Glorious Revolution' of 1688.
- 250–1 *Inflamed by passion . . . injury*: An astonishing attack on the French royalist officers, inserted in *MS C* c. 1819, at a time when Wordsworth was electioneering for the Tories and might well be expected to tone down his contempt. It is an honourable fact that he never ceased to 'hail,|As best, the government of equal rights|And individual worth' (*i.850* 241–3).
- 279–80 *self-devotion . . . confidence*: dedication to the cause, and hopes for earthly well-being (effectively for political justice) felt with the conviction of a Christian martyr.
- 283 *martial tunes*: Owen points out that the *Marseillaise* was first heard in 1792.
- 294–5 *Among that band . . . other mould*: Michel Beaupuy, mentioned at l. 136 above, and wholly different in character. *mould*: earth, or clay, from which the human body was traditionally said to have been formed.
- 298–9 *A meeker man|Than this lived never*: The tones of Chaucer's *General Prologue* appear (cf. ll. 320–1 below, 'Somewhat vain he was|Or seemed so'), suggesting Wordsworth's consciousness of creating a formal portrait of Beaupuy.
- 303 *sensibly*: perceptibly.
- 308 *fairy*: magic.
- 309–13 *By birth he ranked . . . order*: Beaupuy was a nobleman and philosopher, descended on his mother's side from Montaigne. As an aristocratic believer in the Revolution he was by no means alone (see Williams, *Letters Written in France*, passim); among the officers at Blois, however, he was isolated. Aged 36, he befriended the 22-year-old Wordsworth, passing on to him his egalitarian ideals and becoming one of the major influences on his life.
- 325 *Complacently*: enjoyably, with pleasure.
- 340–1 *a sounder judgement|Than afterwards*: Probably than in the period 1793–6, after his return to England; cf. Book X.
- 361/2 *MS Y*: preserves a fine additional line referring to unprincipled wars of conquest: 'The senseless thirst of bloody spoils abroad'.
- 363 *as it is*: insofar as it is.
- 368–71 *making social life . . . wise and good*: Social life is to become as pure (through the spreading of knowledge) as personal life is among the wise and good.
- 383–4 *from the depth|Of shameful imbecility*: Introduced in *MS C* c. 1819, and again showing no slackening of Wordsworth's commitment to the Revolution.
- 395 *continence*: self-possession.
- 399–400 *Rotha's stream,|Greta, or Derwent*: Cumbrian rivers: the Rothay flowing

into Grasmere, the Greta (beneath Coleridge's house, Greta Hall, Keswick) flowing into Derwentwater, and the Derwent ('fairest of all rivers') flowing from Derwentwater to Wordsworth's birthplace at Cockermouth.

415-24 *Such conversation . . . philosophers*: Wordsworth is drawing appropriately on the *Life of Dion* in North's *Plutarch* (1579), where philosophers play an active part in liberating Sicily from the tyranny of Dionysius the Younger in 357 BC. Dion recruited Eudemus Cyprian and Timonides Leucadian, and together they sailed from the Ionian island of Zante (ancient Zacynthus). Plato had been involved in earlier negotiations.

415 *Attic*: Greek.

430 *accoutred*: equipped, prepared.

431-6 *He perished . . . Lived not to see*: Wordsworth is misinformed as to Beauupuy's later career. As Chief of Staff of the Army of the West he had the task of suppressing the counter-revolution of 'deluded men' in the Vendée, and in October 1793 was badly wounded at Château-Gontier. He survived, however, for three more years, dying at the battle of Elz on the eastern front on 19 October 1796. Though he did not live to see the rise of Napoleon and the creation of a French empire, he took part in the aggressive campaigns of 1794-6 that shocked Wordsworth and other British radicals as a betrayal of the Revolution.

442-3 *High woods and over-arched . . . side*: 'a pillared shade|High overarched, and echoing walks between' (*PL IX 1106-7*).

449 *so met in shades like these*: met as we have done, in shades like these.

454-6 *Angelica . . . as she*: Angelica and Erminia, heroines of Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* and Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata*, evoke the romantic imagination that counterbalances politics in Wordsworth's walks with Beauupuy. In 1789 Wordsworth, who was reading Italian (not part of the syllabus) at Cambridge, had joined in presenting a copy of Tasso to his school library (*Wordsworth's Hawkshead 144-5*).

461-4 *haunt|Of satyrs . . . thrall*: Among possible sources, see especially the stories of Una and Hellenore (*FQ I vi 13 and III x 43-4*).

470-2 *a roofless pile . . . violence abrupt*: It is significant that *Descriptive Sketches*, with its account of the desecration of the Grande Chartreuse (ll. 53-79), is written under the influence of Beauupuy in summer of 1792; see also 1850 VI 420-88.

473 *colloquies*: discussions.

485-93 *that rural castle . . . plain beneath*: De Selincourt's much followed identification of Beauregard as the 'rural castle' and Anne Pisseleu d'Heilly as the particular mistress of Francis I has its problems. Beauregard was built 25 years too late, and in any case is hardly on high enough ground for contact with Francis at Chambord. Anne, meanwhile, first as *fille d'honneur* to the King's mother, then as *maîtresse en titre*, was living at Court, and would have had no cause to signal. Had Wordsworth been concerned with fact he would hardly have let 'name now slipped|From my remembrance' stand for 45 years.

491 *cressets*: flaming torches.

512-16 *a hunger-bitten girl . . . sustenance*:

It is one of those pieces of writing that would seem inept if they didn't so obviously work. At first the girl is the subject of the central relative clause ('who

crept along'), then with no grammatical transition the heifer turns out to have displaced her. . . . No punctuation could contain or imply the poet's meaning, but we become aware through the movement of the syntax that the girl in her poverty and despair has yielded to the dominance of the heifer, which is of course feeding, while she is 'bitten with hunger'. The detail of the cord, not held and controlled, but tied to her as if she were the animal, brings home the cruelty of the situation. (BV 252).

517 *heartless*: despairing.

533-4 *whence better days* | *To all mankind*: Wordsworth assumes, as many did, that the French Revolution (itself modelled on the American) will lead to political reform across the known world.

538 *Captivity by mandate without law*: The *lettre de cachet* (issued by royal or official mandate), with which Vaudracour is threatened at ll. 666-7 below.

541-3 *if not the air . . . Dread nothing*: Wordsworth is being ironic about the likelihood of total change: it is too much to hope that all will breathe the air of liberty, and the human heart have nothing to dread.

551-5 *a tragic tale . . . therein*: Wordsworth's statement that he heard the 'tragic tale' from Beauvuy and others who had played a part in it is corrected in the Fenwick Note to *Vaudracour and Julia* (published as a separate work in 1820), where it is said to be 'faithfully narrated, though with the omission of many pathetic circumstances, from the mouth of a French lady who had been an eye and ear witness of all that was done and said'. To which Wordsworth adds: 'Many long years after I was told that Duplignè [Vaudracour] was then a monk at La Trappe.' Wordsworth, it would seem, heard the story from a woman at Blois (perhaps from others too), and for the sake of continuity transferred it within his poem to Beauvuy. Two other factors have to be taken into account: the similar story of parental tyranny told by Williams in *Letters from France*, and the poet's own recent experience. Early in 1792 Wordsworth had met and fallen in love with Annette Vallon, by whom he had a child, christened in Orleans Cathedral on 15 December as Anne Caroline Wordsworth. Wordsworth and Annette were separated, not by an angry father, but by war (declared in February 1793, two months after the poet's return to London). Annette's two surviving letters, however, leave no doubt that they intended to get married. Williams's story of M and Mme Du Fossé, though it differs in many ways from *Vaudracour and Julia*, resembles it in idiom and atmosphere, and provides the central detail of an aristocratic father willing to imprison his son rather than agree to his marriage with a woman of lower birth. The key to Wordsworth's relationship to Williams's story may be in the fact that in 1793 he was hoping to turn his 'tragic tale' into a novel (*Chronology* I 124). Williams would have been his literary model. *Vaudracour and Julia*, we may assume, has the primary purpose of telling by implication of the poet's relation to Annette. In doing so it broadly follows a story told to him at Blois in 1792, and is written with an eye on the bare heartfelt narrative of *Letters Written in France*.

553-9 *Oh, happy time . . . sequel*: Instead of removing the traces of his story from *The Prelude*, Wordsworth, after publishing *Vaudracour and Julia* separately in *Poems* 1820, permitted his introduction to the lovers' tale to stand. Ll. 557-9, with their incongruous doubling back, and the pointless summary

of his untold tale (ll. 559-85), are the product of much reworking in 1832 and 1838-9.

- 558 *love-knot*: Probably of ribbon.
 561 *Young Vaudracour*: Wordsworth takes the name from Lieutenant Vaudracour in Beaupuy's regiment at Blois.
 580 *outside*: surface.
 589 *The house . . . shrine*: A recollection perhaps of Criseyde's desolate house, Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde* V 551-3:

fayne wolde I kisse
 Thy colde dores, dorste I for this route,
 And farewel shryne, of which the seynt is oute.

Wordsworth had made a number of translations from Chaucer in 1801.

- 595 *Overblessed for life*: blest beyond endurance.
 615-17 *in a distant town . . . babe was born*: Annette moved from Blois to Orleans to have her child, Mme Du Fossé (in Williams's story), from Rouen to Caen.
 631-2 *busy . . . as a swallow|About its nest*: A Dove Cottage touch. 'The swallows come to the sitting-room window as if wishing to build', Dorothy writes in her *Journal*, 16-19 June 1802. 'They swim round and round, and again they come . . . The swallows were very busy under my window this morning.'
 638-42 *that darling bard . . . unrelenting east*:

Juliet: Wilt thou be gone? It is not yet near day.
 It was the nightingale, and not the lark,
 That pierced the fearful hollow of thine ear -
 Nightly she sings on yond pomegranate tree -
 Believe me, love, it was the nightingale.

Romeo: It was the lark, the herald of the morn;
 No nightingale. Look, love, what envious streaks
 Do lace the severing clouds in yonder east!
 (*Romeo and Juliet* III v 1-8)

- 650 *A final portion*: A settlement in lieu of his inheritance.
 664 *obduracy*: Stressed on the second syllable.
 666-7 *The father . . . signet of the state*:

Monsieur Du Fossé received intelligence that his father, irritated almost to madness by the information of his marriage, was making application for a *lettre de cachet* in order to confine his daughter-in-law for the rest of her life, and had also obtained power to have his son seized and imprisoned. (Williams, *Letters Written in France* 130-1)

- 694 *Self-slaughter*: suicide; 'Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd|His canon 'gainst self-slaughter!' (*Hamlet* I ii 131-2).
 715-17 *thought|Unfilial, or unkind . . . breast*: Vaudracour's excessive meekness, paralleled neither in Wordsworth himself nor in Du Fossé, is further evidence of a distinct source.

- 723 *nice*: fastidious, delicate.
- 746 *traversed from without*: impinged upon (literally 'crossed') by external pressures.
- 758-9 *So they fared* | *Objects of general concern*: 'Everyone sympathized in the fate of this unfortunate young man, and execrated the tyranny of the unrelenting father' (Williams, *Letters Written in France* 168).
- 785-6 *impressions . . . Friendly to human kindness*: Cf. *Ruined Cottage* 229, 'A power to virtue friendly'.
- 840 *and be there immured*: remain for the rest of her life within its walls. Williams visits Benedictine and Carmelite convents at Rouen, and learns that the Carmelite nuns 'slept in their coffins, upon straw, and every morning dug a shovel-full of earth for their graves', also that 'they walked to their devotional exercises upon their knees'. At one point she meets nuns who have 'been forced by their parents to take the veil' (Williams, *Letters Written in France* 118-19).
- 907-8 *Which . . . by some mistake . . . died*: Regarded by De Selincourt as bringing the story to 'a climax of absurdity difficult to parallel in our literature'. Wordsworth's concern, as he said in the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* 1800, was not with 'action and situation', but with the 'feeling therein developed'. This could lead to a certain perfunctoriness; cf. the removal of Margaret's inconvenient child, at *Ruined Cottage* 345-7, and of Luke to 'a hiding-place beyond the seas' (*Michael* 420-5).
- 912 *From that time forth he never uttered word*: The last words of Iago, almost verbatim: 'From this time forth I never will speak word' (*Othello* V ii 303).
- 927 *savage outside*: wild appearance.
- 929 *intelligence*: communication.
- 931-5 *Nor could the voice of freedom . . . imbecile mind*: Details which we know from the Fenwick Note did not apply to Duplignie (the Vaudracour of Wordsworth's source), and which seem very probably to come from *Letters Written in France*. For Du Fossé there is a happy ending, but not for one nameless victim of a parental *lettre de cachet*:

He was confined ten years, and only released when all the prisons were thrown open by order of the National Assembly. But for this unhappy young man their mercy came too late. His reason was gone for ever, and he was led out of his prison, at the age of five-and-twenty, a maniac. (pp. 211-12)

imbecile: is stressed on the second syllable.

Book Tenth

- 1-8 *It was a beautiful . . . England*: Wordsworth was leaving not only the autumnal beauty of the Loire, but Annette Vallon, who had moved to Orleans in September to have her child. He reached Paris, 'the fierce metropolis', c. 29 October 1792, and was in England by early December. Caroline (whom because of the war he would not meet until 1802, when she was nine) was christened in Orleans Cathedral on the 15th.
- 4-10 *A day . . . passed on*: Elaboration of 1832 and 1838-9.
- 5 *tilth*: arable land.

- 8-9 *From his throne . . . fallen*: Louis XVI was imprisoned after the storming of the Tuileries on 10 August 1792, ending three years' attempt by the leaders of the Revolution to work within the framework of a constitutional monarchy; see ll. 44-8n. below.
- 9-13 *the congregated host . . . innocuously*: Austrian and Prussian forces, under the bloodthirsty Duke of Brunswick, invaded France on 19 August confident of quickly restoring the monarchy. Written on the 'front' (forehead) of the invasion was the Brunswick Manifesto of 25 July 'giving up the city of Paris to military execution, and exposing it to total destruction' if 'the least outrage' were offered to the French royal family. Longwy and Verdun were taken by the invaders, but on 20 September the cloud 'burst innocuously' as an inexperienced French army won the important battle of Valmy, forcing a retreat to the Rhine.
- 14-18 *a band . . . victims*: Wordsworth's simile of the coalition armies closing in on the French like trapped animals is shown by the diction ('elate and jocund', 'punctual spot') to be from the first consciously Miltonic. In 1850 it became more obviously so with its reference to *Paradise Lost* XI 391, 'Agra and Lahore of great mogul'.
- 20 *Rajahs and Omrahs*: Indian princes and nobles; Owen suggests that Wordsworth's image is of a tiger hunt.
- 23 *to the better cause*: on the part of the French.
- 24-31 *The state . . . republic*: Despite the example of America, it had not been among the aims of the Revolution that France should become a republic. When she did so, on 22 September 1792, two days after the victory at Valmy, there was little alternative. The revisions of 1850 34-9 belong to *MS C*, c. 1819, and leave a somewhat confused impression as to Wordsworth's attitudes.
- 31-4 *Lamentable crimes . . . past*: News of the fall of Verdun to Brunswick's invading army set off four days of mob violence, 2-6 September, in which about half the inmates in the prisons of Paris were executed after summary trials. Though Marat and others were advocating the slaughter of aristocrats, and in other parts of the country there had been purges specifically of priests, four-fifths of those who died in Paris seem to have been ordinary criminals, not royalists. No one ordered the purge, but Danton certainly condoned it.
- 36 *Ephemeral monsters*: Given the context of senseless violence, Wordsworth may be thinking of the dragon's teeth sown by Cadmus, which sprang up as armed men, but fought each other to death.
- 42-4 *The prison . . . In bondage*: The Temple was the last home of the royal family, the King and Queen leaving it only to be guillotined (on 21 January 1793 and 16 October), and the Dauphin dying there in 1795.
- 44-8 *the palace . . . dead and dying*: On 10 August 1792 threats of invasion caused the Paris working-class 'sections' to take control and attack the Tuileries. Four hundred *sans-culottes* were killed by the Swiss Guard, who were then butchered themselves when the King (who had fled to the Assembly) ordered them to lay down their arms. Total numbers killed as the Palace was sacked seem to have been in the region of 1,200. Bodies were burnt in the Place du Carrousel.
- 62-6 *The fear gone by . . . substantial dread*: The Massacres take on substance - flesh and blood - as Wordsworth in his terror reaches out like Doubting

- Thomas to 'feel and touch them'. Links with *The Borderers* (Mortimer to Rivers, IV ii 96-7: 'The proofs, the proofs! You ought to have seen, to have touched the guilt') suggest the extent to which Wordsworth feels implicated in the violence; see Jonathan Wordsworth, 'Wordsworth's "Dim and Perilous Way"' 205-223.
- 65 *a little month*: Wordsworth's subdued quotation sets up a parallel between his own response to the Revolution's sudden turn to violence and Hamlet's to his mother's 'o'er hasty marriage' (and collusion in murder): 'A little month . . . a beast that wants discourse of reason|Would have mourned longer' (I ii 147-51).
- 68 *calendars*: chronicles.
- 70-74 Reliving his substantial dread of the Massacres, Wordsworth produces five sudden purely apocalyptic lines of interior monologue that are quite unlike anything else he ever wrote . . . The horse is schooled by man against its nature to turn upon the spot (as Danton may induce spontaneous violence to come round), and 'the wind of heaven' that should be freer still, wheels like the horse 'in his own steps'. The poet in his nightmare reverie can turn anything to evidence of cyclical return. Years, tides, days, add their more obvious corroboration, till the argument so commonly and tendentiously used for the Christian afterlife ('all things have second birth') betrays us suddenly into the power of insatiable violence: 'the earthquake is not satisfied at once.' (*BV* 254).
- 70 *The horse is taught his manage*: schooled to perform particular movements and paces (Wordsworth is probably thinking of the manoeuvre in which a horse turns full circle on its hind legs). I am grateful to Reeve Parker for pointing out to me that the National Convention at this time met at the Manège, previously a riding-school. Owen notes a Shakespearean reference in *As You Like It* I i 11-13: 'His horses are bred better . . . they are taught their manage'.
- 78-84 Wordsworth in *MS C* (c. 1819) expanded the five great lines of 1805 to thirteen. These were cut to seven in subsequent revisions, but the final text is a mish-mash. As manuscript succeeded manuscript, revision had its own momentum; after 1832 Wordsworth seems never to have turned back to *MS A* or considered reverting to an original reading.
- 77 '*Sleep no more*': Wordsworth may be thinking not merely of *Macbeth* II ii 35-6 - 'Methought I heard a voice cry "Sleep no more!"|Macbeth doth murder sleep"' - but also of Godwin's powerful and relevant use of the quotation in *Caleb Williams*: 'The ease and lightheartedness of my youth were forever gone. The voice of an irresistible necessity commanded me to "Sleep no more"' (Oxford Novels 138).
- 83-4 *the Palace Walk|Of Orleans*: the arcades of the Palais Royal, as at IX 51-2.
- 86-103 *hawkers . . . irresolute friends*: A turning-point of the Revolution, as Louvet accuses Robespierre of aiming at dictatorship - '*Je t'accuse d'avoir évidemment marché au suprême pouvoir*' - and the Girondins (who had indicted Danton in the previous debate for collusion in the September Massacres) fail to press home their advantage. Robespierre is given time to prepare a defence, and survives; power swings away from the moderates as the King is put on trial and executed (21 January 1793); working through the Paris Commune, Robespierre in July 1793 assumes control; in October the Girondin leaders are guillotined.

- 87-8 *'Denunciation . . . Robespierre'*: Pamphlet containing Louvet's speech at the Convention, on sale 30 October 1792.
- 99 *in the tribune*: on the rostrum.
- 113-14 *The indecision . . . best*: indecisiveness of the Girondins in the Convention, who 'seemed best' in their intentions; see Mme Jeanne Marie Roland de la Platière (whose death it caused), *Appeal to Impartial Posterity* I 55-6: 'Sometimes for very vexation I could have boxed the ears of these philosophers . . . excellent reasoners all, learned politicians in theory, but totally ignorant of the art of leading men.'
- 116 *impiety*: lack of scruples, moral standards.
- 121 *The gift of tongues might fall*: As upon the apostles at Pentecost, *Acts* 2. 2-4.
- 125 *work of safety*: Glossed by Reed as anticipatory self-protection, but Wordsworth is surely thinking of the defence of republican France (in which, since Valmy, he has total confidence).
- 134-8 *Yet would I willingly . . . single persons*: Wordsworth's dreams of being the man of the hour were no doubt foolish, but he would have been aware, for instance, of the influence of Tom Paine (in 1792 a member of the National Convention in Paris) on the course of the American Revolution.
- 137 *still*: always.
- 139 *Transcendent . . . patrimony*: over and above considerations of region or nationality (Wordsworth is telling himself that even a foreigner might have influence).
- 141 *objects*: objectives, aims.
- 144-5 *where evidence divine . . . most sure*: 'Evidence divine' tells man to have faith in the cause that will fulfil his nature.
- 146-52 *That, with desires heroic . . . safe obedience*: Men are instinctively drawn to the self-reliant and heroic 'spirit' (leader), joining him, and trusting their safety to him, as streams blend themselves in a river.
- 179-90 Inserted in *MS D* (early 1832) as a continuation to the abstract and not easily intelligible reasonings of 1805 136-57.
- 179 *the means*: Probably the leader's human supporters.
- 183 *A sovereign voice*: conscience.
- 187 *either sacrifice*: It seems that life as well as death is seen, in the circumstances of betrayal, to be a sacrifice to the 'stern decree' of conscience.
- 160 *theme*: topic set for composition.
- 165-6 *to Harmodius . . . Aristogiton*: Athenians who tried to kill the tyrant Hippias and his brother Hipparchus in 514 BC. Harmodius died in the attempt, Aristogiton was captured and executed, but they were widely praised for their good intentions (by Plato, for instance, in the *Symposium*). A Greek drinking song translated by Wordsworth c. 1786 oddly celebrates them as successful in their coup: 'When the tyrant's breast they gored . . . Gave to Athens equal laws' (Oxford I 299).
- 167 *To Brutus*: The idealist among Caesar's murderers: 'All the conspirators save only he|Did that they did in envy of great Caesar' (*Julius Caesar* V v 69-70).
- 170 *the godhead which is ours*: Cf. the final words of *The Prelude*, where the mind of man is 'Of substance and of fabric ['of quality and fabric' - 1850] more divine' (than 'the earth|On which he dwells').
- 171 *charmed*: laid to sleep.

- 175 *Doth live but by variety of disease*: Not one of Wordsworth's clearer statements. Are the 'diseases' too various to be mortal?
- 178 *Creed . . . not annulled*: Cut c. 1819; 1850 makes no other substantive change to Wordsworth's moving statement of faith in the Revolution, 1805-176-88. The 'shameful years' (1794-1804) included the Reign of Terror and the rise of French imperialism.
- 179 *virtue: power* (Latin *virtus*). *one paramount mind*: the leader whom Wordsworth has posited in ll. 136-75.
- 180 *those impious crests*: the Jacobins; Wordsworth's metaphor of plumed helmets is taken from *PL VI* 188, 'This greeting on thy impious crest receive'.
- 183 *immaturity*: It is Wordsworth's consistent view that the people have to be educated to receive power; see *Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff*, c. February 1793.
- 190 *Compelled . . . absolute want*: Wordsworth's vehemence has the air of self-justification. It cannot have been an easy decision to leave France in autumn 1792, with Annette about to have Caroline. Had the war not intervened he would presumably have scraped together money and returned to get married, but as he left he must have known that the political situation was worsening fast. Englishmen were being arrested in Paris, power was slipping away from the Girondins, the King was on trial for his life - and there can have been little doubt that if he was convicted England would join the war.
- 222-4 *Dragged by a chain . . . Heaven*: A revision, c. 1819.
- 191 *else*: otherwise.
- 194-5 *made a common cause . . . perished*: become more closely associated with the Girondins (imprisoned by Robespierre in July 1793; guillotined in October).
- 199 *A poet only to myself*: Wordsworth had published almost nothing, but had two major poems, *An Evening Walk* and *Descriptive Sketches*, printed on his return to England (no doubt in the hopes of raising money to get married on).
- 200-1 *even, beloved friend . . . unknown*: Wordsworth met Coleridge in September 1795.
- 202 *a whole year's absence*: November 1791-December 1792; for some reason the period is lengthened in what De Selincourt describes as 'the more decorative version of 1850'.
- 242 *patriot of the world*: Modelled on Bacon's phrase 'a citizen of the world' (used e.g. by Williams, *Letters Written in France* 14, 'it required but the common feelings of humanity to become in that moment a citizen of the world').
- 204-10 *a contention . . . English people*: It took 20 years, from the foundation of the Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade by Clarkson, Wilberforce and others in 1787, for an act to be passed prohibiting the carrying of slaves on British ships (see Wordsworth's sonnet of 1807, 'Clarkson, it was an obstinate hill to climb'). A bill was passed by the Commons in 1792, but thrown out ('baffled', l. 206) by the Lords, as worsening events in France led to a conservative backlash.
- 218-19 *For me . . . affections*: By contrast, see Cowper's gruesome jocular anti-slave-trade songs of 1788 (e.g. *Sweet Meat has Sour Sauce*) and Coleridge's vehement *Lecture on the Slave Trade* (1795).

- 248 *levy*: enrolment.
- 229-30 *the strength of Britain . . . host*: France declared war first (1 February 1793) and England ten days later. Alliances with Prussia and Austria were concluded in July-August. As Wordsworth writes in 1804, the war has still more than nine years to go (ten and a half, if one includes the 'hundred days' and Waterloo, June 1815).
- 233 *Change and subversion*: Followers of the Revolution are 'subverted' (undermined) by war with the country that embodies their hopes, and will in their own country from this moment be regarded as 'subversive'.
- 237 *revolution*: Wordsworth's personal 'revolution' (with a small 'r') is caused by England's joining the war against the Revolution (with a capital).
- 242-4 *with what ungracious eyes . . . regenerated France*: News of the Revolution was in fact welcomed in England. Even Pitt thought at first that the 'convulsions would culminate in general harmony and regular order'. Opinion was turning against France by the time Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution* appeared in November 1790. Corresponding Societies, formed to distribute cheap copies of Paine's *Rights of Man* (March 1791), increased the fears of an English uprising, and from 1793 there was active Government intervention.
- 248 *foretasted the event*: imagined how it would feel to be at war.
- 276-9 *As a light . . . tower*: Wordsworth substitutes 1850 'pliant harebell' and 'tower' for 1805 'green leaf' and 'tree' in *MS C* (c. 1819).
- 257 *station*: position, viewpoint
- 261-3 *When Englishmen . . . shameful flight*: Wordsworth is thinking of British and Hanoverian troops put to flight at Hondschoote and Wattignies, autumn 1793, and perhaps of the disastrous campaign of the grand old Duke of York, summer 1794.
- 268-9 *bending all|To their great Father*: 'While each to his great father bends' (*Ancient Mariner* 601); compelled to wish for his country's defeat, Wordsworth, amid the 'simple worshippers', is as much an alien as the Mariner himself.
- 279-80 *in which worst losses . . . best of names*: in which losses (from the point of view of humanity) could seem to be gains.
- 280-3 *when patriotic love . . . harbinger he is*: Despite the image of John the Baptist giving way to Christ, Wordsworth's point is ironical: patriotic love, rightly so called, gives way to jingoism, a desire for victory in battle regardless of the injustice of the war.
- 284 *ancient faith*: Presumably in this case democratic ideals, belief in the Revolution, exchanged for the ironically 'higher creed' of loyalty to the Government.
- 287-9 *in which Experience . . . grey locks*: in which those whose experience should have enabled them to know better join the (bad) cause with youthful enthusiasm.
- 315 *the red-cross flag*: the white ensign (the red cross of St George, quartered with the union jack on a white background), flown by the British fleet in battle to avoid confusion with the *tricolor*, introduced by the French in 1794. Wordsworth's association is likely to be with pictures of British ships in action; the squadron he watched in July 1793 was under the command of Sir Peter Parker, Admiral of the Blue, and would have flown blue flags.

- 293-8 *I beheld . . . place of convocation*: Looking back in a note to *Guilt and Sorrow* (1842), Wordsworth wrote:

During the latter part of the summer of 1793, having passed a month in the Isle of Wight, in view of the fleet which was then preparing for sea off Portsmouth at the commencement of the war, I left the place with melancholy forebodings.

- 298-306 *There I heard . . . pain of heart*: Wordsworth had been more indignant in the fragment *At the Isle of Wight* written at the time:

But hark from yon proud fleet in peal profound
Thunders the sunset-cannon; at the sound
The star of life appears to set in blood (Oxford I 308)

- 309-12 *Tyrants . . . goaded land waxed mad*: Wordsworth's stay on the Isle of Wight in July 1793 coincided with Robespierre's taking control in Paris. The 'devilish plea' of plotting against the state on behalf of foreign powers was used during the following year to send many hundreds to the guillotine. Robespierre is linked in Wordsworth's language with Milton's Satan, 'the fiend [who] with necessity, [The tyrant's plea, excused his devilish deeds' (*PL* IV 393-4).

- 313-14 *blasts* From hell . . . heaven *Hamlet*: I iv 41, 'Bring with thee airs from heaven, or blasts from hell.'

- 317 *theirs*: i.e. the faith of those (referring back to l. 315).

- 317-19 *who throned . . . their god*: The Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris was reconsecrated on 10 November 1793 as the Temple of Reason. Among those who disapproved, however, was Robespierre. Not content with guillotining Chaumette and other members of the National Convention involved, he himself presided on 8 June 1794 at a Festival of the Supreme Being. As in the final chapter of Rousseau's *Social Contract*, God and an afterlife were presented as the basis of republican 'virtue', the quality in whose name Robespierre chiefly acted, and which above all the Terror was said to protect.

- 319-21 *the hopes . . . paradise of ages*: Though not regarding the Terror as a purge required in the name of future happiness, Wordsworth himself was capable of thinking that violence had to be accepted as a phase in the revolutionary process; see *Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff* and ll. 749-51 below.

- 327-8 *The Senate was heart-stricken . . . Uplifted*: Seventy-five right-wing deputies in the National Convention protested after the expulsion of the Girondins on 2 June 1793, but were themselves arrested; there was no further opposition. During Robespierre's year of power, to be 'heart-stricken' was itself a crime. 'A man is guilty against the Republic', Saint-Just told the Convention in January 1794, 'when he takes pity on prisoners. He is guilty because he has no desire for virtue; he is guilty because he is opposed to the Terror.' Such guilt was punishable by death.

- 329 *Domestic carnage . . . year*: Wordsworth's line makes it sound as if the Terror lasted for years. The first major series of executions was of the Girondin leaders in October 1793; the Great Terror began with the law of 10 June 1794 altering court procedures so that prisoners could be condemned *en masse*; 1,376 people were guillotined in Paris in the 50 days before Robespierre's fall on 27 July.

- 335-6 *Head after head . . . fall*: Selection for the guillotine was in fact rather capricious. Many were executed with little or no pretext, others (Helen Maria Williams and Tom Paine among them) survived long periods in prison knowing that each day might be their last.
- 352-4 *The illustrious wife of Roland . . . last words*: Citizeness Jeanne Marie Roland de la Platière (whose *Appeal to Impartial Posterity*, written in prison waiting for execution, reveals more than any book of the period the inside story of the Revolution's struggles for power) went to the guillotine on 8 November 1793. The scene is recorded by her editor, Bosc, in the words of a fellow prisoner:

she was neatly dressed in white, and her long black hair flowed loosely to her waist . . . She had for the companion to her misfortune a man whose fortitude was not equal to her own, but whom she found means to inspire with gaiety, so cheering and so real that it several times brought a smile upon his face.

At the place of execution she bowed down before the statue of Liberty, and pronounced these memorable words: 'Oh Liberty, how many crimes are committed in thy name!' (*Appeal* II 145-6)

- 360 *flattered*: filled with unwarranted hope.
- 362-4 *The Herculean commonwealth . . . cradle*: Hera, jealous wife of Zeus, sent two serpents to kill Heracles, his child by the mortal Alcmene. The 'infant godhead' duly throttled them. The armies of the infant Republic (declared on 22 September 1792) had to cope both with the threat of Austrian and Prussian invaders and with civil war (counter-revolution in the Vendée), but before the death of Robespierre were already turning to the attack.
- 370 *beat*: Closer probably in Wordsworth's usage to the beat of a heart than the beat of a drum, and often used by him with the force of a transferred epithet; cf. the 'beating mind' of II 18.
- 378-80 *a sense|Of treachery . . . soul*: Wordsworth in his nightmares is a victim of the Terror, and falsely accused, yet cannot wholly absolve himself from collusion in the violence. His heart has been given to the Revolution for better or for worse.
- 385 *oppression*: A strong word, but Wordsworth means what he says. Compare his sense of being 'vexed' by his own creativity, and of feeling pleasure as 'a weight'.
- 388 *creature divine*: Man is at once created by God, and the one created being that is 'instinct with godhead'.
- 391 *which enables him to be*: which defines his existence as a human being.
- 392 *sequestered*: alienated. *what a change is here*: Reed points to a silent quotation from *Romeo and Juliet* that has a pleasurable appropriateness. Mercutio is teasing Romeo, who, like Wordsworth, is changing to a 'second love':

Holy Saint Francis, what a change is here!

Is Rosaline, that thou didst love so dear

So soon forsaken? (II iii 65-7)

- 401 *inflamed*: inspired; the prophets, though dooming their fellows to destruction, are consoled by the powers of the spirit.

- 408 *consummation*: accomplishment, completion.
- 411 *rage and dog-day heat*: The rising of the 'dog-stars', Sirius and Procyon, was traditionally the hottest and most feverish time of the year. For Wordsworth 'rage' would have its French connotation of madness – even perhaps (given the dog-stars), of rabies.
- 413 *in the order of sublimest laws*: Wordsworth glories in the sublimity of the Terror, conscious that Burke has based his 'laws' of the sublime on fear ('terror' with a small 't').
- 416 *I felt a kind of sympathy with power*: An astonishing statement in its context, but profoundly Wordsworthian. The poet could be said in his writing to replace the Burkean sublime of terror with the sublime of power.
- 431-2 *'Behold the harvest . . . equality'*: The scoffers' taunt has a biblical ring derived partly from the proverb 'As ye sow, so shall ye reap', partly from the mocking of Christ at his crucifixion. *popular*: of the people.
- 438 *charge*: burden, load, contents; Owen takes Wordsworth's image to be of a bursting cess-pool.
- 451-5 *That day . . . town of Arras*: Wordsworth and Jones spent the third night (16 July 1790) of their continental tour at Arras, then celebrating the first anniversary of the fall of the Bastille; see VI 352ff.
- 455-6 *place from which . . . Robespierre*: Robespierre (1758-94) was born at Arras, and represented the town in the National Assembly (variously called at different times) from its first meeting in May 1789. Like so many deputies, he was a lawyer.
- 457 *the atheist crew*: Words applied by Milton, *Paradise Lost* VI 370, to the fallen angels, who refuse allegiance to God, but do not of course deny his existence. Robespierre detested atheism (in the modern sense of the word), sending to the guillotine most of those who in autumn 1793 had instituted the state religion of Reason; see ll. 317-19n. above.
- 460-1 *groaned . . . cruel son*: The directions of Robespierre's Committee of Public Safety were carried out in Arras by an ex-priest named (ironically) Le Bon, who was later said by his secretary to have 'killed in a sort of fever'.
- 462 *As Lear reproached the winds*: The reference to *Lear* III ii 1-24 can be read in two ways: either Wordsworth's quarrel with the image in his mind is as pointless as the mad King's reproaches to the winds, or the town groans under the Terror as Lear complains at the storm. The first, and stronger, reading is pre-empted by the poet's executors, who place dashes at the end of 1850 503, and after 'winds' in l. 507. Punctuation in the MSS offers no basis for their confidence.
- 468 *this foul tribe of Moloch*: 'First Moloch, horrid king, besmeared with blood|Of human sacrifice, and parents' tears . . .' (*PL* I 392-3).
- 469 *regent*: ruler; Robespierre had no elective office or official title, ruling through the Committee of Public Safety and by the support of the Paris sections.
- 472 *a small village*: Rampside, on the coast north of Barrow-in-Furness and opposite Piel Island, where Wordsworth was staying with cousins in August-September 1794; see *Peele Castle* 1-2: 'I was thy neighbour once, thou rugged pile|Four summer weeks I dwelt in sight of thee . . .'
- 474-5 *the smooth sands . . . estuary*: Levens Sands, which can still be crossed with

a guide when the tide is out, and which formed the main north-south route, cutting across Morecambe Bay; see ll. 515-29 below.

476 *genial*: warm, cheerful.

477-86 *With distant prospect . . . childhood*: Looking east and north Wordsworth sees mountain-tops of the Lake District lit by the sun, and thinks of the hidden valleys below where he has been brought up. To mark the contrast he turns to Milton at his most ornate for the mountainscape, and touches in the 'happy fields' of his childhood in his own less elevated style.

480 *Creatures of one ethereal substance*: beings created from the same heavenly material (clouds and mountains are spiritualized alike by the sun and by the imagination).

481 *consistory*: synod, church council; cf. the 'gloomy consistory', summoned in mid-air by Satan, *PR I* 42.

482 *burning seraphs*: radiant angels; among the angelic 'orders', seraphs are closest to God, living in the realm of pure fire. De Selincourt points to Milton, *At A Solemn Music* 10, 'the bright seraphim in burning row'.

483 *empyrean*: 'the pure empyrean where he sits|High-throned above all height' (*PL III* 57-8).

486 *fulgent*: shining, resplendent; 'At last as from a cloud his fulgent head|And shape star-bright appeared' (*PL X* 449-50).

492 *An honoured teacher of my youth*: William Taylor, brilliant young Cambridge-trained headmaster of Hawkshead Grammar School, died on 12 June 1786, aged 32. His grave may be seen at Cartmell Priory (a church of great beauty) near Ulverston.

499 *A fragment . . . Gray*:

His merits, stranger, seek not to disclose,
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode
(There they alike in trembling hope repose),
The bosom of his father and his God.

(*Elegy* 125-8, with adapted first line)

501 *'My head will soon lie low'*: Taylor's moving words were used by Wordsworth, aged sixteen, in his ballad *And Will You Leave Me Thus Alone* (23-4 March 1787):

Heaven told me once - but I was blind -
My head would soon lie low;
A rose within our garden blew
Amid December's snow. (*Oxford I* 266)

506 *in my own despite*: Cf. *Ruined Cottage* 206-8: 'In my own despite|I thought of that poor woman as of one|Whom I had known and loved.' In each case the reader is surprised by the implied resistance to emotional commitment.

513-14 *when I . . . toilsome songs*: Wordsworth's first extant poem was written at Taylor's suggestion in 1785 to celebrate the bicentenary of Hawkshead Grammar School. Though disparaged by Wordsworth himself (*Memoirs I* 13) as 'a tame imitation of Pope's versification', the poem has considerable power and looks forward to later poetry on the theme of education.

- 520 *A Romish chapel*: Built, like Piel Castle, by monks from nearby Furness Abbey.
- 527-8 *shallow stream* | *Of inland water*: The River Leven, which crosses the Sands, has to be waded; the rest of the two-mile passage is dry-shod. Turner and Cox, among others, have painted the scene that Wordsworth describes; see also Elizabeth Gaskell, *The Sexton's Hero*.
- 534 *In the familiar language of the day*: going straight to the point.
- 535 *Robespierre was dead*: News of Robespierre's death (at first very confused) reached London on 16 August 1794; Wordsworth heard it around the 20th.
- 538 *he and his supporters all were fallen*: Robespierre's fall (dramatized within weeks by Coleridge and Southey) was very sudden. On 27 July 1794 he was outmanoeuvred in the National Convention by Tallien and Barras, and arrested after a painful attempt at suicide. On the 28th he and his 21 closest associates (bar Lebas, who had successfully killed himself) went to the guillotine ('their helper' in l. 549). A further 86 Robespierrists were purged - 71 on the following day - including Samson the executioner.
- 539-40 *my joy* | *In vengeance, and eternal justice*: Note the order: Wordsworth makes no bones about a dominant feeling of revenge.
- 546-8 *They who . . . the Augean stable*: Robespierre, in Wordsworth's unpleasant image, diverts a river of blood to cleanse the Republic, just as Hercules diverts the Rivers Alpheus and Peneus through the stables of King Augeas (choked with 30 years' ox-dung) to accomplish the sixth of his 'labours'.
- 554 *madding factions*: Cf. 'hissing factionists' (IX 57) and Gray's *Elegy* 73, 'Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife'.
- 559-66 *Along that very shore . . . level sand*: Tacitly Wordsworth's exultation and delusive political hopes are compared to the joy of heart with which as a boy he had 'scampered homeward' from Furness Abbey ('St Mary's mouldering fane'), II 135-44. *fane*: temple, church.
- 566 Repetition of II 144.
- XI 1 The decision to divide 1805 Book X into two was taken in 1832. To judge from *MS Z* (April-May 1805), it was a return to Wordsworth's original intention. Why he ever thought having such a weighty book was a good thing is hard to know.
- 567-72 *From this time . . . past aims*: Authority in France became less efficient as well as 'milder'. The committees through which Robespierre had worked were deprived of their power, and the laws on which he had depended were repealed. With them went the controlled economy which he had devised and enforced. The currency collapsed, starvation was widespread. Lack of effective government led three years later (September 1797) to renewed dictatorship under the Directory, and finally (November 1799) to the rise of Napoleon.
- 576 *of heartless omen*: discouraging.
- 589-92 *Such victory . . . noiseless fortitude*: Wordsworth continues to believe not only that the Republic will triumph, but that there will then be a peaceful revolution in Britain.
- 592-5 *Beholding still . . . same in quality*: Seeing that France resists her attackers as powerfully as before, the poet imagines that her motivation remains as pure.

- 596 *the two spirits*: the forces of reaction and of truth (Britain and her allies embodying the 'worse' spirit, France the 'better').
- 598-604 *never dreamt|That transmigration . . . called to*: The 'soul' of France has been replaced. The Republic, created with such high ideals, has suffered a moral fall - is no longer the same being.
- 604-17 *Youth maintains . . . ordinary practice*: Wordsworth is talking about himself, and the basis of his mistaken judgments in the period after Robespierre's death. The pattern of his thoughts follows his sentence structures: (1) Youth is the period of human life most in touch with nature; (2) nature, in this political phase when 'habit, custom, law' have lost their authority, has unusual scope to influence the judgment; (3) events of the day produced abundant evidence to support warm, or wild, judgments, and to undermine the authority of custom.
- 617-22 *I could see . . . safety*: Those who, dazed by the Terror, build themselves up a tower of refuge on the basis of seemingly promising news, are (to the Wordsworth of the mid-1790s) as foolish as the builders of Babel (*Genesis* 11.3-9).
- 625 *conceited*: imagined.
- 640 *passion over-near ourselves*: material too fraught with emotion to be decorously described.
- 643 *scorn and condemnation personal*: lampoon, invective; though at times in *The Prelude* an excellent satirist, Wordsworth regards satire as a low form, and personal satire as unacceptable.
- 645-7 *Our shepherds . . . tool of murder*: Wordsworth's metaphor-mixing indignation against the Pitt Government is oddly reminiscent of *Lycidas* 119-20: 'Blind mouths! that scarce themselves know how to hold|A shephook'.
- 647-51 *They who ruled . . .|To imitate*: Despite the example of Robespierre, who lived and died by the guillotine, the British Government longed to imitate repressive French policies. 'These pretended constitutionalists', Coleridge wrote in *The Friend* with this passage in mind, 'recurred to the language of insult, and to measures of persecution. In order to oppose Jacobinism, they imitated it in its worst features: in personal slander, in illegal violence, and even in the thirst for blood' (Rooke II 141).
- 653-4 *in their weapons . . . reach*: Wordsworth writes as one who has himself been watched by a Home Office informer (at Alfoxden in summer 1797); his image is of rats behind the wainscot.
- 658 *It hath been told*: In IX 295-543, where Wordsworth, under the influence of Beaupuy, gives his heart to the French people.
- 660 *polity*: government.
- 662-5 *I had approached . . . metal which I saw*: According to the fable (which is only partly relevant to Wordsworth's lines) a two-sided shield - one side gold, one silver - is hung at a crossroads. Knights approaching from opposite directions see it differently, and fight to maintain what they see (cf. Joseph Spence, *Moralities* [1753], 99-102).
- 672-3 *themselves|Felt deeply*: Read: 'though deeply felt'.
- 677 *sanctuary*: church building where anyone fleeing from civil prosecution could claim protection.
- 682 *noviciate*: inexperienced, resembling a novice in a religious order; drawn probably from Coleridge, *1796 Religious Musings*. 437-8: 'Till then|I discipline my young noviciate thought'.

- 689-727 Among the few passages of *The Prelude* known in Wordsworth's lifetime; published (with ll. 662-5 above by way of preface) in *The Friend*, 26 October 1809, then in 1815 and Wordsworth's subsequent collections.
- 690 *auxiliars*: helpers; often used of supporting troops on a battlefield.
- 694-5 *the meagre, stale, forbidding ways|Of custom*: Wordsworth avoids too close resemblance to *Hamlet* I ii 133-4: 'How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable| Seem to me all the uses of this world!'
- 697-9 *When reason . . . A prime enchanter*: In a light mockery of his former self, Wordsworth invokes for reason the power of a Prospero.
- 706 *temper*: temperament.
- 708 *rapt away*: carried away, enraptured.
- 709-16 *They who had fed . . . To wield it*: An unexpected self-portrait.
- 716-19 *they too . . . peaceful selves*: Seemingly a composite portrait of Mary Wordsworth and Wordsworth's brother John, the 'silent poet'.
- 721 *stuff at hand plastic as they could wish*: ready and malleable material for the imagination to work upon (in its creation of future happiness).
- 723-7 *Not in Utopia . . . not at all*: 'Paradise and groves|Elysian', Wordsworth had written in the Prospectus to *The Recluse* (1800),

blessèd islands in the deep,
Of choice seclusion - wherefore need they be
A history, or but a dream, when minds
Once wedded to this outward frame of things
In love, find these the growth of common day? (ll. 35-40)

There had been no political context in the Prospectus, but in both this poem and *The Prelude* there is the moving emphasis on finding happiness in actuality - in the world that we know and share.

- 736 *convoked*: called forth, summoned.
- 739 *still*: always.
- XI 160 An alexandrine in the MSS, corrected by the poet's executors, who substituted a dash for the words 'and that'.
- 749-51 *Not caring . . . futurity*: Wordsworth is impressively clear that some violence and suffering is to be accepted in the early stages of a revolution. In the *Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff* (1793) this is the basis on which he defends the execution of Louis XVI.
- 751 *happy*: Removed c. 1819, to reduce the line from an alexandrine (presumably unintended) to the regular pentameter.
- 752-6 *In brief . . . more strong*: In this last phase of Wordsworth's long sentence (beginning at l: 738), he presents himself as the child of nature whose emotions, though they have now found a wider sphere, remain unchanged. Those appropriate to an earlier stage have grown weaker and merged imperceptibly into adult (political) responses.
- 757-9 *In the main outline . . . France*: For the past hundred lines Wordsworth has been working through a second time the period described in ll. 227-306 above. He has now arrived once more at the outbreak of war (declared by France on 1 February 1793, and Britain on the 11th).
- 768-9 *What had been a pride|Was now a shame*: Wordsworth, for whom patriotism is an aspect of his early bonding with nature, is thinking of his country's shameful opposition to liberty and the Revolution.

- 774 *As from the first*: Presumably, as from the early stages of the Revolution.
- 791-3 *And now, become oppressors . . . conquest*: For eighteen months after their success at Valmy (September 1792) French armies were occupied with defending the borders and suppressing counter-revolution. That they should then turn to the attack made sense in economic terms, though it went against the renunciation of wars of conquest written into the Constitution in May 1790. By the end of 1794 Belgium and Holland had been occupied; Spain and northern Italy invaded. Napoleon meanwhile was rapidly rising through the ranks.
- 794-6 *and mounted up . . . The scale of liberty*: Liberty, which should be weighing most heavily with the French, is being outweighed by conquest. Wordsworth's image of the balance (scales) is from *Paradise Lost*, where God hangs 'forth his golden scales' in heaven to show Satan his weakness in comparison with Gabriel: 'The fiend looked up and knew|His mounted scale aloft' (IV 1013-14).
- 798 *taking to the shame*: accepting, taking for himself, the shame.
- 800-1 *to prove|Their temper*: test their strength (the metaphor is from 'proving' steel).
- 803 *Grow into consequence*: become substantial, take on the status of fact.
- 806-10 *the philosophy . . . ready welcome*: Godwin's *Political Justice* (February 1793) offered a rationalist philosophy in which man's future happiness was to depend on education and the dictates of the mind, freed from emotional ties. The first edition (rewritten in 1796) assumed that Britain would peacefully follow the examples of America and France.
- 809 *a purer element*: reason.
- 812-13 *Where passions . . . names*: Having been his disciple in the years 1794-6, Wordsworth exposes the weak point of Godwin's system with brilliant irony. The claims of *Political Justice* had been an act of faith, its dependence on reason emotional.
- 818-29 *What delight . . . independent intellect*:

The satire is beautifully controlled – and needs to be, if the writing is to deflect obvious comparisons between Godwinian arrogance and Wordsworthian egotistical solitude. The passage stresses again and again the folly of the individual, the disparity between his assumption of power and powerless actuality. 'Self-knowledge' he clearly does not possess (no one would expect him to, after the ironic 'How glorious'); 'self-rule' is another matter, but confers no right to survey and judge the kingdoms of the world; 'resolute mastery' might be fine in itself, but has no control of nature, time, or place, and cannot change the past; it is true in a way (and a Wordsworthian one) that the basis of social freedom is 'the individual mind', but not when it adopts a posture of superiority, regarding general laws as 'blind constraint' and 'magisterially' assuming that nothing need be taken into account but such circumstances as happen to penetrate its unwarranted seclusion. (BV 267).

- 833 *a secure intelligence*: a settled mind.
- 836 *worm-like*: like a caterpillar (commonly called 'worms' at this period, just as butterflies are commonly called 'flies'); Wordsworth draws his image, and the wording of l. 238, from Spenser's delightful mock-heroic *Fate of the Butterfly*.

- 839 *yet I feel: to this day I feel.*
- 843-7 *sacrificed . . . false imagination:* To Wordsworth the 'comprehensive mind' (expansive, generous in its imagination) has paradoxically an 'exactness' (precision) that 'scrupulous and microscopic views' cannot achieve; cf. *Not Useless Do I Deem* 58ff.: 'was it meant|That we should pore, and dwindle as we pore,|Forever dimly pore on things minute . . .'
- 850 *ancient institutions:* Probably Wordsworth means traditional ways of thought, but his attack would be no less relevant to 'institutions' such as the University or the House of Lords.
- 855-6 *A veil had been|Uplifted:* By the Revolution.
- 863 *Let loose and goaded:* Wordsworth's mind is released from old ways of thought by the Revolution, but also 'goaded' (a maddening process at l. 312) by the sense of alienation that follows. Hence the reference in the next line to 'what hath . . . been said of patriotic love' (see ll. 253-78 above).
- 870-1 *A happy man . . . painful things:* Characteristics that Wordsworth had given to his second self, the Pedlar, as early as spring 1798: 'in himself|Happy . . . He could afford to suffer|With those whom he saw suffer'. (ll. 279-84).
- 878 *nature's holiest places:* Cf. ll. 379-80 above, 'the place|The holiest that I knew of - my own soul'.
- 879 *some dramatic story:* Taking 'dramatic' in rather a literal-minded way, Owen and Reed suggest a reference to Wordsworth's play *The Borderers* (1796-7). Wordsworth, however, is clearly referring to a prospective work - 'Time may come . . .' He is writing in autumn 1804, and on 6 March had told De Quincey of having 'arranged the plan' of *The Excursion* (not a drama, but dramatic in the sense that it is written in dialogue). *The Borderers* lay in the past (Coleridge had known it for more than seven years), and revealed Wordsworth's experience in the Revolution only by implication. *The Excursion*, by contrast, lay in the future, and did indeed tell (in the 'dramatic story' of the Solitary) both of what the poet had learned, and of the errors into which he had been betrayed. See Jonathan Wordsworth, 'That Wordsworth Epic', *WC*, winter 1980, 34-5.
- 885-6 *a heart . . . turned aside|From nature by external accidents:* Probably the clearest statement as to how Wordsworth came to view his former political self.
- 889-90 *Dragging all passions . . . to the bar:* As the passions are indicted, called to the bar to explain their right to exist, it is (by implication) Godwinian reason that acts as prosecutor.
- 892 *titles: credentials.*
- 898 *in fine: in the end.*
- 899-900 *Sick, wearied out . . . in despair:* A crisis-point that is of great importance in *The Prelude*, but which Wordsworth does not elsewhere mention. Loss of confidence may well have been associated with reading the impoverished second edition of *Political Justice* at Racedown in March 1796. Godwin on whose thinking Wordsworth had relied for the two past years (and whom he had met personally nine times in London) was in full retreat. On his own admission, five out of the eight books of *Political Justice* 1793 had been rewritten. A work that had looked forward to a chain reaction of

beneficent revolutions (America, France, England, and onwards across the known world) now offered the rhetoric of rationalist optimism, divorced from political hope.

XI 306–33 *This was the crisis . . . no admission*: Inserted in its original form in *MS C c.* 1819, but frequently revised as Wordsworth sought to portray his early moral crisis as a 'strong disease' of the soul.

903–4 *Turned towards mathematics . . . evidence*: Wordsworth is turning not to text-book maths (the academic subject he ought to have studied with more vigour at Cambridge), but to the 'independent world|Created out of pure intelligence', discussed in VI 178ff., a 'clear synthesis built up aloft:

Mighty is the charm
Of those abstractions to a mind beset
With images, and haunted by itself . . .

XI 308 *our blessed reason*: Looking back, Wordsworth sees his crisis of confidence as the 'lowest ebb' of the soul, and (confusingly, if one takes into account the original circumstances) thinks of reason as a divine gift wrongly deemed to be inadequate.

XI 309–20 *The lordly attributes . . . slave of crime*: This speech that Wordsworth puts into the mouth of his former self reads most oddly after 1805 890–900. Where the early passage shows 'a heart . . . turned aside|From nature by external accidents' (ll. 885–6), 1850 portrays rebellion, 'selfish passion', a questioning of God's purpose in the bestowing of free will.

XI 328–30 *turned to abstract science . . . space and time*: A recollection of Wordsworth's account of the arab's 'stone' in V 103–5, where mathematics is seen in its most exalted form. Representing Euclid's *Elements*, the stone had

held acquaintance with the stars
And wedded man to man by purest bond
Of nature, undisturbed by space or time . . .

905–6 *most precious friend . . . First known to me*: A half-truth: Wordsworth had met Coleridge six months earlier, in September 1795, but did not get to know him until mid-1797 – hence, presumably, the cutting of these lines in 1850.

908–9 *the beloved woman . . . days were passed*: Dorothy, with whom Wordsworth had set up house in September 1795 at Racedown in Dorset.

914–15 *a saving intercourse|With my true self*: Cf. *Tintern Abbey* 117ff.: 'in thy voice I catch|The language of my former heart . . .'

920 *office*: role, function, vocation, duty.

921 *And lastly*: Wordsworth's syntax is still dependent on 'Ah then it was' in l. 904.

930–3 *In the catastrophe . . . an Emperor*: Napoleon, who had declared himself Emperor in May 1804, summoned Pius VII to crown him in Paris – then (2 December) took the crown out of his hands and crowned himself. Wordsworth seems to be writing just before the event, 'for so they dream' implying intention on the part of the French. *catastrophe*: dénouement, theatrical climax (not necessarily tragic).

- 934 *opprobrium*: disgrace.
- 934-5 *the dog|Returning to his vomit*: Wordsworth's vehement image is from *Proverbs* 26.11, 'As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly' (see also *II. Peter* 2.21-2, where the proverb is applied to backsliders who 'have known the way of righteousness'). Having declared themselves a republic in September 1792, the French are returning to monarchy.
- 935-40 *when the sun . . . opera phantom*: the sun of the Republic, which has touched the clouds with its glory, sets in a grotesque piece of theatre (as Napoleon crowns himself). *gewgaw*: toy, plaything. *machine*: stage-prop.
- 946-50 *now|Among the basest . . . Timoleon*: Coleridge was in Sicily, part of the kingdom of Naples and regarded as particularly backward, despite a glorious classical past. De Selincourt quotes at length from the *Life of Timoleon* in North's Plutarch, showing Timoleon (d. 337 BC) as a rooter-out of tyrants, establisher of Sicilian democracy, and defender of the island against the Carthaginians.
- XI 377-8 *Where Etna . . . Syracuse*: Poetic licence; Mary Moorman, *The Later Years* 504-5, draws attention to Kilvert's account of a meeting between Wordsworth and George Venables when the lines on the mountain's shadow were being composed, c. 1838:

One evening near Rydal I saw Wordsworth sauntering towards me wearing a shade over his eyes, which were weak, and crooning out loud some lines of a poem which he was composing. I stopped to avoid splashing him and apologised for having intruded upon him. He said, 'I'm glad I met you, for I want to consult you about some lines I am composing in which I want to make the shadow of Etna fall across Syracuse . . . would this be possible?' I replied that . . . the only difficulty was that Etna is exactly north of Syracuse. 'Surely', said Wordsworth, 'it is a little N.E. or N.W.?' And as he was evidently determined to make the shadow fall the way he wanted it, I did not contradict him.

(Francis Kilvert, *Diary Selections: 1870-79*, ed. William Plomer, 3 vols, London, 1960, I 234)

- 951 *How are the mighty prostrated*: Strangely inelegant rewording (unchanged in 1850) of David's lament for Saul and Jonathan: 'The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places: how are the mighty fallen' (*II Samuel* 1.119).
- 953-4 *When the great voice . . . ancient heroes*: The call for liberty?
- 960 *Strewed with the wreck . . . years*: Cf. Cowper, *Task* II 75-7:

Alas for Sicily - rude fragments now

Lie scattered where the shapely column stood;

Her palaces are dust.

- 964 *A hope to be deferred*: hope for the distant future.
- 968-9 *One great society . . . noble dead*: Expanded upon by Wordsworth in *Convention of Cintra* (1809):

There is a spiritual community binding together the living and the dead, the good, the brave and the wise, of all ages. We would not be [do not wish to be] rejected from this community, and therefore do we hope. (*Prose Works* I 339)

- 974 *Sirocco*: hot oppressive wind blowing from North Africa.
- 977 *sanative*: healing, restorative.
- 981–2 *this last spot . . . Stands single*: Since the breakdown of the Peace of Amiens (1802–3), Britain had been maintaining the war against Napoleon alone.
- 985 *This heavy time of change for all mankind Lycidas*: 37, 'But oh the heavy change now thou art gone', has been brought into Wordsworth's mind (as De Selincourt points out) by his own use of 'thou art gone' in l. 980.
- 994 *The gladsome image in my memory*: Wordsworth aged 20 had quite deliberately stored the scenery of the Alps within his memory, reflecting as he did so: 'perhaps scarce a day of my life will pass in which I shall not derive some happiness from these images' (14 September 1790).
- 996 *at a time, how different*: Wordsworth contrasts the European political scene of 1804 with that of 1790 when 'benevolence and blessedness|Spread like a fragrance everywhere' (VI 368–9).
- 1002–3 *o flowery vale|Of Enna*:

that fair field

Of Enna, where Proserpina gathering flowers

(Herself a fairer flower) by gloomy Dis

Was gathered. (PL IV 268–71)

- 1012–13 *Empedocles|Or Archimedes*: Philosopher-poet, supposed to have thrown himself into Etna c. 433 BC, and mathematician (died c. 212 BC) to this day famous for Archimedes' Principle.
- 1015 *Theocritus*: Greatest of Greek (Sicilian) pastoral poets, died c. 260 BC.
- 1021–3 *how bees with honey fed . . . muse's nectar*: Story told by Theocritus, *Idyll* VII 78–83. The muse drips nectar on Comates' lips encouraging bees to feed him in the cedar chest where he is imprisoned.
- 1028 *by this calm fireside*: At Dove Cottage, Grasmere, c. late November 1804.
- XI 455 *invaded heavens*: The mountain's height invades the sky.
- XI 458 *discipline*: Owen suggests 'instruction'.
- XI 460 *sapient*: wise.
- 1033 *pastoral Arethuse*: Sicilian stream (transformed from a Greek nymph, Arethusa) invoked by Milton, *Lycidas* 85.
- 1036 *Thou gratelatest*: you greet.
- 1037 *votary*: devotee:

Book Eleventh (1850 Twelfth)

- I News of the death of his brother John, captain of the *Earl of Abergavenny*, reached Wordsworth on 11 February 1805, and brought work on *The Prelude* to a stop. Ten books were more or less complete. The last three – all of them short – were put together in April and the first half of May, a great deal of old material being used in the process. *MS Z*, fair copy of Books XI and XII, shows that XI began originally at l. 42 below, 'This history, my friend'.
- 7–8 *Not with these began . . . end*: An affectionate allusion to *Idiot Boy* 445–6: 'And with the owls began my song,|And with the owls must end'.
- 9–14 *Ye motions of delight . . . silent night*: Found in their original form in a long

- 110 *pure forms*: forms exempt from moral judgment, standing outside a moral context (rather than forms that are ideal, 'pure' in the Platonic sense).
- 116-18 *fell|Beneath . . . Less elevated*: See ll. 148ff. below, 'how feeble have I been'; Wordsworth is referring, somewhat obscurely, to a taste for the picturesque.
- 123-4 *the grand|And simple reason*: Described at XIII 170 as 'reason in her most exalted mood', and conforming effectively to the Kantian *Vernunft*. In the lines that follow, Wordsworth is scrupulously fair to the lesser, analytic reason (in Kant's terms, *Verstand*, 'understanding'), which has its place but must not be allowed to become an idol. Reason in the sense of Godwinian rationalism (the focus of Wordsworth's attack in Book X) ceases at this point to be a factor in *The Prelude*.
- 132-3 *a worthy theme|For philosophic verse*: For *The Recluse*, that is, rather than *The Prelude*.
- 152 *presumption*: presumptuousness; Wordsworth's concern at this point is to show Imagination Impaired (as in the heading of the book) as a prelude to its restoration in the 'spots of time' sequence (ll. 258-389 below). He goes on to accuse himself, with no great conviction, of three distinct forms of presumption that have made him insensitive to the 'soul of nature': (1) the picturesque (ll. 152-7); (2) making aesthetic comparisons (ll. 157-63); (3) the tyranny of the eye (ll. 163-75).
- 152-7 *even in pleasure . . . my habit*: Wordsworth's disparagement of the picturesque as 'a strong infection of the age' conceals the fact that his developing love of nature at Hawkshead had been influenced by West's *Guide to the Lakes* (third ed. 1784) and Gilpin's *Lakes Tour* (1786), and that he had borrowed from both writers in his poetry. As late as *Tintern Abbey* (July 1798), the 'steep and lofty cliffs' that so memorably 'connect|The landscape with the quiet of the sky' derive from Gilpin's observation of charcoal-burners beside the Wye. Smoke from their fires, he notes (*Wye Tour* 12), 'spreading its thin veil over [the hills], beautifully breaks their lines, and unites them with the sky'.
- 157-63 *giving way|To a comparison . . . Less sensible*: Though Wordsworth claims to have been more given to aesthetic comparison of natural scenes than to picturesque judgments, no evidence survives of his 'Pampering [him]self with meagre novelties|Of colour and proportion.' It is not easy to believe he ever did so.
- 163 *sensible*: sensitive, responsive.
- 167 *creature*: man as created.
- 170-5 *The state|In which the eye . . . dominion*: Whether or not the dominion of the eye could be said to have impaired Wordsworth's imagination, it is entirely credible that he should think it 'The most despotic of our senses'.
- 179-80 *summons all the senses . . . themselves*: High-sounding verse; what it could mean is another matter. Under special circumstances some (hardly 'all') senses might perhaps counteract each other. Self-counteraction remains a problem.
- 183 *power*: imaginative power.
- 184 *another song*: Again a reference to *The Recluse*; removed from the text c. 1838, the year that Wordsworth conceded to the Boston publisher George Ticknor that the great philosophical poem might never be written.

- 190 *from hill to hill, from rock to rock*: Wordsworth is quoting from the opening of *To A Daisy* (1802):

In youth from rock to rock I went,
From hill to hill, in discontent
Of pleasure high and turbulent . . .

- 194 *the inner faculties*: Including, of course, 'that inward eye' [Which is the bliss of solitude] (*Daffodils* 15–16, written spring 1804).

- 199 *a maid*: Mary Hutchinson, who was the same age as Wordsworth ('young as I was then', l. 199), and whom he married on 4 October 1802.

- 202–3 *critic rules . . . intermeddling subtleties*: 'Critic rules' of the picturesque (as at l. 154 above) and subtleties such as Wordsworth had denounced in *Tables Turned* 26–8:

Our meddling intellect
Misshapes the beauteous forms of things,
We murder to dissect.

- 205 *genial circumstance*: More than just 'good fortune', 'genial' carrying an implication of warmth, growth-inducing properties, and 'circumstance' meaning in origin 'surroundings'.

- 213 *nature's inmate*: at one with nature (literally, 'one who dwells with nature'). Tactfully or otherwise, Wordsworth is to be seen applying to his wife lines drafted for his sister. The fragment 'I would not strike a flower' had been addressed to Dorothy, like its companion-piece *Nutting* (c. November 1798):

For she is nature's inmate, and her heart
Is everywhere. Even the unnoticed heath
That o'er the mountain spreads its prodigal bells
Lives in her love . . .

- 223–4 *before I was called forth . . . hills*: Before leaving the Lake District for Cambridge, at the age of seventeen.

- 230–1 *nor . . . survived* | *The first diviner influence*: Despite *Intimations* 67–8, Wordsworth does not feel that 'Shades of the prison-house' had begun to close upon him personally as the 'growing boy'.

- XII 185 *As piety ordained*: A small change from 1805 'As my soul bade me', but not a small distortion. Wordsworth as Hawkshead had 'worshipped' instinctively – as an act of 'natural piety' – not (as this revision of 1832 implies) through Christian meekness.

- 240–1 *through the gorgeous Alps* | *Roaming*: In summer 1790, aged 20; see Book VI.

- 242 *this degradation*: The impairment of imagination that Wordsworth has attempted to portray in ll. 152–98 above.

- 244–5 *custom that prepares . . . to least*: Familiarity breeds contempt; the great spiritual aspects of nature come to be undervalued by comparison with superficial attractions.

- 247 *Or, lastly, aggravated by the times*: By political pressures.

- 250–6 *I had felt . . . creative soul*: Wordsworth's attempt to impose upon *The*

Prelude a Miltonic structure based on the loss and regaining of paradise (seen first in the five-book version of March 1804) falters because he is unable to say with conviction that his imagination has ever been seriously impaired. Cambridge, though presented as an eddy in the river of his development, does nothing to prevent its onward course. The soul of nature diffuses through London's frightening impersonality 'Composure and ennobling harmony' (VII 740): Political commitment in France betrays the poet into the false hopes and sterile arguments of Godwinian rationalism, but even here we are told at once of recovery and Dorothy's saving presence. There can be no doubt of Wordsworth's wish to show the innocent vision occluded by experience, but he can't bring himself to the belief that it happened. His poem depends far more on the sense of having been, and remained, a 'chosen son'. See *BV* chapter 8, 'Versions of the Fall', especially pp. 274-6.

- 257-388 Originally consisting of three episodes (1799 I 258-374), the 'spots of time' sequence provides in all versions of *The Prelude* the rationale for Wordsworth's belief in the capacity of the adult mind to draw strength and inspiration from childhood experience. The individual 'spots' reached the expanded form preserved in 1805 during work on the five-book *Prelude* in early spring 1804. It was at this period that the Drowned Man of Esthwaite (first episode in 1799, and found at V 450-81 in 1805) was separated off.
- 259 *A vivifying virtue*: life-giving power. 1799 'fructifying virtue' had placed the emphasis on creativity, 1850 'renovating virtue' (present in Reed's text of the *A/B* Stage) stresses renewal.
- 270-2 *We have had . . . her will*: Wordsworth's emphasis on the mind as 'lord and master' is the key to his new attitude to the Spots of Time in 1805. 1799 takes imagination for granted in its quest for continuities in human existence, 1805 exalts it as the triumph of the human mind.
- 288-9 *a bottom . . . had been hung*: If we assume that the child did indeed stumble on the site of a gibbet, the valley-bottom was Cowdrake Quarry east of Penrith, where Thomas Nicholson had been hanged in 1767. *The Prelude* is not, however, a record of fact. Nicholson's gibbet had not 'mouldered down' in 1775, and a five-year-old would not have ridden that far. Wordsworth is creating a composite experience, and has chiefly in mind a rotted seventeenth-century gibbet in the meadows at Hawkshead, which we know was an object of terror for him during his schooldays.
- 291-301 *on the turf . . . green sod*: The letters carved in the turf are not present in 1799, and not likely to have been part of whatever was Wordsworth's original experience; probably he heard of them in the years 1799-1804. Their existence is corroborated by the anonymous *History of Penrith* (1838), which however states that they read 'TPM' (for 'Thomas Parker Murdered'), while Wordsworth regards them as recording 'the murderer's name'.
- 292 *fell*: fierce; as at l. 318 above, 'I was a fell destroyer', Wordsworth's tones are slightly arch.
- 294 *monumental*: memorial.
- 305 *A girl who bore a picher on her head*: A cottage-woman fetching water from a stream in the valley - at the time (as Wordsworth says) 'an ordinary sight'.

- 310 *visionary dreaminess*: Wordsworth's readers would recollect 'The dismal situation waste and wild' of Milton's Hell, where there was 'No light, but rather darkness visible' (*PL* I 60-3).
- 312-14 *the naked pool, The beacon . . . The woman*: 'I have been struck with the important truth', De Quincey (who had read the 1805 *Prelude* in MS) writes in *Suspiria De Profundis*,
 that far more of our deepest thoughts and feelings pass to us through perplexed combinations of concrete objects, pass to us as *involved* (if I may coin that word) in compound experiences incapable of being disentangled, than ever reach us directly and in their own abstract shapes. (Ward 130)
- Note also the pattern of 'involved' (concrete objects with which the emotions have become involved, or associated, and which thus recall the original feelings) in ll. 357-9 below.
- 315-44 *When, in a blessed . . . conclude*: Written in early spring 1804 when Wordsworth was revising the Spots of Time for the five-book *Prelude*. The two 'dear ones' of l. 317 are Mary Hutchinson and Dorothy, and the 'time of early love' was summer 1787 just before he went up to Cambridge. He and Mary would have been seventeen, Dorothy fifteen.
- 320-5 *Upon the naked pool . . . left behind*: Passion is valued by Wordsworth not so much for its moods as for its intensity and rootedness in the past. Though no one had made such assumptions before, he expects us to accept without question that the pleasures of young love ('youth's golden gleam') can be enhanced by memories of painful early experience.
- 325-7 *So feeling comes in aid . . . strong*: The creed on which, more than any other, *The Prelude* is built.
- 332-3 *that thou must give, Else never canst receive*: Lines that form part of a dialogue with Coleridge, centring upon *Dejection: An Ode* (published in the *Morning Post* as a tribute to Wordsworth on his wedding-day, 4 October 1802): 'Oh Edmund, we receive but what we give, And in our life alone does nature live'. Coleridge's lines express anxieties that Wordsworth (Edmund) does not feel, but for both poets the capacity to give (outgoing imagination) is associated with ability to perceive and feel intensely.
- 335-6 *the hiding-places . . . close*: Written probably just before *Intimations* was completed in February 1804. Five years earlier, in 1799 Part II, Wordsworth had spoken confidently of the 'poetic spirit' as 'in some Through every change of growth or of decay Preeminent till death' (ll. 306-10).
- 337-42 *I see by glimpses . . . future restoration*: Lines added after the death of the poet's brother John in February 1805, and conveying the mood in which the last three books of *The Prelude* were put together in April-May.
- 344-88 In contrast to the previous 'spot', *Waiting for the Horses* follows the text of 1799 very closely. In the background is an account of the event written for *The Vale of Esthwaite* in 1786-7, as little as two or three years after the death of the poet's father on 30 December 1783; see 1799 I 352n.
- 345 *The day before the holidays began*: Probably 19 December 1783.
- XII 291 *those led palfreys*: A revision of c. 1819, together with 'couched' (for 'was') in l. 300 and 'Sojourners' in l. 307.
- 349 *My brothers*: Wordsworth's elder brother Richard (a pernickety lawyer, 1768-1816) and John (the sea-captain, 1772-1805).

- 349-54 *There was a crag . . . choice uncertain*: Wordsworth is waiting above Hawkshead, and a little to the north. The horses, sent by his father in Cockermouth, might be coming over Wrynose Pass and through Little Langdale, or via Keswick and Ambleside.
- 360 *those companions*: Note the touch of humour as Wordsworth draws attention to the non-human 'involutes' (ll. 312-14n. above) with which he formed a relationship as he waited. The hawthorn is present in the early *Vale of Esthwaite* account (1799 I 353-5n.), the 'single sheep' is a narrowing down of 'the poor flocks . . . sad-drooping', and the 'naked wall' replaces 'yon naked rock'.
- 365 *A dweller in my father's house*: Notable both for its biblical ring and its impersonality. Wordsworth had been born in the house, and spent his childhood there, but the reference hardly makes it sound like home.
- 366 *orphans then*: The poet's mother had died in March 1778, just before his eighth birthday.
- 367-9 *The event . . . appeared|A chastisement*: The child feels that he is being punished for looking forward too eagerly to the Christmas holidays - that, in effect, he has killed his father.
- 372-4 *With trite reflections . . . my desires*: Wordsworth's emphasis on 'trite reflections' ('Put not your trust in the things of this world', and the like) tells us how to read God's 'correction' of the child's desires. Cowper remarks, *Task* V 875-6, on our practice of 'inventing to ourselves|Gods such as guilt makes welcome'.
- 379-81 *the mist . . . indisputable shapes*:

Earlier the mist had obscured the child's view, causing the strained attention that is typical of so many of the border experiences, and that almost invariably prefaces the unexpected. Now, it advances along the roads by which the horses should have come . . . in shapes that indisputably resemble them. But what should one make of the *Hamlet* echo:

Thou comest in such a questionable shape
That I would speak to thee. I'll call thee Hamlet,
King, father, royal Dane. Oh answer me! (I iv 43-5)

It seems an odd chance that this of all passages in Wordsworth's poetry should be linked to the ghost of a murdered father. But in fact there is one other passage, similarly linked, and just as important. Looking backwards to the 'spots of time' in the great ninth stanza of *Intimations*, the poet in 1804 gives thanks not for 'the simple creed|Of childhood'

But for those blank misgivings of a creature
Moving about in worlds not realized,
High instincts before which our mortal nature
Did tremble like a guilty thing surprised . . .

In this case it seems we have a quotation consciously used, but oddly misapplied: why should the child (as representative of our mortal nature) be connected with the Ghost who at the crowing of the cock, 'started like a guilty thing|Upon a fearful summons' (*Hamlet* I i 148-9)? The answer can only be that at some level the poet associated the 'blank misgivings' and 'high instincts' of childhood with his father's death, and with the guilt that has been taken over from the Ghost.

Infusing the unimportant remembered scene above Hawkshead with emotions occasioned by his father's death, the child gives it lasting power; evoking this power (and consciously deriving it from misplaced guilt), the adult poet visualizes the mist as 'advancing' in shapes that are connected by verbal echo to the ghost of a father who returned to seek revenge. On the level of the poet's intention one assumes that the mist-shapes were unquestionably horses; on another, one indisputably can, and perhaps should, take them to be something far less comfortable. Presumably, writing 100 years before Freud's discussion of the 'uncanny', Wordsworth would have been surprised to think of the forms he had created in the mist, and similarly 'advancing' mountain on Ullswater, in terms of his father; but the man who could write, 'And I grew up|*Fostered* alike by beauty and by fear' (1805 I 305–6) was not very far from knowing that nature in her 'gentle visitations' had been a replacement for his mother, or that he associated his father with 'severer interventions'. (BV 63–4)

381 *indisputable*: Stressed on the second and fourth syllables.

384 *fountain*: stream or well; cf. *Intimations* 151–5, where the 'first affections' and 'shadowy' recollections of childhood,

be they what they may,
Are yet the fountain-light of all our day,
Are yet the master-light of all our seeing . . .

387–8 *unknown to me . . . brought*: Spots of Time shape the adult mind through the powers of association, though it remains unconscious of their workings.

XII 326–35 *and on winter nights . . . hour of . . . ease*: The Spots of Time, which since January 1799 have supported each successive version of *The Prelude* with their theory of the imagination nourished and inspired by early experience, dwindle now to the memories of an old-age pensioner – ways to 'animate an hour of vacant ease'. Though Wordsworth had felt the need to correct his original lines as early as 1832, the text of 1850 is arrived at in a very late revision, 1839 or later. See Jonathan Wordsworth, 'Revision as Making, *The Prelude* and its Peers', *Romantic Revisions*, ed. Robert Brinkley and Keith Hanley, 18–42.

394 *Or otherwise*: or in other ways.

Book Twelfth (1850 Thirteenth)

4–6 *sister horns . . . her bounties*: The two-sidedness of nature – the fact that she contributes equally to emotion and to calm – constitutes her strength, and is the basis of her influence. Attempts (including my own Norton footnote) to give larger meanings to Wordsworth's horn metaphor are no great success. 'Twin peaks' would probably have done as well as 'sister horns', and the 'bounties' of l. 6 require no reference to cornucopias ('horns of plenty').

8–9 *genius . . . peace and excitation*: An interesting Wordsworthian definition, related to the twin influences of beauty and the sublime.

21 *now*: Wordsworth's thoughts have gone back to the period following his

- moral crisis of X 888-904. The effect of this backward glance is to identify the crisis of Book XI - never very fully defined or dated (see XI 250-6n.) - with that of X.
- 24 *a power*: nature; as in ll. 1 and 45.
- 26 *right reason*: 'reason in her most exalted mood', equated at XIII 170 with 'amplitude of mind' and imagination.
- 32 *magnanimity*: literally 'greatness of soul'.
- XIII 27-8 *trains*|*To meekness . . . humble faith*: Pious revision of 1838-9.
- 34-5 *the busy dance*|*Of things that pass away*: Wordsworth seems to be thinking of 'the quick dance|Of colours, lights, and forms' in London (VII 156ff.).
- 37-8 *when over fondly set . . . her incumbrances*: Cf. Wordsworth's mockery of the Godwinian former self who, at X 821-3, 'with a resolute mastery' shakes off 'The accidents of nature, time and place|That make up the weak being of the past'.
- 47-52 *seeing little worthy . . . beauteous world*: Drawn (like XI 15-22) from the unused introduction to *Nutting*, drafted as early as October 1798 in *MS JJ*.
- 57-9 *I took the intellectual eye . . . little ones*: In the terms of Coleridge's letter to Poole of 16 October 1797 the spiritual ('intellectual') eye perceives 'the great and the whole', whereas those depending on 'the testimony of their senses . . . contemplate nothing but *parts* - and all *parts* are necessarily little'.
- 64 *The promise of the present time*: political hopes for the future of mankind.
- 75 *bottomed*: based.
- 80 *The wealth of nations*: A sideways reference to Adam Smith, *Enquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776), is enough to sum up for Wordsworth's reader the impersonality of modern political thinkers ('statists', l. 78). The inverted commas at 1850 78 are added in 1838-9.
- 81-2 *having gained . . . of what makes*: The text of *MS Z* is plainer and more to the point: 'having learned|More feelingly to know wherein consists'.
- 103-5 *that injustice which . . . Ourselves entail*: Since the *Salisbury Plain* poems and *Convict* of 1793-6 Wordsworth had written little poetry of social protest, but his sense of injustice had not diminished.
- 109 *notices*: observations.
- 112-277 Old material drafted for Book VIII in *MS Y* (October 1804), and seeming at times anomalous after the full-scale accounts of London in Book VII, and of political involvement in Book X (composed in November-December 1804, after the *Y* materials).
- 117 *An intermixture of distinct regards*: In effect translated by ll. 118-19. Wordsworth requires that 'regards' (sights, experiences) of a more personal kind should be mingled with affairs of the outer world; cf. the 'individual sights|Of courage, and integrity, and truth' (VIII 839-40).
- 120 *that great city*: A reference to VIII 824-7 where 'the unity of man' is 'affectingly set forth' among 'the multitudes|Of that great city'. The link of course had more point before the *MS Y* drafts used to form the central section of Book XII were separated from the materials of Book VIII (see 112-277n.).
- 128 *untoward*: intractable, obstinate, unfavourable; used by Wordsworth in *The*

- Leech Gatherer* to describe his thoughts of poets being brought 'to despondency and madness'.
- 136 *In my esteem, next to such dear delight*: Interlined in *MS Z*; a reminder that Wordsworth's revision tends at all periods to elaboration.
- 139-40 *and teach . . . fields and groves*: References in ll. 143-4 to the cottage-bench and well confirm that Wordsworth has in mind the Pedlar who tells the story of Margaret in *The Ruined Cottage*: 'Together did we make the hollow grove|Ring with our transports' (*Pedlar* 323-4).
- 141-2 *where if we meet a face . . . friend*: To be placed alongside IV 58-9, 'The face of every neighbour whom I met|Was as a volume to me', and contrasted with the London experience of VII 597-8, 'the face of everyone|That passes by me is a mystery.'
- 149-50 *one bare steep . . . feet had trod*: The road to the village of Isel over Watch Hill, which can be seen from the house at Cockermouth where Wordsworth passed the first years of his life (*De Selincourt*).
- 158 *bedlamites*: madmen ('Bedlam' being a corruption of London's Bethlehem Hospital for the Insane).
- 174 *estate*: condition, place in society.
- 185-204 Like the *Matron's Tale* (VIII 222-311) surplus material drafted for *Michael* in *MS J* (autumn 1800), and incorporated into *Prelude MS Y* four years later.
- 187-8 *A gift . . . Of vulgar nature*: a gift merely of nature.
- 189 *Retirement MS J*: 'Refinement' looks a better reading, and was perhaps lost through hasty copying in *MS Y*.
- 194-7 *True is it . . . and poverty*: A passage that had been impressively simple in *MS J*:

These deem that bonds of natural amity
Do seldom lay strong hold upon the hearts
Of men in low estate, true inference
When want and the excess of poverty

- 204 *that inference*: The inference of ll. 185-93 that feeling goes along with cultivation. On 14 January 1801 Wordsworth had told Charles James Fox that *The Brothers* and *Michael* 'were written with a view to show that men who do not wear fine clothes can feel deeply.'
- 215-19 *flattering thus . . . universal heart*: Cf. Wordsworth's vehement letter to John Wilson of 7 June 1802:

People in our rank in life are perpetually falling into one sad mistake . . . that of supposing that human nature and the persons they associate with are one and the same thing. Whom do we generally associate with? Gentlemen, persons of fortune, professional men, ladies, persons who can afford to buy, or easily procure, books of half a guinea price . . .

- 231-59 A passage that contains striking echoes of Wordsworth's poetic manifesto of 1800, the Prospectus to *The Recluse*. The number of echoes increases in revision. L. 251 (echoing Prospectus 16-18) is present in *MS Y*; ll. 239-40 and 243 make their appearances in *MS Z*, the first recalling Prospectus

- 28-9, the second ('Nor uninformed by books, good books though few') being close to parody in its recollection of Prospectus 11-12: 'fit audience let me find, though few!' ('Fit audience find, though few', thus prayed the bard'.
- 238-9 *through unadulterated ears|Pour rapture*: For 'ears' Wordsworth originally wrote 'hearts' (MS: Y). It is hard to know which reading is the more incongruous. *unadulterated*: uncorrupted.
- 245 *Sorrow that is not sorrow*: Cf. Wordsworth's wish in *Intimations* 186-7 to find strength 'In the soothing thoughts that spring|Out of human suffering'.
- 254-5 *Who to the letter . . . soul*: who judge the inward soul by outward appearances.
- 260 *mould*: composition (the 'earth' from which man was made at Creation).
- 261 *Who are their own upholders*: Cf. the 'visitings|Of the upholder, of the tranquil soul' (III 115-16).
- 263-4 *Expressing . . . native passion dictates*: The ideal of the perfect natural expression of emotion that lies behind the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* 1800.
- 264-74 *Others too . . . among them*: Wordsworth has in mind his brother John, the 'silent poet' (drowned at sea four months after these lines were drafted in MS Y - and two months before they were incorporated into Book XII).
- 272 *Words are but under-agents . . . souls*: The prefix 'under' works in different ways, suggesting the unimportance of words as such to those who speak 'the language of the heavens', but implying too that the 'silent poet' is peculiarly in touch with the sources of Wordsworthian power; cf. the 'under-soul' of III 539-40 and 'under-presence' of XIII 71-3. As 'under-agents' in the soul, 'words' are non- or pre-verbal communication.
- 274 *They do not breathe among them*: In their highest moments 'silent poets' do not live ('breathe') in the world of 'words' (articulate language).
- 280 *the inner frame*: Effectively, the soul.
- 286-9 *I felt . . . passion makes it*: Beauty is in the eye of the beholder.
- 301 *poets, even as prophets*: As 'Prophets of nature' Wordsworth and Coleridge will, in the final lines of the poem, 'speak|A lasting inspiration', instructing their age in the paramount beauty of the mind.
- 303 *his peculiar dower*: his personal talent, endowment.
- 308 *influx*: inspiration.
- 309-12 *work of mine . . . nature's*: Wordsworth's most concise and powerful statement of his ambition as a poet.
- 312-14 *To such mood . . . raised*: Wordsworth's claim is to have been exalted during his experience on Salisbury Plain in summer 1793 into a mood in which he was uniquely inspired, 'enabled to perceive|Something unseen before' (ll. 304-5). He crossed the Plain on foot, with little or no food, his thoughts on the war with France - 'more like a man|Flying from something that he dreads, than one|Who sought the thing he loved' (TA 71-3). *Sarum*: Latin name of Salisbury.
- 315 *downs*: chalk-hills, unploughed at this date, and used only for grazing sheep.
- 320-36 *I had a reverie . . . the dead*: Wordsworth is drawing heavily (at times verbatim) on his anti-war poem *Salisbury Plain*, perhaps begun on the spot (see ll. 358-9 below), and certainly completed by April 1794:

Much of the wonders of that boundless heath
 He spoke, and of a swain who far astray
 Reached unawares a height and saw beneath
 Gigantic beings ranged in dread array.
 Such beings, thwarting oft the traveller's way,
 With shield and stone-axe stride across the wold . . .

And oft a night-fire mounting to the clouds
 Reveals the desert, and with dismal red
 Clothes the black bodies of encircling crowds.
 It is the sacrificial altar fed
 With living men! How deep it groans – the dead
 Thrilled in their yawning tombs their helms uprear;
 The sword that slept beneath the warrior's head
 Thunders in fiery air; red arms appear
 Uplifted through the gloom and shake the rattling spear. (ll. 172-89)

323 *wold*: open countryside.

330 *desert*: desolate, unpopulated area (not in this case sandy)

332-3 *how deep the groans* . . . *gigantic wicker*: According to Aylett Sammes, *Britannia Antiqua Illustrata* (1676), the Druids performed human sacrifices by burning their victims in a huge basketwork statue of a man. Taking his cue from Erasmus Darwin (who depended on Sammes) Wordsworth writes at a later stage in *Salisbury Plain*:

Though from huge wickers paled with circling fire
 No longer horrid shrieks and dying cries
 To cars of demon-gods in peals aspire . . .

Blake's imagination too was caught by

that holy fiend

The wicker man of Scandinavia, in which cruelly consumed
 The captives reared to heaven howl in flames among the stars . . .

(*Jerusalem* II, plate 47)

333 *thrills*: pierces.

335-6 *the pomp* | *Is for both worlds* . . . *dead*: the spectacle ('pomp') is shared by the 'living' (those burning the captives in the 'wicker') and the already dead wakening in their burial-mounds ('monumental hillocks').

339 *the downy plain*: Salisbury Plain is a plateau composed of chalk downs.

342-3 *figuring o'er* | *The untilled ground*: making a design on the unploughed turf.

343 *divine*: deduce.

344 *infant*: early.

347-53 *I was gently charmed* . . . *sound*: The transition from Wordsworth's creative reverie of ll. 320-36 to the mere 'antiquarian's dream' of ll. 338-53 reproduces exactly the pattern of *Salisbury Plain*, the stanzas quoted above being followed by a vision of Druid astronomers:

Long-bearded forms with wands uplifted show
 To vast assemblies, while each breath of night
 Is hushed, the living fires that bright and slow
 Rounding the ethereal plain in order go.
 Then as they trace with awe their various files
 All figured on the mystic plain below,
 Still prelude of sweet sounds the moon beguiles
 And charmed for many a league the hoary desert smiles. (ll. 191-8)

356-65 *Nor is it, friend, unknown . . . reflected*: Wordsworth's meaning is somewhat obscured by the use of 'it' in l. 356 to refer to the experience that has just been described. Pleased by reading Wordsworth's poem in 1795-6 (in its later form, *Adventures on Salisbury Plain*), Coleridge has himself given pleasure by pointing to its transformation of 'present things'. According to chapter 4 of *Biographia Literaria* (dictated in 1815, ten years after the *Prelude* lines) it was *Salisbury Plain* that alerted Coleridge to Wordsworth's

original gift of spreading the tone, the atmosphere, and with it the depth and height of the ideal world round forms, incidents and situations, of which, for the common view, custom had bedimmed all the lustre, had dried up the sparkle and the dew drops.

358-9 *some imperfect verse . . . composed*: Wordsworth, who was given to composing as he walked, may well have begun *Salisbury Plain* on the spot in late July-early August 1793, but much of the poem was probably written in North Wales in the weeks that followed. Sense of the poetry's imperfection led to his withholding publication (except of the section revised for *Lyrical Ballads as The Female Vagrant*) until *Guilt and Sorrow*: of 1842.

367-8 *the mind . . . Witness and judge*: As 'witness' the mind offers the evidence of memory, as 'judge' it has therefore the right to pronounce upon its own past.

XIII 362 *We were as strangers*: Wordsworth met Coleridge briefly at Bristol in September 1795, and sent him a copy of *Adventures on Salisbury Plain* early in 1796.

XIII 363-5 *verse, however rude . . . light from far*: De Selincourt points out that Wordsworth is 'confusing and combining the impression made on Coleridge by [*Salisbury Plain*] with that made by *Descriptive Sketches* some time earlier.' See *Biographia Literaria* chapter 4:

During the last year of my residence at Cambridge I became acquainted with Mr Wordsworth's . . . *Descriptive Sketches*, and seldom, if ever, was the emergence of an original poetic genius above the literary horizon more evidently announced.

370 *about this period*: To be specific would not have helped. Wordsworth in Book X had brought his story down to 1796 (at least), and in Book XIII he was about to use as his climax the ascent of Snowdon which had taken place in 1791. Though it needs a forward movement, *The Prelude* does not depend on chronological sequence.

370-9 *sight|Of a new world . . . sees*: Though Wordsworth does not say so directly, the 'new world' of imaginative giving and receiving is the pantheist world

of *Tintern Abbey*: As its basis it has the divine principle ('That whence our dignity originates') that is present at once in 'the round ocean and the living air . . . and in the mind of man' (*TA* 99-100), and that constitutes the 'pure spirit and best power|Both of the object seen and eye that sees'.

Book Thirteenth (1850 Fourteenth)

- 1-65 The great Snowdon episode that forms the imaginative climax of *The Prelude* was written in February-early March 1804 to open the last book of the five-book *Prelude*. It describes an event that took place in summer 1791. When Wordsworth abandoned the five-book scheme, c. 10 March 1804, he could have inserted the Climbing of Snowdon in its chronological position between the French visits of 1790 and '92 (Books VI and IX). Instead he set it aside to be the climax of the new longer poem. As such it is assigned to no date or period. It is an event of the mind, and takes place 'on one of these excursions'.
- 2 *a youthful friend*: Robert Jones, Cambridge friend and fellow 'mountaineer' (VI 340), with whom Wordsworth stayed on a number of occasions in North Wales after undertaking the Continental tour of 1790.
- XIV 3 *Cambria*: Wales.
- 3 *Bethgelert's huts*: the cottages of Beddgelert, featured in watercolours of the period, notably by John Varley.
- 11 *glaring*: Cf. *Ruined Cottage*: 2-3, 'the uplands feebly glared|Through a pale steam'.
- 15 *pilot*: guide.
- 17 *chat*: Not elsewhere used by Wordsworth, who is expressing mild contempt. Pope, *Rape of the Lock* II 17-18, rhymes the word with 'singing, laughing, ogling, and all that'.
- 25 *barking turbulent*: A touch of mock-heroic humour: Wordsworth pairs Anglo-Saxon noun with Latin Miltonic adjective, and enters into the dog's 'own great joy'.
- 39-40 *instantly a light . . . Fell like a flash*: Related to the 'pleasant instantaneous light' that 'startles the musing man' in *Night-Piece* 7-8, but far more dramatic.
- 45-6 *their dusky backs upheaved . . . ocean*: As he portrays the mist that is an emblem of human creativity, Wordsworth's mind turns to Milton's account of Creation, *PL* VII 285-7:

the mountains huge appear
Emergent, and their broad backs upheave
Into the clouds . . .

- 51 *Usurped upon*: For the metaphor of usurpation, so important to Wordsworth at this period, see *BV* 174-202, 'Usurpation and Reality: Spring 1804'.
- 54-9 *And from the shore . . . voice*: The numinous blue chasm at the centre of the Snowdon mistscape had made its appearance in Wordsworth's poetry within a year of his night-time climbing of Snowdon in summer 1791. Not

in a Welsh scene, however, but in a description of the Alps:

A mighty waste of mist the valley fills,
 A solemn sea, whose vales and mountains round
 Stand motionless, to awful silence bound.
 A gulf of gloomy blue, that opens wide
 And bottomless, divides the midway tide . . .
 Loud through that midway gulf ascending sound
 Unnumbered streams with hollow roar profound.
 (1793 *Descriptive Sketches* 495-505)

Many of the details that the Snowdon lines share with *Descriptive Sketches* derive from a mist-scene quoted from Beattie's *Minstrel* (1771) by James Clark, *Survey of the Lakes* (1787) 73, but the blue chasm seems to be Wordsworth's personal observation, or personal invention.

- 57-9 *A deep and gloomy breathing-place . . . voice*: Wordsworth's 'breathing-place' chasm is akin to the fountain of *Kubla Khan* ('As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing'), but more personal in its implications. Clark (see previous note) had emphasized that as one climbs through mist 'every sound is much more distinctly heard than at any other time'; Wordsworth has the streams and torrents blend into a single voice, which (even before the allegorization of ll. 66-73) it is not difficult to associate with a welling up of the unconscious.
- 63 *the homeless voice*: Numinous by virtue of having no apparent source - 'Not to be tracked and fathered' (III 467).
- 65 *The soul, the imagination of the whole*: As Wordsworth mounts towards the conclusion of his poem, the revelation offered on Snowdon is of the identity of soul and imagination.
- XIV 61-2 *Heard over earth and sea . . . heavens*: Nebulous, safe, apologetic lines, designed (in 1838-9) to replace the too daring implications of 1805. No other passage of *The Prelude* suffered as greatly in revision as did the Climbing of Snowdon, because no other passage shows so powerfully the grandeur and independence of Wordsworth's early thinking.
- 66-73 *A meditation . . . Or vast in its own being*: Wordsworth's 'meditation' on the Climbing of Snowdon is written fourteen months after the episode itself (ll. 10-65) in May 1805. It expresses the poet's most advanced thinking on imagination, and should not be taken as literally corresponding to a train of thought on the mountain in 1791:

Though Wordsworth is now explaining things that before had been unstated, the poetry has lost none of its fluidity. The opposition between soul and imagination is beautifully taken up in 'The sense of God, or whatsoever is dim/Or vast in its own being'. In the spacial quality of 'under-presence', 'dim' and 'vast', one responds again to the power of the 'deep and gloomy breathing-place'. But this is not all. The meditation is said to rise within the poet, well up of its own accord from those same interior depths from which had 'Mounted the roar of waters, torrents, streams/Innumerable'. The meditation too is a sense of God, or the godlike in man, produced by the soul/imagination. (BV 323).

- 72-3 *The sense of God . . . own being*: One of the great moments in Wordsworth's poetry, as he brings his poem to a climax that leaves open the nature of his spiritual experience. An equal grandeur is claimed for the mind if what it perceives is its own internal vastness, rather than the presence of God. Coleridge could not have accepted such a formulation (though he would have known it was true to Wordsworth), but in terms of *Biographia Literaria* chapter 13 Wordsworth's lines evoke the primary imagination in its highest mood. Through an act that is at once perceptive and creative, the human mind is shown to possess godlike powers.
- XIV 63-77 *When into air . . . mortal privilege*: A rewriting of Wordsworth's 1805 'meditation' (ll. 66-73) that leaves none of the great claims standing, and not a single line untouched. Again, 1838-9.
- XIV 64-5 *given to spirits . . . chance human wanderers*: In 1805 there had been no implication of sharing the vision with Jones and the shepherd; the poet had been no aimless 'wanderer', but a 'chosen son'.
- XIV 70-4 *There I beheld . . . continuous stream*: The great and wholly accessible poetry of 1805 68-73 has been replaced by lines of remarkable obscurity. It is far from clear how a mist-covered landscape could typify the 'acts' and 'possessions' of an intellect, let alone 'what it has and craves' (ll. 67-8), but the remainder of the passage presents still greater difficulties. Where in 1805 the mighty mind had been imaged in the mistscape with the 'blue chasm' at its centre, now the mind (with a hint from Milton's Holy Spirit brooding over Chaos, *PL* I 21-2) broods above the abyss, detached from it and listening externally to its voices. Is it perhaps the moon that Wordsworth now thinks of as typifying the mind?
- XIV 74-7 *a mind sustained . . . mortal privilege*: Owen notes: 'Sense obscure . . . But it seems likely that "of transcendent power" and "of more than mortal privilege" are parallel phrases referring to "recognitions".' 'More than mortal privilege' he then glosses as 'the privilege of immortality'. His reading can hardly be ruled out, but it may be simpler to see the mind as sustained by recognitions of power in sense, to which the specially privileged soul may give ideal form.
- 75 *Exhibited by putting forth*: demonstrated by analogy.
- 79 *So moulds them, and endues, abstracts, combines*: Transforming the mountains with a sea of mist, nature performs a function akin to the secondary (less important) powers of the human imagination, as defined in *Biographia Literaria* chapter 13: 'It dissolves, diffuses, dissipates in order to recreate . . . at all events it struggles to idealize and to unify'. Coleridge is not on record as having made his distinction between the primary and secondary imaginations by 1805, but the closeness of his wording in this instance suggests that he may have done so in conversation. There can be no doubt that Wordsworth's thinking depends upon him; see Jonathan Wordsworth, 'The Infinite I AM', *Coleridge's Imagination*, ed. Gravil, Newlyn and Roe, 22-52.
- 81-4 *Does make one object . . . but feel*: Working on the five-book *Prelude* in February-early March 1804, Wordsworth drafted six further examples of interaction between the mind and nature to follow the Climbing of Snowdon. First of these was the exquisite study of a horse singled out by the 'abrupt and unhabitual influence' of moonlight:

One evening, walking in the public way,
 A peasant of the valley where I dwelt
 Being my chance companion, he stopped short
 And pointed to an object full in view
 At a small distance. 'Twas a horse, that stood
 Alone upon a little breast of ground
 With a clear silver moonlight sky behind.
 With one leg from the ground the creature stood,
 Insensible and still; breath, motion, gone,
 Hairs, colour, all but shape and substance gone,
 Mane, ears, and tail, as lifeless as the trunk
 That had no stir of breath. We paused awhile
 In pleasure of the sight, and left him there,
 With all his functions silently sealed up,
 Like an amphibious work of nature's hand,
 A borderer dwelling betwixt life and death,
 A living statue or a statued life.

Beautiful as they are, the lines were never published by Wordsworth.

- 84-119 *The power . . . external universe*: Possession of 'the glorious faculty' of imagination defines the Wordsworthian elect ('higher minds'), controlling their relation not only to the natural world but to every aspect of existence.
- 93 *native*: natural.
- 94-6 *for themselves create . . . instinct*: Emphasis once again on the imagination as both creative and perceptive.
- 98-9 *They build . . . From least suggestions*: In Wordsworth's earliest recorded definition (Note to *The Thorn*, 1800), imagination had been 'the faculty that produces impressive effects out of simple elements'.
- 101 *calls*: stimuli, excitements.
- 103-5 *By sensible impressions . . . invisible world*: As in Blake, the senses are a barrier to perception of the divine: 'If the doors of perception were cleansed everything would appear to man as it is, infinite' (*Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, plate 14).
- XIV 114 *That flesh can know*: As opposed to the bliss known to heavenly beings; a revision probably dating from late 1832.
- 108-11 *consciousness* | *Of whom they are . . . impressions*: For the truly imaginative, all experience is a confirmation of identity.
- 113 *Whether discursive or intuitive*: The Kantian distinction between 'discursive' understanding and 'intuitive' reason. Describing reason as the 'being' of the soul, Raphael (*PL V* 487) makes the discursive/intuitive distinction for Adam, commenting: 'discourse|Is ofttest yours [human], the latter most is ours [angelic]|Differing but in degree, in kind the same.' Milton's lines are quoted by Coleridge in *Biographia Literaria* chapter 10, and in chapter 13 are picked up in his reference to the secondary imagination as identical to the godlike primary 'in the *kind* of its agency . . . differing only in degree'. To judge from *Prelude XIII* Coleridge must have pointed Milton's lines out to Wordsworth before his departure for Malta in spring 1804, and passed on to him the equation of intuitive reason with the primary imagination.

- XIV 126-7 *that peace . . . understanding*: 'The peace of God which passeth all understanding' (*Philippians* 4.7). Ll. 127-9, with their reassuring Christian view-point, belong to 1838-9.
- 127 *And yet . . . undiminished powers*: Wordsworth's line belongs to the same month (February 1804) as *Intimations* iv-xi and 1805 XI 335-6 ('The hiding-places of my power|Seem open, I approach, and then they close'), but adopts a surprisingly confident tone.
- 128 *whatever falls*: From Fortune's revolving wheel (see l. 129).
- 131-2 *never . . . Did tamper with myself*: Made clear in 1850 150-1.
- 136 *with jealousy*: watchfully, scrupulously.
- 141 *a universe of death*: Drawn from Milton's Hell, *PL* II 622-4: 'A universe of death . . . Where all life dies, death lives, and nature breeds|Perverse all monstrous, all prodigious, things'. Significantly Wordsworth had evoked the same passage in his account of the perversion of nature in London's Bartholomew Fair (VII 687ff.).
- 143-4 *To fear and love . . . ends*: Cf. the statement of Wordsworth's theme at I 305-6: 'Fair seed-time had my soul, and I grew up|Fostered alike by beauty and by fear.' Fear ends in love, because painful (sublime) experiences are formative, leading to love of nature.
- XIV 179-87 *There linger . . . Almighty's Throne*: Though the 1850 replacement of 1805 159-65 is not arrived at until 1838-9, Wordsworth redefines the 'higher love' of 1805 in specifically Christian terms as early as c. 1819 (see Introduction).
- 163 *a diffusive sentiment*: Cf. II 420ff. (written originally for *The Pedlar*, spring 1798): 'I felt the sentiment of being, spread|O'er all that moves and all that seemeth still . . .'
- 166 *intellectual*: spiritual.
- 167-70 *imagination . . . exalted mood*: An extreme statement of the powers of the primary imagination, but one that is in line with the poetry and thinking of Wordsworth and Coleridge. This higher imagination is godlike and thus equivalent to 'absolute [spiritual] strength'; 'clearest insight' speaks for itself; 'amplitude of mind' implies magnanimity (literally 'greatness of soul'), the outgoing, expansive power of imagination; intuitive reason ('reason in her most exalted mood') has been the theme of Book XIII and is later equated with the primary imagination in *Biographia Literaria*.
- 172-84 *we have traced . . . infinity and God*: Modelling his imagery to some extent on the sacred river Alph of *Kubla Khan*, Wordsworth now offers the river that has been recurrent in *The Prelude* from the opening lines of *Was It For This* and 1799, as symbolic of the organic structure of his poem.
- 183 *The feeling of life endless*: Though *Intimations* alludes in February 1804 to 'the faith that looks through death', Wordsworth seems to have had no confidence in an afterlife when his brother John was drowned in February 1805. A letter to Beaumont of 12 March (six weeks before this section of *The Prelude* was written) shows him arguing himself into an acceptance of 'the supposition of another and a better world'.
- XIV 205 *human Being*: human existence.
- 188 *Dividually*: separately. In practice it would be hard to define outgoing 'spiritual love' (such as that shown in the Ancient Mariner's blessing of the watersnakes) as distinct from the primary imagination.

- 193 *this ability*: the capacity for spiritual love.
- 208 *female softness*: Valued highly by Wordsworth in men; cf. the shepherd's attention to his infant son, *Michael* 162–8.
- 209 *little loves and delicate desires*: A reflection of Dorothy's tenderness in *The Sparrow's Nest*, 'And humble cares and delicate fears' (l. 18), which is strengthened in 1850. In the background (as Reed points out) are the 'soft and delicate desires' of Claudio, *Much Ado About Nothing* I i 303.
- 211–14 *Child of my parents . . . imbibed*: Apart from his tribute to Dorothy's tenderness in *The Sparrow's Nest*, Wordsworth has in mind *To A Butterfly*: 'she, God love her, feared to brush|The dust from off its wings' (ll. 17–18).
- 222–3 *the very going-out of youth . . . reached*: Book XII had ended with the crossing of Salisbury Plain in summer 1793, and Book XIII opened with the ascent of Snowdon two years earlier. It is not in Wordsworth's interests to be precise about chronology. The 'later seasons' of Dorothy's influence (l. 215) include the Racedown period, 1795–7.
- 225–6 *that beauty . . . terror in it*: Milton's sense of the terror that exists in love (effectively of the presence of the sublime within the beautiful) is expressed by Satan, new-landed in Eden and confronted by the beauty of Eve: 'She fair, divinely fair, fit love for gods,|Not terrible, though terror be in love|And beauty' (*PL* IX 489–91).
- 228 *reckless of*: unconcerned by.
- 236–44 *At a time . . . refined humanity*: The period associated in *Tintern Abbey* with coming to hear 'The still sad music of humanity', and marked by composition of *The Ruined Cottage* in early summer 1797.
- XIV 266–75 *Thereafter came . . . the dewy grass*: In an early form, Wordsworth's tribute to his wife is inserted into *The Prelude* c. 1819: The vagueness of 'Thereafter' is strategic. After their 'blessed time of early love' (1805 XI 317) in 1787, Mary had been displaced in Wordsworth's thoughts by Annette (and Caroline). The war, however, had kept him and Annette apart from autumn 1792 for almost ten years. Before the end of this period – perhaps when Mary came to visit Dorothy at Racedown, November 1796–June 1797 – she and Wordsworth had (privately) come together again. They were married in October 1802.
- XIV 268–9 *no more a phantom to adorn|A moment*: A reference to the touching Lucy poem written for Mary in spring 1804:
- She was a phantom of delight
When first she gleamed upon my sight,
A lovely apparition sent
To be a moment's ornament . . . (ll. 1–4)
- 249 *Placed on this earth to love*: Cf. the poignant final lines of Coleridge's *Pains of Sleep* (1803) 'To be beloved is all I need,|And whom I love I love indeed.'
- 253–7 *the life|Of all things . . . Interposition*: Through Coleridge's loving companionship Wordsworth came at Alfoxden to accept a Unitarian belief (merely 'interposed', not argued or preached) in the One Life.
- XIV 282–7 *Thus fear relaxed . . . eternity*: A revision of 1805 253–5 made in 1839

- or later. For no obvious reason Coleridge (d. 1834) is credited with having rescued Wordsworth from fear and self-hauntings. At Alfoxden? Or is Coleridge being transported in the poet's fancy back to the period of the Racedown crisis of confidence, spring 1796?
- 257 *closelier gathering*: more personal, more immediate in their concerns.
- 264-5 *a reason . . . pathetic truth*: reason at her most personal — as opposed to 'reason in her most exalted mood' (l. 170 and n. above), which is imagination.
- 268 *Where man is sphered . . . God animates*: Man's proper place ('sphere') is earth, but earth is animated by God.
- 271 *consummation*: perfecting.
- 273-8 *We have reached . . . should endure*: Wordsworth thinks of himself as having brought his story up to the period of *Lyrical Ballads*, when (in March 1798) *The Recluse* was first projected.
- 274 *which was our object from the first*: Not strictly true; see Introduction.
- 280 *Of books how much*: Addressing Coleridge, with his massive reading, Wordsworth is conscious of not having stressed the role of literature in his education, though he had attempted to do so in Book V.
- 282-8 *nature's secondary grace . . . moral world*: The habit of drawing moral truths from nature ('Consider the lilies of the field . . . They toil not, neither do they spin . . .') was foreign to Wordsworth though he could indulge in it on occasion. In *The Primrose on the Rock* (1831) the flowers are 'faithful to the stems', the stems 'faithful to the root', and 'God upholds them all'.
- 291-4 *In turn might fancy . . . judgement steadied*: As in Book VIII, Wordsworth sets a value on fancy that Coleridge could not have accepted; see VIII 590-11.
- 294-306 *Then might we return . . . never heighten*: Strangely opaque lines (cut with no loss in 1850), perhaps about anthropomorphic readings of nature.
- 308 *that marvellous world*: the world of human consciousness and emotion.
- 316 *a public school*: Founded in 1584, Hawkshead Grammar School was (as Eton, Winchester, Westminster had originally been) public in the sense of being a Grammar School, open to all.
- 329-31 *keep|In wholesome separation . . . observes*: It is interesting that Wordsworth, who placed so much emphasis on emotion, should value reserve and the ability to keep one's feelings to oneself.
- 334 *Since I withdrew unwillingly from France*: In November 1792, leaving behind Annette and the newborn Caroline.
- 338-43 *Three years . . . wanderer's life*: December 1792-September 1795.
- 349-67 *A youth . . . bent of nature*: Raisley Calvert, younger brother of Wordsworth's schoolfellow William (who lent the poet and Dorothy their first, temporary, home together at Windy Brow, Keswick in spring 1794), died of tuberculosis in 1795 aged 22, leaving Wordsworth £900 to free him from taking a job and enable him to write.
- 356 *no redundant patrimony*: a limited family fortune.
- 360 *mortal*: earthly, mundane.
- 368-9 *further pains . . . seems not to require*: Wordsworth has it in common with Milton that many of his weakest lines occur in moments of transition.
- 372 *the termination of my course*: death.
- 373-7 *even then . . . I said . . . reproach to hear*: A reference back to the self-reproach — 'Was it for this' — in which composition of *The Prelude* had begun in

- October 1798; see the openings of *Was It For This* and 1799, and 1805 271ff. Reed points also to *Genesis* 3.8-13, as Adam and Eve hear the reproachful voice of God, walking in the garden.
- 377-80 *Anon I rose . . . I had been|And was*: Based on the 'prospect wide|And various' shown to Eve in her dream, *PL V* 86-9.
- 383 *Attempered*: suited; cf. the 'rural ditties' of *Lycidas* 32-3, 'Tempered to the oaten flute'.
- 385 *gratulant*: capable of giving pleasure.
- 387-90 *ought of worth|Sufficient . . . uncertain*: On 6 March 1804, at the moment of embarking on the full-length *Prelude*, Wordsworth had told De Quincey: 'This poem will not be published these many years, and never during my lifetime till I have finished a larger and more important work [*The Recluse*] to which it is tributary.' In sight of completing the 'tributary' poem, Wordsworth comments to Beaumont on 1 May 1805: '[It is] a thing unprecedented in literary history that a man should write so much about himself.'
- 393-8 *That summer . . . Lady Christabel*: summer 1798, on the Quantock Hills above Alfoxden. *The Ancient Mariner* was in fact completed in March, and *Christabel* Part I in April.
- 394 *sylvan combs*: wooded hollows; pronounced 'cooms' (to rhyme with 'tombs').
- 399-403 *I, associate . . . miserable thorn*: Looking back on the partnership that produced *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth pokes fun at himself for his 'murmuring' of *The Idiot Boy* aloud during composition, and for the lugubrious refrain of *The Thorn*: 'Oh misery, oh misery,|Oh woe is me, oh misery!'
- 416-17 *a private grief|Keen and enduring*: Another reference to the death of John Wordsworth, captain of the *Earl of Abergavenny*, drowned off the Dorset coast on 5 February 1805.
- 421-7 *a hope . . . offering of my love*: As Wordsworth brings his poem to a close in early May 1805 Coleridge has been abroad for over a year. When he did finally return, the 'offering of . . . love' was read to him at Coleorton in January 1807. Coleridge responded in his last major poem, *To William Wordsworth*:

o great bard,
Ere yet that last strain dying awed the air,
With stedfast eye I viewed thee in the choir
Of ever-enduring men. (ll. 47-50)

- 429 *thy race be run*: Wordsworth is talking to himself. It is perhaps the thought of having to go on and write *The Recluse* in Coleridge's absence that brings the dispirited Samson to his mind: 'My race of glory run, and race of shame,|And I shall shortly be with them that rest' (ll. 597-8).
- 432 *old idolatry*: Wordsworth models the conclusion of 1805 on that of 1799, where (in spite of his dismay at rising French imperialism) he had lamented the weakness of those in England who betrayed the ideals of the Revolution:

if in these times of fear,
This melancholy waste of hopes o'erthrown,

If, mid indifference and apathy
 And wicked exultation, when good men
 On every side fall off, we know not how,
 To selfishness . . . (1799 II 478-83)

- 436 *the knowledge which we have*: Wordsworth's emphasis on knowledge is surprising, but consistent. In announcing the scheme for *The Recluse* to Tobin on 6 March 1798 he refers to lines already written, as conveying 'most of the knowledge of which [he is] possessed'. *Home at Grasmere* (written for *The Recluse* in 1800) looks forward to a millennium of human happiness that 'love|And knowledge will . . . hereafter give|To all the vales of earth and all mankind' (ll. 254-6).
- 442 *Prophets of nature*: The conclusion to 1799 is buoying Wordsworth up, enabling him to feel confident in a shared prophetic role. Coleridge, in the earlier lines, had been 'in many things' the poet's brother, but 'chiefly' in his 'deep devotion' to nature (II 508-9).
- XIV 446 *faith*: a telling replacement for 'truth' (1805), made in 1832.
- 449 *revolutions*: changes (as of Fortune's wheel - though of course including Revolution with a capital 'r').
- 452 *Of substance and of fabric more divine*: Not merely a resonant conclusion. The mind shares with the rest of nature the animating presence of God, but is more 'divine' in that it alone possesses the God-given power of imagination that enables it to perceive the presence that it shares.

AFTERWORD: THE POET AS REVISOR

It is not chance that Wordsworth's revisions of *The Prelude* were mainly for the worse. Given his methods of working – the creative process that he describes for us in the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* – we should expect it to be so. Twice in the Preface Wordsworth tells us that 'poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings', and twice he modifies his statement. First we are told that the poet must be a person 'of more than usual organic sensibility [who has] also thought long and deeply', next that poetry 'takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity'. It is the words that follow that are chiefly important:

the emotion is contemplated till by a species of reaction the tranquillity gradually disappears, and an emotion, similar to that which was before the subject of contemplation, is gradually produced, and does itself actually exist in the mind.

'In this mood', Wordsworth concludes, 'successful composition generally begins, and in a mood similar to this it is carried on.' These are not theoretical statements, the poet has observed his own mental process and tells us precisely what he sees.

Revision, if it is to be enhancing, has to be similarly imaginative. It must be accompanied by a re-experiencing of the mood in which composition originally took place – a mood that was itself a reliving of earlier experience. Revisions carried out over many years, as they were in key passages of *The Prelude*, are not likely to meet this requirement. Re-entering the original mood becomes progressively more difficult. And it becomes more and more probable that revisions will be carried out for reasons that are at odds with the poet's original intentions, interests, inspiration.

One might assume that what goes for Wordsworth would go for all Romantic poets. Coleridge, though, is on the whole a good reviser. Twenty years after writing *The Eolian Harp* he adds lines perfectly in keeping with his early pantheist self: 'Oh! the one Life, within us and abroad . . .' Though the original 1798 text of *Frost at Midnight* is a wonderful poem, Coleridge improves upon it successively in 1817 and 1828. To *Christabel* (written 1798-1800, published 1816) he adds in 1828 lines of immense importance, bringing out a wounded human side to the demonic Geraldine:

Yet Geraldine nor speaks nor stirs;
 Ah! what a stricken look was hers!
 Deep from within she seems half-way
 To lift some weight with sick assay,
 And eyes the maid and seeks delay . . .

Wordsworth, by contrast, is a bad reviser at the height of his powers. The point is made by revisions to the two-part *Prelude* incorporated in 1805. In February 1804 (when he wrote some of his greatest poetry, including two-thirds of the *Intimations Ode*, *Daffodils* and the Climbing of Snowdon) Wordsworth replaced his beautiful account of the setting of Furness Abbey -

In more than inland peace
 Left by the winds that overpass the vale,
 In that sequestered ruin trees and towers,
 Both silent and both motionless alike,
 Hear all day long the murmuring sea that beats
 Incessantly upon a craggy shore.

- with the lame prosaic rhythms and sadly diminished claims of 1805 II 115-21:

To more than inland peace
 Left by the sea-wind passing overhead
 (Though wind of roughest temper) trees and towers
 May in that valley oftentimes be seen,
 Both silent and both motionless alike;
 Such is the shelter that is there, and such
 The safeguard for repose and quietness.

'By the imagination', Wordsworth told Crabb Robinson in 1816, 'the mere fact is . . . connected with that infinity without which there is not poetry.' Yet fact it was that prompted his revision of the Furness lines. One cannot hear the sea at the site of the Abbey. The beautiful fantasy that one might do so is removed by the poet in a mood utterly at odds with his original creativity.

As the revisions of *The Prelude* go on – small ones at different times, huge ones c. 1819, in 1832, and 1838–9 – the chance that they will be for the better diminishes. In many ways Wordsworth remains an independent thinker: what other poet in 1850 supported the ideals of the French Revolution, or hailed 'As best, the government of equal rights|And individual worth'? And at all stages he remains capable of producing sudden new impassioned poetry – the account of Newton,

with his prism and silent face,
The marble index of a mind for ever
Voyaging through strange seas of thought alone.

But increasingly the drive behind *Prelude* revision becomes the leaving of a gift for posterity. Instead of re-entering imaginatively the early experiences that have been his inspiration, Wordsworth is tidying them up. The changing of three small words right at the end of his poem says it all. As prophets of nature, he and Coleridge had seemed in 1805 to be 'sanctified|By reason and by truth'. In 1850 they are 'sanctified|By reason, blest by faith'.