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A Poetico-Cultural Transference  
in Wordsworth

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## Introduction

( 1 )

Somewhere between February and March 1804, Wordsworth must have completed *Five-Book Prelude*. Until then, he had been tormented by the feeling of failure, the remorse of conscience that he had long relinquished the composition of an ambitious, philosophical poem *The Recluse* which Coleridge had long requested him to write. Wordsworth seriously accepted Coleridge's request, thinking that to complete *The Recluse* is 'a duty to mankind, the purpose of his life.' (Jonathan Wordsworth, "Introduction" *The Prelude: [The Four Text, 1798, 1799, 1805, 1850, xxxii]*) As if escaping from the burden of duty, Wordsworth started to write a prefatory book *The Prelude*, instead.<sup>(1)</sup>

As the recent text exquisitely reconstructed by Duncan Wu (*The Five-Book Prelude*, Blackwell, 1997) shows, the Five-Book version has a consistent design of its own. Its inclusive theme is of imagination impaired and restored. The 'restorative and enduring power of Nature as represented by the spots of time' (Wu, "Introduction" 6) is affirmed by the juxtaposition of life and death; in other words, 'the entire poem is framed by the spots of time.' (ibid. 7) Imagination fostered by Nature is to be restored after 'the detrimental effects of erudition and indolence,' which he experienced as an inner falling-off at Cambridge: in his words, 'my life became/A floating island, an amphibious thing,/Unsound.' (*The Five Book Prelude*, III 3402) This vision is clear-cut and Miltonic, but not authentically Miltonic, though. The uniqueness of *Five-Book Prelude* reveals itself when the 'spots of time' sequence in each of *Prelude* texts is scrutinized with care, because, excepting this Five-Book version, other texts are not consistently faithful to this blessed vision. Rather, they deviate from it. (As to the significance of 'Spots of Time' sequence, see Chapter 3.)

The differences between *The Five-Book Prelude* and other texts are not due to



the inconsistency of Miltonic vision, but to multiple reasons. Most of them are caused by the change of the current viewpoints in Wordsworth's time, especially, in Nature discourse, which gradually shift from the mimetic to the association theory. They can be better explained when they are set within the all-inclusive poetico-cultural transference, in which Wordsworth was inevitably engaged during his critical period. (As to the concept of 'poetico-cultural transference,' see below.) The poetico-cultural transference does not merely let the prevalent social, political ideology conjoin with the structural designs of Wordsworth at work. It concerns more with various aspects of the subject-object relationship in accordance with the author-reader relationship. In fact, while he shifted the basis of his poetics from Blair's passion theory to Hartley's vibration theory by 1805 (see Chapter 1), the transference he experienced during this period had entailed much of his empathetic assimilation to the implicit 'culture' of the people on the one hand, and on the other his infinite attempt to search for the true language was cultivated. It essentially appertains to the mode of cultural transaction between the self and the society. (The detailed discussion on the author-reader relationship is given in Chapter 3.)

Almost in parallel with the composition of *Five-Book Prelude*, Wordsworth re-organized his materials concerning his developing mind, most of which had been used in *Two-Part Prelude 1799*. The *Five-Book Prelude* and *Thirteen-Book Prelude* were produced by this re-structuring process, the cause of which might be partly ascribed to his personal relationship with Coleridge, who had been suffering from an attack of diarrhea at Malta. The two editors of thirteen-book *Prelude*, Mark L. Reed (Cornell Edition) and Jonathan Wordsworth (*The Four Texts*), however, gave us a more complex but substantial cause. They gave a textual explanation of the revision. Both of them agree that the *Thirteen-Book* version began to put in its appearance in 1799, but they slightly differ in fixing the date when Book VII was written. Mark Reed places Book VII (London Book) between the two French books, VI and IX, both of them being written in spring 1804, and he affirms that Book VII was written in spring 1804. (2) But

Jonathan Wordsworth repudiates his inferred dating of Book VII, as follows:

My own positioning of VII in autumn 1804 to some extent depends on the connection (notably at ll.294, 387 and 470-3) with Wordsworth's *Kitten and the Falling Leaves*...In all probability Wordsworth after breaking up the five-book *Prelude* in early March 1804, and sending Coleridge *1805* I-V to take with him to the Mediterranean, wrote the French books, VI, IX and X(a).

(Jonathan Wordsworth, "Introduction" xxxv)

Whenever Book VII would have been written, one thing is clear. It deals with an inconsistent theme which overflows from the tidy context of *Five-Book Prelude*. The theme tells how the mind can effect reconciliation with reality without mediation of nature. If modern poetry should pursue a fundamental, cultural purport, it has to reflect the way of the living of the people. Wallace Stevens, one of our great contemporary poets, says:

It has to be living, to learn the speech of the place.  
It has to face the men of the time and to meet  
The women of the time. It has to think about war  
And it has to find what will suffice.

(Wallace Stevens, "Of Modern Poetry")

Though he could have been indifferent to the significance of his poetry, Wordsworth in Book VII did put into practice these requisites which, as Stevens insists, the modern poet should have. Modern poetry shouldn't exclude even the crude aspects of the culture 'the men of the time' and 'the women of the time' are making and unmaking at their own cultural moments in the everyday lives. It has to confront with the unstable reality of the world, the language and the way of living of both the common people and the sophisticated one, which are generally called popular culture today. From this viewpoint, Book VII fulfils these necessary requirements of modern poetry. As a forerunner of the modern poet, Wordsworth in this book particularly tries to focus on an intricate relationship between his imagination and "popular culture." In

so doing, he dares to establish a hybridization of the two, even if within a limited scope. The involute, supple structure of Book VII symbolizes the nature of the poetico-cultural transference in Wordsworth.

In this thesis, I intend to clarify first how the divergent, derivative meanings, which stand outside the consistent context of Miltonic vision of impaired innocence retrieved, had already emerged in Book II, and then proceed to discuss how Book VII shows 'a vital schizophrenia or decentering expressive of so much in personal growth' (Geoffrey H. Hartman, *Wordsworth's Poetry 1787-1814*, "Retrospect 1971" xvii), as a result of reconstruction of the memories of early childhood. It is curious enough that, in spite of the challenging opening lines of Book VII, which at once adhered to and altered the actual chronology of Wordsworth's life, Book VII has attracted little attention of the critics, while Book VI composed in the same year 1804 has attracted considerable one.

Five years are vanished since I first poured out,  
Saluted by that animating breeze,  
Which met me issuing from the city's walls  
A glad preamble to this verse: I sang  
Aloud, in Dythyrambic fervour, deep  
But short-liv'd transport, like a torrent...  
A water-spout from Heaven.

(VII 1-9)

According to the assertion above, his imaginative mind might have started growing in 1799, but it stopped its growth for five long years and then suddenly like a torrent resumed its growth. The water metaphor of the opening lines refers to the discontinuity of the growth of his imagination: the 'interrupted stream broke for the once more, /and flowed a while in strength, then stopped for years.'

But the biographical evidences tell us another story. As is the case with *The Two-Part Prelude of 1799*, the stream of his poetic passion had not stopped at all. After the publication of *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798, he composed great lyrics for further

editions of *Lyrical Ballads*, such as “Michael,” and “Resolution and Independence,” while the great ode “Intimation of Immortality” (composed in 1802) shows ‘a beautiful affirmation of the fullness of life.’ (Jonathan Wordsworth, *The Borders of Vision*, 165) In 1803, he took a tour in Scotland with Coleridge and Dorothy, and wrote several lyrics filled with sympathy toward the Scottish and their culture, such as “The Solitary Reaper,” and “Glen-Almain.” (As for Wordsworth’s wavering stance toward the Scottish, especially his evaluation of Ossian, see Chapter 10.) In the meantime, “Home at Grasmere” was written as the Prospectus to “*The Recluse*,” which is still being conceived though. Ironically enough, the almost abnormal intense state of Wordsworth’s imagination was evinced during the fallow period of ‘five years.’

[H]is way of life and its emotional and spiritual continuity suddenly faltered, under the new internal and external pressures, under his deep sense of changes within himself, and under his awareness of shifting relationships with persons both near and distant.

(Jared R. Curtis, *Wordsworth’s Experiments with Tradition: The Lyric Poems of 1802*, 18)

Instigated by the ‘deep sense of changes,’ in both Book VI and VII, Wordsworth in a peculiar and contradictory way is obliged to deal with his problems; how his imagination works, how his text corrupts, and how his passionate love for nature is betrayed. In the invocation to Imagination in Simplon Pass episode (Book VI), ‘[a]n unresolved opposition between Imagination and Nature’ (Hartman 39) reveals itself, while an opposite pair of ‘blank confusion’ (VII 695) and ‘the absolute presence of reality’ (VII 249) incites an empathy toward the crowd on the streets, as well as toward a blind beggar. The satirical tone is no less vividly discerned in Book VII than in Book VI. However, it is in Book VII that the contradiction and the futurity develop into the de-centering movement. The poetic self does not converge on the stable and transparent self, existing as the link between the sign, the narrator and the referent (the external world). The self-conscious narrator is well aware of the fictiveness of

culture, and simultaneously comes to engross in 'the matter.' (Book VII 489)

Consequently, the Imagination discourse based on the mimetic theory is not appropriate, when it comes to explicate what the word 'the matter' represents. (As regards traditional literary theories Wordsworth was conscious of, see Chapter 1.) The argument needs to include the process of poetico-cultural transference in Wordsworth, because it is in this process that the de-centering movement reveals itself. Wordsworth, especially in Book VII, enacts himself as a standard-bearer of the modern poetry which is characterized by 'a self that is continuously changing.' (Robert Rehder, *Wordsworth and the Beginnings of Modern Poetry*, 200) Modern poets are expected to write 'a response to a change in world-view' (ibid. 222), and Wordsworth himself recognised such an expectation in Book VII, saying that a poet should 'tak[e] in/A whole horizon on all sides' (VII 259) to seek 'something ever more to be.' (*1805 Prelude* VI 542) Needless to say, modern poets cannot remain detached from the cultural, social-political network of language-ethnicity. It is this relational network that provides a space for a poetico-cultural transference to occur within its fundamental structure and stratification. What distinguishes Book VII from Book VI is a shift of attention from the supernatural to the real which ineluctably came to pass through Wordsworth's imaginative experience. It is a shift of the viewpoint from the writer as a scripter of the experience to that of the reader as a critic. In this thesis, we try to explore how the poet's struggle was performed at the threshold of the modernity. For this purpose, we call the overall mode of his personal transaction between the imaginative and the real as "*poetico-cultural transference*," which the poet particularly witnessed at the critical period when the proceeding erosion of the sophisticated taste by "popular culture" of his time became inevitable.

( 2 )

In Book VII, the poet endeavoured to explain objectively what he experienced in

the city of London, the ‘vast mill.’ (*1805 Prelude VII*, 696) At the very moment he was thrown into it, however, he found himself paralyzed and unable to retain his own cultural identity; he could not assimilate his identity into the colourful scenery unfolding before his eyes. It is because he was overwhelmed, being dragged into its involute stream:

The broad highway appearance as it strikes  
On strangers of all ages; the quick dance  
Of colours, lights, and forms; the Babel din;  
The endless stream of men, and moving things;  
(*1805 Prelude VII*, 155–8)

Why was the poet overwhelmed by the scenery of London? The answer lies in the last line cited above; ‘The endless stream of men, and moving things.’ He felt as if men and things intermingled with each other so perfectly that their identities were nullified. Later, Gutave Doré (1832–1883), a French painter who was the most sympathetic interpreter of British Romanticism, reanimated the scene in his famous illustrations, “London, A Pilgrimage.” There, the decisive moment is depicted when the poet can realize ‘no single discernible locus or identity.’ (Hartman xvii) The poet momentarily perceives himself as a separate existence among the crowd; he himself feels isolated and immobilized among them. It is in this crowd that he finds a source of ‘inspiration,’ as shown in Book VI. Just as Hartman puts it, Wordsworth’s tendency is ‘to deny any intrinsic link between imagination and the supernatural.’ (ibid. 18) In fact, Wordsworth managed to set up an eccentric link of ‘apocalyptic self-consciousness’ (ibid.) in this crowd, which could transcend the static model of mimesis. The supervening structure thus generated, which we call the poetico-cultural transference, is approximate to what Hartman calls ‘vital continuum.’ (Hartman 17)

In Book VII, Wordsworth tries to capture the moment of apocalypse in reality by using the term ‘matter.’ Book VII successfully presents the paradoxical situation of continuity and change. This is a laudable feat. It is because the poet challenged here

the traditional conventions and tried to explore the way to represent 'life' and energy of the crowd.

The matter which detains me now will seem  
To many neither dignified enough  
Nor arduous, and is doubtless in itself  
Humble and low—yet not to be despised

By those who have observed the curious props  
By which the perishable hours of life  
Rest on each other, and the world of thought  
Exists and is sustained. More lofty themes,  
Such as at least do wear a prouder face,  
Might here be spoken of, but when I think  
Of these I feel the imaginative power  
Languish within me.

(1805 *Prelude* VII 489–99)

In this passage, '[t]he matter which detains [him]' is contrasted with '[m]ore lofty themes,' and the poet (I) affirms that it is the latter themes which make 'imaginative power/Languish within [him].' Evaluating the undignified, humble matter higher, the poet dares to connect 'the matter' and 'the imaginative power.' We can easily say that by the latter term Wordsworth refers to the imagination as we commonly understand it. But what can 'the matter' be? In Book VII, it refers to the way of the people on the streets of London, to the very features of the ordinary man's way of living, that is, what we call today "popular culture" or "low culture," as opposed to "high culture."<sup>(3)</sup>

Nevertheless, poetico-cultural transference in Wordsworth involves various phases in itself. In the "Preface"(1800) to *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth makes his famous declaration that '[p]oetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings,' with the specific qualification that 'it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility.' His ideal of activated imagination remains intact even in Book VII of the *1805 Prelude*, where the split between 'powerful feelings' and 'emotion recollected in

tranquility' becomes wider and deeper along with the involute process of his poetico-cultural transference. Thus, Wordsworth in Book VII not only deals with an intricate relationship between imagination and "popular culture," but also dares to establish a close relationship between the two, though he did it only for a limited period. He seems to have explored the possible modes of their mutual transaction and to have tried to elaborate them in a perfect and adequate language. Needless to say, his exploration was not the first attempt in the history of English literature. Similar explorations had been done by Chaucer, Shakespeare, Dryden, Milton and so on. Then, how peculiar was Wordsworth's performance? He did it in that literary situation in which imagination and "popular culture" were thought as incongruous. It would be more significant to show how an intrinsically self-centered poet as Wordsworth tried to find a close inter-relationship among such incongruous things at the critical moment of decentralization under the pressure of historical changes.

On the other hand, poetico-cultural transference in Wordsworth evolves with the changing connotations of word 'culture,' for the poet did not apply the very word "culture" in Book VII of *The 1805 Prelude*. Interestingly enough, it is in Book XII which was composed probably at the end of May 1805 that he used the word for the first time. Besides, he employed the term in the sense similar to what we mean today by "high culture." The very word then implied aesthetic and moral judgments which were thought to lead men to an ideal perfection. The state of perfection was sustained by class-conscious distinction. Set in historical situations, Wordsworth did not possess any word available to refer to what we call today "low culture," or "popular culture," so that he might have been forced to use the word 'the matter' in Book VII. (For the detailed discussion on the culture discourse, see Chapter 1.)

Wordsworth insists in Book VII 489-99 of *The 1805 Prelude*, which I cited above, that 'those who have observed the curious props' do not despise 'the matter.' What did he intend to mean by the phrase of 'the curious props'? We should not read it as a mere metaphor. Instead, it should rather be accepted literally



as a sign referring to the real, palpable side of physical nature. Poetico-cultural transference does not stand alone, being separated from this merging process of materiality and spirituality in 'the curious props.' As he declared in the following, Wordsworth always tried to keep in touch with 'words for things.' (311) It is a personified notion derived from monism. (See Chapter 7.) Concurring to the premises of monism, words are not to be '[d]ebarred from Nature's living images.' (313) Though Wordsworth was not always faithful to this theory in practice, it is from this monistic standpoint that Wordsworth condemns Coleridge for his idealism as involving the use of language for its own sake:

I have thought  
Of thee, thy learning, gorgeous eloquence,  
And all the strength and plumage of thy youth,  
Thy subtle speculations, toils abstruse  
Among the schoolmen, and Platonic forms  
Of wild ideal pageantry, shaped out  
From things well-matched or ill, and words for things—  
The self-created sustenance of a mind  
Debarred from nature's living images,  
Compelled to be a life unto itself...

(1805 *Prelude*, Book VI, 305-314)

Perhaps, Wordsworth the poet could not have attained 'an assured sense of self or decisive poetry' (Hartman xvii) at the emotionally heightened stage of Book VI. At this moment of crossing the Alps, he was forced to discover 'the autonomy of his imagination' independent of strong outward stimuli, while his stability of self is threatened to disintegrate. To the contrary, Book VII shows the moment when a strong external stimuli came not from the nature but from the materialized things in city life. Necessarily, he was obliged to transfer his standpoint from the Lucretian subjective expressionist to the Hartleyan objective associationist. (The detailed discussion is in Chapter 1.) Although it is difficult to estimate how much he is indebted to David Hartley(1705-1759)<sup>(4)</sup>, Hartleyean idea on language<sup>(5)</sup> lurks at

least behind the crucial passages of Book VII. Hartley did disconnect words from passions, saying ‘the Words denoting the Passions do not, for the most part, raise up in us any degree of the Passions themselves, but only the Ideas of the associated Circumstances.’ (*Observations on Man, His Frame, His Duty, and His Expectations* (1749) 276) Instead of ‘the Passion,’ Hartley introduced the notions of the Will and the vibration.

If the Intervention of other Ideas, or of Sensations and Motions (all which we are to suppose to follow the Will directly), be necessary, it is imperfectly voluntary; yet still it will be called voluntary, in the Language of Mankind, if it follow certainly and readily upon the Intervention of a single Sensation, idea, or Motion, excited by the Power of the Will: But if more than one of these be required, or if the Motion do not follow with Certainty and Facility, it is to be esteemed less and less voluntary, semi-voluntary, or scarce voluntary at all, agreeably to the Circumstances.

(Hartley 103)

At the core of the fluctuating flow of poetico-cultural transference, Wordsworth the poet is seen shifting his stance from the expressionist’s to the associationist’s one, which entails his change of view from the acquiescence to Idea to the conformity to the Circumstances. Curiously, at this crucial moment, Wordsworth is also seen setting Hartley’s mechanical association theory roughly equal to a popularized version of Platonic philosophy of ideal. He endeavours to adjust the former to the framework of mimesis. Out of this amalgam of popularized versions, not only Wordsworth’s monism but also his poetry developed. In terms of Coleridge, this extremely subjective hybridization is derived from Wordsworth’s ‘Analogon’ and his authoritative reliance on author–reader relationship.

A faith, which transcends even historic belief, must absolutely *put out* this mere poetic Analogon of faith, as the summer sun is said to extinguish our household fires, when it shines full upon them. What would otherwise have been yielded to as pleasing fiction, is repelled as revolting falsehood. The effect produced in this

latter case by the solemn belief of the reader, is in a less degree brought about in the instances, to which I have been objecting, by the baffled attempts of the author to *make* him believe.

(“Defects of Wordsworth’s Poetry” *Biographia Literaria II*, Chapt 22, 134)

Why was Wordsworth the poet so fascinated by poetic Analogon? It is likely because his search of the permanent poetry urges him not toward something static but to ‘something evermore about to be’ (*The 1805 Prelude* VI 542) even in ‘[t]he endless stream of men, and moving things.’ (VII 158) Abrams points out that there resides ‘a conspicuous parallelism between [the] basic pattern of mental activity and the elementary concepts of matter, motion, and force composing Newton’s science of mechanics.’ (Abrams 163) Nevertheless, in Book VI of *The 1805 Prelude*, the converse pattern evinces itself, where Coleridge’s indulgence in the parallelism between ‘Platonic forms’ and ‘things’ has become the target of Wordsworth’s criticism. In Wordsworth’s understanding, the unit of ideas inherent in the mind can conform to Newton’s definition of particles of matter better than to the Platonic Idea, for words are to be equated with things, if only sustained by ‘curious props.’

In the cultural milieu of the first decade of the nineteenth century, Hartley’s system of psycho-physiological parallelism was accepted uncritically by many intellectuals.<sup>(6)</sup> Thus Hartley’s associative theory provides Wordsworth with the course of necessitarian progress towards a millennium. The latter’s assimilation with “culture” (i.e., the whole way of life of the people) cannot be pursued without the chain of reasoning among mind, Nature, and language, and it is that which is exemplified by Hartley’s association theory. (As for the detailed discussion on the connection between the nature discourse and the culture one, see Chapters 1 & 2.)

Poetico-cultural transference has been always invigorated and nourished by the author-reader relationship. Wordsworth stresses the point in his “Essay, Supplementary to the Preface” (1815), saying that ‘without the exertion of a co-operating *power* in the mind of the Reader...elevated or profound passion cannot

exist.’ (“Preface of 1815,” *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, II 81) ‘A co-operating power’ is sometimes set equal to ‘the spirit of Nations,’ which later comes close to the ideal of Imperialism, but Wordsworth requires his reader to tie this restrictive power with ‘the conferring, the abstracting, and the modifying powers of the Imagination.’ (“Preface of 1815,” *ibid.* 33.) (The detailed discussion on the social-cultural bond of the author-reader relationship, see Chapters 3 & 7.) Wordsworth was both familiar with and disgustful at the restraints and refinements of civility. They have been considered to play the dominant roles among the literary circles. Wordsworth was obedient to and rebellious against this enclosure. This ambiguous attitude accelerates the particular movement of poetic-cultural transference in Wordsworth, which was obviously revealed in 1804-5. An indefinite process of poetico-cultural transference inevitably accompanies a substantial change in the field and direction in which Imagination works. It should be noted that Wordsworth’s poetico-cultural transference is performed in connection with his search for genuine poetry as well as with his dynamic search for cultural identity. The social and cultural conditions of the life of the people help the poet in search of true poetry to carry out an invisible poetico-cultural transference.

( 3 )

Being one of the young radicals during the Revolutionary period, Wordsworth was critical of the taste of the contemporary conservative readers. Under the strong influence of his close friend S. T. Coleridge, he cherished a lively interest in German literature. (As for Wordsworth’s acceptance of German literature through Coleridge, see Chapter 5.) In spite of several strategic, revolutionary announcements in the 1800 “Preface” to *Lyrical Ballads*, young Wordsworth (and Coleridge) succeeded in creating poems characterized by a strong combination of imagination and two cultures: the culture of those who are nourished in ‘an accurate taste’ (7) as well as the culture of

those who live in rural areas. In fact, the poems collected both in *Lyrical Ballads* and in the problematic drama *The Borderers* (1796) clearly indicate how deeply the best literary tradition of the time, including Virgil, Chaucer, Spencer, Shakespeare, Milton, Pope etc., had trained Wordsworth to become a good poet. Nevertheless, the fluctuations of poetico-cultural transference are discernible even in the textual variants of the early three texts of *The Prelude* (1798, 1799, and 1805). The connotations of the word 'culture' and 'under-presence' get gradually expanded from an emotional assimilation to the People to the universalized axiom. The change is mostly manipulated by Wordsworth as the didactic teacher of the People. In that indefinite dynamic field of poetico-cultural transference, the author-reader relationship works simultaneously in the contrary directions, sympathy for/admonishment of the people. As a result, both social and cultural determinants of the language are seen actively exerting their powers one after another. They concur not only in Wordsworth's personal mind but also in his social transaction, forming the involute motion as if they were trying to reveal '[a]ll out-o'-the-way, far-fetched, perverted things/All freaks of nature, all Promethean thoughts/Of Man.' (VII 687-8) In this way, Book VII of *The 1805 Prelude* provides the very theatre where the drama of this transference is seen performed. (As for Wordsworth idea of language, see Chapter 6.) The world is being made and unmade within it.

While this immense human and historical drama is enacted in the city of London, the poet is set in a curious position being hung and suspended between a common reality and the unseen presence of power. He even experiences a 'blank confusion' (Book VII 696) in 'the mighty city,' (697) '[t]hat ha[d] no law, no meaning, and no end' (VII 704). Wordsworth the poet-narrator became aware of some underlining force prevalent in his sense of vacuity, the feeling of disconnectedness. It might be the growing power of Imperialism that sustains the pageant of the people. Floating among the multi-national and multi-cultural crowd in the London streets, he noted: '[t]he Swede, the Russian; from the genial south/The Frenchman and the Spaniard; from

remote/America, the hunter Indian; Moors, Malays, Lasers, the Tartar and Chinese, and negro ladies in white muslin gowns.' (VII 239-243) He found himself unable to read the meaning of '[t]he changeful language of their countenances.' (VII 727) Finally, he came to recognize the sad reality of Imperialism as '[t]he absolute presence of reality' (VII 249) as if her greediness took in '[a] whole horizon on all sides.' (VII 259)

—with power  
Like that of angels or commissioned spirits  
Plant us upon some lofty pinnacle  
  
Or in a ship on waters (with a world  
Of life, and life-like mockery, to east,  
To west, beneath, behind us, and before)...  
(VII 259-264)

Although his sense of 'a vacuity of the language' is listed as one symptom of 'gross realities' (VII 508), in the context of our postmodernism, it refers to the fundamentals of capitalism as well. Basically, the infrastructure of Wordsworth's time does not differ from ours. His sense of helplessness of being marginalized in its mechanism is epitomized in the label the blind beggar wore on his chest, who stands propped by the street wall. As the poet-narrator observes it, '[t]he present and the past, hope, fear, all stays/All laws, of acting, thinking, speaking man' (VII 604-5) is summed up in his label which tells succinctly '[t]he story of the man and who he was.' (VII 614) The unbridgeable vacuity between the fact and the fiction is revealed;

[I]t seemed  
To me that in this label was a type  
Or emblem of the utmost that we know  
Both of ourselves and of the universe... (VII 616-19)

This is a rare moment in which the pivot of Wordsworth's indefinite process of poetico-cultural transference is explicitly referred to, though disappointedly. Here, his

lifelong pursuit for genuine poetry merges with the process of his search for cultural identity. His recognition of the vacuity of language runs parallel with the aborting process, which is inevitably involved in the formation of cultural identity. (As for his detailed discussion, see Chapter 2.) Nevertheless, all the actions are regulated and displayed within the context of the taste–imagination discourse. Wordsworth realized the importance of the spirit of nature, the *genius loci*, and thought it represented in an implicit culture of simplicity existing in the way of life of the low and rustic people. Still, he vaguely believes that habitual influence of nature can shape the soul with beauty and order. Wordsworth was too culturally refined to ignore the presence of educated readers well versed in the scientific thinking of his age. (The point is discussed in relation with their political unconscious, their myth making, and female voice; see Chapters 4, 7, and 8.)

In 1815, ironically, his vague understanding of Imagination as ‘an unfathered vapour’ urges Wordsworth to probe the overestimated value of Taste. In so doing, he went further to admit his early mistake. He confused the role of imagination with that of taste by attributing the pathetic and the sublime to the latter. In addition, he requests the cooperation of his reader: ‘without the exertion of a co-operating *power* in the mind of the Reader, there can be no adequate sympathy with either of these emotions: without this auxiliary impulse, elevated or profound passion cannot exist.’ (ibid.) Finally, he allows the discriminating border line between taste and imagination to extend to the point where it can mark the cultural difference between the two groups of his readers, the insensitive and unthinking Public and the philosophically minded People. (As for the definition of the Reader, see Chapters 5–7, and for the deepening awareness of the transmutation of the reader in Wordsworth, see Chapters 7–11. His growing antipathy to Ossian and disappearance of Lucy is interrelated with this process of poetico–cultural transference.)

The poetico–cultural transference in Wordsworth thus runs parallel with his deepening awareness of the reverse connotation of taste. In 1815, he clearly comes to

admit that taste cannot cover nor eclipse the genuine imagination, though a crucial point of this transference is depicted in Book VII of *The 1805 Prelude*.

A range of socio-cultural determinants is suggested in an obscure flux working to accelerate this transference behind *The Prelude* as a whole. This movement is remarkably represented in Book VII on the city life. There, the people themselves are seen as fragmented, materialized, and dehumanized. They are no kin to the rural human beings who live their own low but humble life in accordance with the human nature co-existing in sympathy with the universal nature. It seems that the city crowd do not deserve the sympathetic understanding of the narrator-poet, especially after he experienced a 'blank confusion' (Book VII 696) in 'the mighty city.' (697) His sympathy is epitomized in the simple but unelaborated expression of the label the blind beggar wears on his chest.

Furthermore, the socio-cultural conditions of the life of the people help transform the poet's viewpoint from a superior observer to that of a drifting and wandering individual sunk deep in the flowing stream of the crowd. He feels 'as if admonished from another world.' (VII 622) After undergoing this rapid but obscure process of inversion, even the contradictory elements of the crowd start to consolidate themselves into 'one identity' (VII 704), which refers, reflexively, to the poet's own cultural identity. The poetico-cultural transference in Wordsworth thus holds a divergent trajectory. Figuratively speaking, it mainly concerns with the ambivalent caesura between synchronic powerful feelings and diachronic recollected emotion, the contradictory trajectory of which keeps its eddying involute movements going on.

To clarify the nature of poetico-cultural transference in Wordsworth should, therefore, require both elucidation and evaluation of these contradictory elements, whether they are of the vivid lyrics created by the young revolutionary Wordsworth and/or of the didactic, philosophical musings by the solitary Wordsworth. The rupture between them is subtle but ambivalent. Our point resides in clarifying this apparent inconsistency. In the analyzing process, an inevitable obligation of the author-reader



relationship will be brought out. For that purpose, the discussion is set within the contexts of such cultural constituents as language, political ideology, feminism, and imperialism as the titles of the following chapters indicate. His unconscious assimilation to the popular culture is mostly expressed in a ballad form he much used. After passing through the path of poetic narrative of the autobiographical poem, *The Prelude*, the author comes to tell his experience through the voices of divided self in *The Excursion* in 1814. The individualized action of the self thus undergoes a substantial change within the involute of poetico-cultural transference, till it attains a universalized, historical dimension. Usually, it is said that Wordsworth's great period ended up in *Poems in Two Volumes* (1815). Nevertheless, an emotionalized historical narration in a Romance, *The White Doe of Rylstone*, leads his Imagination to make up the symbolic image of a white doe. This book is a cultural evidence which indicates how Wordsworth's work is accepted by the Victorians. Ironically, the cultural significance of Wordsworth's work lies in the fact that it is 'a marketable commodity.' (Stephen Gill, *Wordsworth and the Victorians*, 2) Even the poetical transference of the literary form, from a ballad to a romance, in Wordsworth is not separable from the socio-cultural determinants of the age, especially those of marketing, of capitalism.

#### NOTES:

(1) *The Prelude* has many versions. This great autobiographical poem was left in manuscript during the poet's lifetime. See Jonathan Wordsworth ed., *William Wordsworth: The Prelude; The Four Texts (1798, 1799, 1805)* Henceforward all quotations from *The Preludes 1799, 1805 and 1850* are from *The Prelude, 1799, 1805, 1850*, ed. Jonathan Wordsworth, M.H. Abrams, and Stephen Gill, New York and London: W.W.Norton & Company, 1979.

(2) 'In March-April 1804, Wordsworth's poem, as far as it then went, fairly surely treated his principal residences in their actual chronological sequence: first native regions, then Cambridge. The probability seems strong that having finished, sometime in April, an equivalent of Book VI with its description of his last college vacation. Wordsworth would have turned to consideration of his second remove of residential distance from home; that is, London.' (Mark L. Reed, "Introduction," *The*

*Thirteen-Book Prelude*, 55)

(3) The definition of 'culture' would invite a lot of arguments because of the complexity of idea and the range of its reference. The model used here is the very simple one first proposed by Edward Sapir: 'those general attitudes, views of life, and specific manifestations of civilization that give a particular people its distinctive place in the world.' (Edward Sapir, *Selected Writings of Edward Sapir*, 311) Later Raymond Williams renamed it 'a whole way of life.' (Raymond Williams *Culture and Society* xviii) This broad concept is convenient enough to comprehend complex ideas about the relations between a general, historical self-development of humanity, and a particular way of life, and between these and the works and practices of art and intelligence.

(4) David Hartley (1705–59) is the representative figure of British Associationism. In *Conjecturae* (1746) he yoked the Newtonian theory of vibrations and of the aether to the principle of the association of the idea which was adumbrated by John Locke (1632–1704). At the same time, he is among the followers of Aristotle's *De Anima*. Consequently he is regarded as the first philosopher to relate the bodily frame with sense organs and nerves to all the phenomena of sensation, imagination, memory, understanding, affection and will. He belongs to a group consisting of such well known figures as John Locke (1632–1704) and Joseph Priestley (1733–1804). The influence of his *Observations on Man* (1749) lasted during a span of perhaps seventy-five years after its publication. Naturally S. T. Coleridge and William Wordsworth were deeply influenced by it. Hartley borrowed Newton's theory affirming that repeated vibrations deposit minute vibrations in an object.

(5) Hartley asserts that 'a perfect and adequate language,' (Hartley 320) that is poetry, should arise out of '[p]rogress in pure unmixed Happiness,' and that to express one's own feelings and to understand those of others might be to 'give to and receive from each other happiness indefinitely.' (ibid.)

As Jonathan Wordsworth points out in *The Borders of Vision* (129), an echo of Hartley's *Observations on Man* is already discernible in *Home at Grasmere* composed as early as in 1800, that is, five years before the composition of the 1805 *Prelude*. The echo is also discernible in the meditative expression on the relationship between things and language in Dove Cottage MS 16, which belongs to the period in 1798 when Wordsworth was contemplating *The Recluse*.

Not useless do I deem  
Thus quiet sympathies with things that hold  
An inarticulate language, for the man  
Once taught to love such objects as excite  
No morbid passions, no disquietude,  
No vengeance and no hatred, needs must feel  
The joy of that pure principle of love  
So deeply that, unsatisfied with aught  
Less pure and exquisite, he cannot choose

But seeks for objects of a kindred love  
In fellow-natures, and a kindred joy.  
(*The Oxford Authors* 678)

(6) Indeed it was David Hume that 'posited the concept of the associations of ideas' as the principle governing the sequence and conjunction of ideas, and rendering the imagination 'in some measure, uniform with itself in all times and places.' (M. H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp*, 162) But it was through David Hartley's 'version of associative theory' that was 'developed independently of Hume' which the mechanical theory of association was connected with Aristotelian literary theory of mimesis. According to Abrams, 'very quickly the general concept of association, although with diverse predications of the number and kinds of associative connections, became incorporated into standard theories of the literary imagination.' (Ibid. 162)

(7) When he read the label the blind beggar wears, he felt 'as if admonished from another world.' (VII 622) His disturbance was incisive enough to undercut his sympathetic alliance with rural people, represented by the story of Mary of Buttermere, only sad and mild memories of whom sleep 'undisturbed.' (VII 411)

## Chapter 1

### A Personalised Attempt to Overcome the Split between Subject and Object

#### (1)

Wordsworth's poetico-cultural transference is characterized by his own supple idea of imagination. His idea is mainly derived from the eighteenth-century view of man and nature. In this personalized boundary of poetico-cultural transference, however, he made an attempt to accentuate the emotional origin of language. His idea of language was an outcome of natural incorporation of the prevalent ones about the nature and value of primitive poetry. Wordsworth combined it with Longinian doctrines of the sublime style as the ideal having its main sources in the thought and emotions of the speaker. It is natural that M. H. Abrams classifies Wordsworth's poetic theory into the expressive theory of art. What Wordsworth tried to do is to substitute the theory for 'neo-classic theories which had been based most substantially on Aristotle, Horace, Cicero, and Quintilian.' (M. H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp*, 104) While the neo-classic theories are based on the mimetic and pragmatic, the expressive theory stresses the importance of creative process operating under the impulse of feeling, and regards poetry as the combined product of the poet's perceptions, thoughts, and feelings. The 1800 "Preface" to *Lyrical Ballads* already signalizes a possibility of such a commingling, substituting the internal for the external. There he insists that the poet 'considers man and nature as essentially adapted to each other, and the mind of man as naturally the mirror of the fairest and most interesting properties of nature.' (140) At the same time, he also insists that in a state of excitement, feelings and ideas 'follow the fluxes and refluxes of the mind.' (*The Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, I 126) But in the concluding part of *1805 Prelude*, which is about what the poet perceived on top of Mt. Snowdon, the dynamic exchange

of the internal and the external is worked out in his usage of “mind.”

A meditation rose in me that night  
Upon the lonely mountain when the scene  
Had passed away, and it appeared to me  
The perfect image of a mighty mind  
Of one that feeds upon infinity,  
That is exalted by an underpresence,  
The sense of God, or whatso'er is dim  
Or vast in its own being.

(1805 *Prelude* XIII 66–73)

Apparently, the passage echoes the statement he made in 1800 “Preface” of *Lyrical Ballads*. In a state of excitement, feelings and ideas ‘follow the fluxes and refluxes of the mind.’ (*The Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, I 126) At the same time, it still retains the mimetic model, saying that the poet ‘considers man and nature as essentially adapted to each other, and the mind of man as naturally the mirror of the fairest and most interesting properties of nature.’ (140) The word ‘mind’ here signifies the traditional meaning of ‘thought,’ as is defined in the entry II of OED. Adapting it to the mimesis model, Wordsworth succeeded to represent how, in perception and in its subsequent meditation, the mind works passively receptive to the world-Soul, ‘a mighty mind’ like a mirror.

In this final scene of Mt. Snowdon, however, the internal mind, the coercive, creative imagination, ‘an underpresence/The sense of God,’ dominates the scene. Like God the creator, it works positively projecting the light to the external world as if it were a lamp. Herein reside the modernity and the eccentricity of Wordsworth. It should be noted that his contemporary context of the word ‘mind’ allows Wordsworth to exercise an eccentric commingling function of intellect, feeling, and memory. His obedience to any aesthetic principle is inconsistent. It varies freely in the flow of poetico-cultural transference. Compared to him, Coleridge is more rational. For example, the same context brings out Coleridge’s famous definition of imagination as

synthetic, vital, and permeable power. Coleridge classified the imaginative power, according to its function, into the primary and the secondary ones.

The primary IMAGINATION I hold to the living Power and prime Agent of human perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM. The secondary I CONSIDER as an echo of the former, co-existing with the conscious will, yet still as identical with the primary in the *kind* of its agency, and differing only in *degree*, and in the *mode* of its operation.  
(*Biographia Literaria*, I, Chapter 13, 304)

This crucial idea of Coleridge's was formed almost 15 years later than the one we find in Wordsworth's "Preface." M. H. Abrams suggests 'Coleridge may have derived some of his terms for specifying the imagination from the associationists he opposed.' (M.H.Abrams, "Notes," 363)<sup>(1)</sup> To the contrary, when Wordsworth declared that famous definition of poetry in "Preface" (1800), he could rely much on the ideas of associationists such as David Hume (1711-76) and David Hartley (1705-57).

Unlike the case of Coleridge, who undercut the connotations the associationists implied, Wordsworth's idea more conformed to their terminology. For example, he declares that famous definition of poetry, as follows;

Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings; it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility: the emotion is contemplated till by a species of reaction the tranquility 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.  
(*The Prose Works*, 148)

In stead of a lamp, the soul engaged in creation is here figured as a fountain from which its water overflows. '[T]he perfect image of a mighty mind' (*1805 Prelude* XIII 69), or an image of human mind, embodies itself when it is supported by 'an underpresence' (l.71), which stands for 'powerful feelings.' In Wordsworth's words, reciprocal relationship between subject and object is explained as follows: '[T]he power

which these/aknowledge when thus moved, which nature thus/Thrusts forth upon senses, is the express /Resemblance.’ (ll. 84–7)

Replacing the mimetic mirror familiar in older aesthetic theory with a fountain metaphor, Wordsworth, thus, attributes poetry an efficient cause. What matters here is the water, ‘the impulse within the poet of feelings and desires seeking expression.’ (M. H. Abrams 22) For Wordsworth, both Aristotelian formal cause and neo-platonic final cause seemed unsatisfactory. In the former paradigm poetry is determined by the human actions and qualities imitated, while in the latter poetry should exert its influence on the audience. These causes cannot equate ‘the impulse within’ with the compulsion of the internal, creative imagination, which acts like God the creator. Since the impulse primarily derives from the internal source of motion, the motion itself, not the cause, matters much in this ambiguous derivation process.

In the dimmed moon light on Mt. Snowdon, the mirror held to nature becomes transparent, while the division between animate being and inanimate thing becomes nullified: ‘[A] hundred hills their dusky backs upheaved.’ (l. 45) In this sublime scene of natural reaction, the motion implied by Wordsworth’s fountain metaphor could be assimilated in the line of the Longinian expressive theory. In other words, his fountain metaphor thus connotes the Longinian expressive theory, that a work of art consists essentially in the internal, which is made the external under the impulse of feelings. A poem can be a combination of a poet’s perceptions, thoughts, and feelings, so that it can stand for the internal motion, whether it is illuminated by the image of ‘a flash’ of the moon or it is described by the image of an overflowing fountain.

What is performed in the ‘transformation’ (l.94) in the dim moon light in Book XIII of *1805 Prelude*, therefore, symbolizes the generative process of poetry in Wordsworth. Poetry is not simply a description of the reflected image on the mirror. It is a newly created ‘like existence’ (l.94) of ‘all the objects of the universe’ (l.92), but it is created in a way that ‘the enduring and the transient both/Serve to exalt.’ (ll.67–8) Consequently, with the help of imagination, impressions and passions are enabled to

get themselves blended in the mind and heart of the poet so as to be expressed and revealed in poetry.

As the paraphrasing of Mt. Snowdon scene above suggests, the process of poetical transmutation Wordsworth offered in 1800 as a sort of experiment is not so transparent nor radical as the one Coleridge proposed in 1815. Wordsworth's model depends on the blending and fusing power of imagination, which acts like God the creator on one hand. Since the power is urged by the impulse, it cannot but work in a limited measure through the nature which acts like 'one function of such mind.' (l.74) This power is allegorized in the female form: 'she,' i.e., the nature 'oftentimes/Exerts upon the outward face of things' (ll.77-8) and 'moulds them, and endures, abstracts, combines,/Or by abrupt and unhabitual influence/Does make one object so impress itself/Upon all others and pervade them so.' (ll.79-82) Actually Wordsworth endows the nature with such a mechanical function as both the expressionists and associationists anticipated. Whereas Coleridge, advocate of organic theory, repelled this mechanical kind of function, though he expressed it sometimes by images which imply that coalescence of subject and object is possible. In place of these mechanical functions, Coleridge brought the notion of levels into the imagination discourse: the primary imagination as 'the living Power and prime Agent of all human Perception' which repeats in the finite mind 'the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM' and the secondary imagination as 'an echo of the former, co-existing with the conscious will.' (*Biographia Literaria* I 304) In addition to this distinct antithesis in which the finite and the infinite are precariously yoked by an organic, anthropomorphic metaphor, he differentiates fancy and imagination. Nevertheless, Coleridge would not have accepted that mechanical side of associative faculty which combines particles of ideas as fancy.<sup>(2)</sup> He even condemned the associative unity achieved by this process not as an organic unity but as a unity of emotional coherence. Whereas, as the conclusion of *The 1805 Prelude* suggests, Wordsworth did not concern so much with the antithesis Coleridge proposed. He did not care for the importance of CHOICE, with which a



conscious will operates in the artist in creation. He took a widening interest in motion and movement general rather than in drawing a distinction between artistic and non-artistic function.

Here an eccentricity of Wordsworth's idea on imagination becomes conspicuous. He thought that, since the imagination is more or less an index to the poet's personality, poetry requires his reader to possess the similar kind of imagination as the poet has; that is, his reader should be able to share the feeling of pleasure which his poetry intends to excite, and enjoy it in the same way as the poet does. Since a poet is destined to be involved in whatever cultural situation, he is always aware of its control, the principal index of which is the reader. A poetico-cultural transference in Wordsworth is thus fixed deep in this flux and reflux movement of the mind of the age, which subsumes both intellect and emotion of the age, enmeshed within the history.

Indeed, most of the romantic poets were constantly forced to be aware of some kind of cultural sway, when they endeavoured to attune themselves with the spirit of the age. It constantly demands them to show a way to heal a cleavage between subject and object, or between organic and mechanical theories. Perhaps, Wordsworth the revolutionary was most keenly aware of the cultural and historical compulsion of the age. According to M. H. Abrams, 'Wordsworth, the first great romantic poet, may also be accounted the critic whose highly influential writings, by making the feelings of the poet the center of critical reference, mark a turning-point in English literary theory.' But Wordsworth, continues Abrams, was 'more thoroughly immersed in certain currents of eighteenth-century thinking than any of his important contemporaries.' (M. H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp*, 103) No wonder his eccentric ideas on imagination enclose organically and synthetically various cultural determinants of that critical period. Among the 'certain currents of eighteenth-century thinking' were counted those ideas advocated by Hugh Blair (1718-1800) and David Hartley (1705-57). Wordsworth's indebtedness to both of them, which can be seen especially in "Preface" of *Lyrical Ballads*, and in Book VII of

*1805 Prelude*, has been long neglected, but it must be taken into consideration seriously, when we try to solve the nature of his particularized, eccentric poetico-cultural transference. As was the case of 'mind,' the term 'culture' provides us an essential clue to approach it.

( 2 )

The notion of 'culture' as a whole way of life is disclosed in the poems collected in *Lyrical Ballads*. This type of 'culture' is implied not only in their subject matter but also in their free use of the real language of men. This peculiar technique suggests how Wordsworth accepted a form of cultural primitivism propagated by Hugh Blair. It is based on a simple syllogism: 'the universal feeling of mankind is the natural feeling; and because it is the natural, it is, for that reason, the right feeling.' (*Blair's Lectures*, XXXV 472) Hence, Blair insists that the foundation of taste is the same in all human minds, because 'it is built upon sentiments and perceptions which belong to our nature; and which, in general, operate with the same uniformity as our other intellectual principles.' (II 22) In fact, it relies on the assumption that the shared opinions and feelings of mankind constitute the most reliable norm of aesthetic. Nevertheless, most of eighteenth-century critics accepted this doctrine, with some distinctive variants; 'chronological,' and 'cultural' primitives. Blair emphasizes the former simplicity of nature in evidence of the infancy of societies, while the latter includes 'people dwelling in civilized nations but insulated by caste or rural habitat from the artifice and complications of culture.' (M.H.Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp* 105)

Wordsworth's cardinal poetic value is usually argued in the context of 'nature.'<sup>(3)</sup> It should be noted that the notion formed in this intellectual current confounds simple, wild, and primitive quality of 'nature' with historical characteristics of the primitive savages. His 'culture' as an integral part of nature

is always to be expressed by and through his enhanced imagination at work. In the eccentric process of poetico-cultural transference, socio-cultural determinants of language are dynamically combined with his sympathetic imagination as well. His sympathy extends to those living in the peripheral of the society, so that some ludicrous feelings inherent in the 'culture' of such rural people as Goody Blake Harry Gill, Simon Lee or the Idiot Boy are to be illustrated in 'the manner in which our feelings and ideas are associated in a state of excitement' (*The Prose Work* 126) in tender or pathetic appearance.

Wordsworth the poet started his career under the strong influence of Hugh Blair (1718-1800). Blair is a representative proponent of primitive theories of culture and literature among the Scottish 'Common-sense' philosophers, who are known as generally in opposition to the mechanical theory of association developed by David Hume (1711-76) and David Hartley (1705-57), which is constructed on the idea of mechanical universe of Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727) and John Locke (1632-1704). Nevertheless, Wordsworth's indebtedness to Blair's primitivism is limited in scope, and he gradually becomes inclined to the association theory of David Hartley. In his *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* (1783), Blair repudiated Platonic or Aristotelian idea of poetry, saying:

Some have made its essence to consist in fiction and support their opinion by the authority of Aristotle and Plato. But this is certainly too limited a definition...Others have made the characteristic of poetry to lie in imitation. But this is altogether loose; for several other arts imitate as well as poetry...

(Blair 510-119)

Instead, Blair gives a more comprehensive definition of poetry, 'that it is the language of passion, or of enlivened imagination, formed, most commonly, into regular numbers.' (Blair 511) According to M. H. Abrams, he was among those Scottish writers of the mid-eighteenth century 'who had in common an absorbing interest in the reconstruction of the genesis and prehistoric development of human arts and

institutions.’ (M. H. Abrams 81) Most of them ‘maintained that poetry had been instinctive and emotional in origin, and coeval, or almost coeval, with the birth of language itself.’ (ibid.) Since Blair’s *Lectures* extracted in Knox’s *Elegant Extracts in Prose* was the most widely used textbook of his days, Wordsworth must have read it while he ‘was still at Hawkeshead Grammar-School.’ Duncan Wu suggested that Wordsworth might have read the text during 6–9 February, 1798. (Duncan Wu, *Wordsworth’s reading 1770–1799*, 16)

Blair’s influence still subsisted in the *1805 Prelude*. Nevertheless, in 1805, Wordsworth expressed his perception that taste and imagination work in a contradictory way, especially in the Bartholomew Fair passage of Book VII of *the 1805 Prelude*. The recognition of amorphous mob on the street leads him to the mental confusion, in which the precarious balance between subject and object under the passion breaks down. When he heard ‘[t]he voice of woman utter blasphemy’ (VII 417) and witnessed ‘from humanity divorced/The human form, splitting the race of man/In twain, yet leaving the same outward shape’ (VII 424–6), ‘[t]he sorrow of the passion’ overthrew him. Although the poet in distress implores ‘the muse’s help,’ (VII 655) he feels an anarchical perception invading the creative imagination, saying ‘[t]he whole creative powers of man asleep.’ (VII 654) At this critical moment, it seems to him that against ‘a dream/Monstrous in colour, motion, shape, sight, sound,’ (VII 660–1) the traditional literary canon of imagination has become miserably helpless, and the notion of taste itself doubtful. In other words, his idea that simple innocence or nature discourse may allow human nature to approach to the external Nature collapses at this critical moment. Contradictory as it may sound, it is in Book VII that Wordsworth succeeds in depicting the aspects of the capitalism in the image of the city as ‘one vast mill,’ which is not like ‘falsely catalogued,’ (VII 642) but like things ‘[a]ll jumbled up together’ (VII 690) in remarkable vividness. Though he stood alienated from the mob, his picture of ‘one identity by differences’ (VII 703) could not have been accomplished without his individualized creative power. However, this subtle sense of collapsing

oneness, the feeling of ‘blank confusion,’(VII 695) lies in the depth of his poetico-cultural transference.

This feeling became much more intensified in Wordsworth in 1815. It is true that he has kept on probing into ‘a feeling of the whole,’(VII 712) the unanswerable question he proposed in Book VII of *1805 Prelude*; whether determined words are available to represent the irremediable sense of discrepancy between the perception as ‘an unmanageable sight’ (VII 708) or its representation is utterly contingent to ‘[t]he changeful language.’(VII 727) In this process of probing, he reiterates the same questioning in the context of *Taste* discourse in *Preface of 1815*, and “*Essay Supplementary to the Preface.*” Here he reaches a new stage of comprehension. One solution is to sever ‘comprehensiveness and memory’(VII 717) from the traditional framework of the myth. (See the detailed discussion on “*Nutting*” in Chapter 10.) However, in 1815, he asserts that ‘the profound and exquisite in feeling, the lofty and universal in thought and imagination; or, in ordinary language, the pathetic and the sublime’ (“*Essay, Supplementary to the Preface,*” *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, 81) are contained not in ‘taste’ but in ‘imagination.’ As a poet, in 1815, Wordsworth reached one conclusion thus discriminating two kinds of creative energy. In literary works, one works as fancy or taste, while the other as imagination. In 1805, ‘imagination’ is like ‘unfathered vapour’ in *Prelude* Book VI:

Imagination—lifting up itself  
Before the eye and progress of my song  
Like an unfathered vapour, here that power,  
In all the might of its endowments, came  
Athwart me! (VI 525–9)

The recognition of this unrestrained function of imagination in 1805 attracts our attention particularly, because it suggests that Wordsworth did not acknowledge an affinity between religion and poetry in this passage yet. Rather he alluded to imagination as the image of dictator a few lines below:

...to my soul I say  
'I recognize thy glory'. In such strength  
Of usurpation, in such visitings  
Of awful promise...

In 1815, however, as is indicated in the modified notion of 'whatsoe'er is dim/Or vast' in Book XIII of the *1805 Prelude*, his recognition deepens itself into a spiritual awakening as he states that 'the Infinite Being accommodates himself to a finite capacity.' ("Essay, Supplementary to the Preface," 65)

A poetico-cultural transference in Wordsworth thus accompanies the shift of his chosen models culled among literary theories of his time, main currents of which are derived from Aritotelian Mimesis, Plotinian emanation, and Longinian expressionism. It is a gradual switch from cultural primitivism asserted by Scottish writers of the mid-eighteenth century such as Hugh Blair, William Duff (1693-1763), and Lord Monbodo (1714-1799), to the revitalization of the Newtonian material and mechanical universe by religious sentiment such as David Hartley attempted. Although Coleridge attacks vehemently upon Hartley's system, it needs to be assumed that 'the common belief among scholars is that the poems of Wordsworth's best period, 1797-1807, are permeated with Hartley's doctrine of association.' (Theodore L. Huguélet, "Introduction," *Observations on Man*, xvi) (As to the discussion of Imagination and Religious sentiment in Wordsworth, see Chapter 12.) Moreover, I would like to suggest that his assimilation to Hartley's vibration theory is inseparable from his personal experiences in the great city London. His personalized process of poetico-cultural transference is not straightforward at all, though. Naturally his argument is to be entangled in the mesh of diversifying culture discourses until its ramifications are absorbed into the discrimination process of what the ideal reader is.

On 7 June 1802, Wordsworth wrote to John Wilson, expressing his view on the immutability of human nature, and affirming 'human nature, as it has been [and ever]

will be.’ (*Letters of William Wordsworth*, 52) In the letter, he repeats his point about the virtues of simplicity he once made in the 1800 “Preface” to *Lyrical Ballads*. The ‘best measure’ of human nature, he says, is found in those

[w]ho lead the simplest lives most according to nature[,] men who[ha]ve never known false refinements, wayward and artificial desires, false criti[ci]sms, effeminate habits of thinking and feeling, or who, having known these [t]hings, have outgrown them. (ibid.)

Wordsworth’s point is that poetry should be written for such people endowed with the qualification listed above. In the cultural context of the Enlightenment, his stance of resistance is understandable, seeing such a phrase as ‘false refinements, wayward and artificial desires, false criti[ci]sms, effeminate habits of thinking and feeling.’ It insinuates the characteristics most of the educated classes personified, and Wordsworth, as a legitimate member of the gentry class, was so familiar with them. But the most important point is suggested in the phrase ‘who, having known these [t]hings, have outgrown them.’ It implicates Wordsworth’s intention to discriminate between the educated and those exceptional persons among the educated, such as himself and his friend William Hazlitt (1778–1830). Undoubtedly, Hazlitt is counted among the eminent Romantic critics. Hazlitt might be able to hear the deeper passions expressed in the real language of those who live a ‘[l]ow and rustic life.’ Herein lie the intricate critical problems which might occur in estimating the relationship of culture and imagination in Wordsworth. It is not a simple matter of dichotomy. His demarcation line between the people in the country and the sophisticated urbanites varies now and then, resulting in the involute movement of his poetico-cultural transference. The line signifying such a dichotomy in 1800 became rather blurred by 1815, when the line drawn between the sympathetic reader and the insensible “Public” became more important for him. By 1815, Wordsworth seems to have taken a selective attitude toward the reader. He appealed primarily to those with sympathetic imaginations

among the educated classes.

( 3 )

In that timely occasion when Wordsworth collaborated with Coleridge to publish *Lyrical Ballads*,<sup>(4)</sup> Blair's ideas largely helped Wordsworth and Coleridge especially in outlining "Preface" to *Lyrical Ballads*. Nevertheless, it should be noted that no less important influence of Hartley exerted simultaneously on the collection of these lyrics. The influence of Hartley is evidently seen in "Tintern Abbey" of *Lyrical Ballads*, and subsists in the long, philosophical poem *The Prelude*, especially in Book VII of the *1805 Prelude*.<sup>(5)</sup> In 1798, the idea of the primary laws of our nature connected with 'the power/Of harmony, and the deep power of joy' ("Tintern Abbey" 47-8) enabled the poet to 'see into the life of things.' (l.49) It is because, in the mind of man, the motion of life is seen in 'a spirit, that impels,/All thinking things, all objects of all thought,/ And rolls through all things.' (ll. 101-3) This process expressed in physical terms is understandable by making most of Hartley's theory of vibration as its annotation. An external object (its plural form 'things') impresses a sensation upon the nerves of the sense organ. Consequently the sensation, 'a spirit,' causes a minute vibration by attraction and repulsion in accordance with Newton's principle of motion and sets the infinitesimal particles, '[a]ll thinking things, all objects of thought' in motion; that is, the spirit 'rolls' them. Thus the doctrines of vibrations and association are introduced and exquisitely utilized in explaining the interrelationship of subject, i.e., 'all thinking things,' and object, i.e., the objects of those thinking things. Thodore L. Huguelet suggests, '[i]n "Tintern Abbey" the "affections" and the "language of the sense" may epitomize Hartley's system.' ("Introduction," *Observations on Man, His Frame, His Duty, and His Expectations*, xvii)

The poet-narrator of Book VII of *the 1805 Prelude*, however, is seen stuck in the middle of the hellish colour and bustle of city life. He feels as if he were enforced to



discard his cultural identity. In his mind thinking is dissociated from objects of thought. At the sight of ‘[t]he endless stream of men, and moving things’ (VII 158), ‘[m]onstrous in colour, motion, shape, sight sound’ (VII 661), he was shocked, and was confronted with the grim reality ‘that from humanity divorced/The human form, splitting the race of man /In twain.’ (VII 424-6) Then, the narrator is obliged to admit a barrier that encloses his power to express his feelings. Moreover, he is made aware of the reality as if his sense of belonging to a communal, close-knitted society were split and dwindling. This internal confusion was strong enough to shake Wordsworth’s faith in the expressive theory of poetry proposed by Blair and the Scottish writers of the mid-eighteenth century. Nevertheless, this problematical description of London scene itself conforms to Hartley’s doctrines of the General Laws, in which the Bodily and Mental Powers are related to each other. Wordsworth succeeded in making the reader see (and feel) the objects as they are, as ‘gross realities, /The incarnation of the spirits that moved/Amid the poet’s beauteous world.’ (VII 508-10) It is natural that to his objective description of the City is later given a pictorial expression by Gustave Doré.

In order to account for this surface incongruity between subjective expression and objective description, we should make it clear that ideas expressed in the two different versions of “Preface” to *Lyrical Ballads* are slightly different from each other. “Preface”(1800), written by Wordsworth when he was still in collaboration with Coleridge, appears to have the simplest form, but it differs in various important passages from those of subsequent versions written by Wordsworth alone for the 1802 and the 1850 *Lyrical Ballads*. “Preface”(1800) flatly states that ‘all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings’ (*The Prose Works of William Wordsworth* I 126) and that the author’s purpose is ‘to follow the fluxes and refluxes of the mind when agitated by the great and simple affections of our nature.’ (ibd.) But two years later, in “Preface”(1802), Wordsworth extends the idea by defining the poet’s duty in an analogy of the mirror and object relation.

He considers man and nature as essentially adapted to each other, and the mind of man as naturally the mirror of the fairest and most interesting qualities of nature.

(*The Oxford Authors: William Wordsworth*, 606)<sup>(5)</sup>

Here the basic proposition of the mimesis, that is, the idea of words equating with things, stands out conspicuously as if it were a universal agreement. But when he became doubtful about the presumed equation of the external nature and the internal, as is evidently shown in Book VII of *1805 Prelude*, Wordsworth came to make his nature discourse akin to the nature discourse then prevailing, which was based on the logic of association proposed by Hartley. In spite of its apparent cohesive mechanism, Hartley takes into account the associative relation between segmented parts and their original source, ignoring the boundary between the material and the spiritual. He says ‘our Passions or Affections can be no more than Aggregates of simple Ideas united by Association.’ (Hartley, 368) He insists on factitiousness of emotion as well as that expressed by words.

The most general of our Desires and Aversions are factitious; *i.e.* generated by Associations and diminutions. And, whoever will be sufficiently attentive to the Workings of his own Mind, and the Actions resulting there from, or to the Actions of others, and the Affections which may be supposed to occasion them, will find such Differences and Singularities in different Persons, and in the same Person an essential, original, perpetual Desire of Happiness, and Endeavour to attain it; much rather to the factitious associated Desires and Endeavours here asserted.

(Hartley 370)

Wordsworth himself must have no less recognised the factitiousness of emotion than the fictitiousness of the word ‘nature’ in Book VII of *1805 Prelude* so far as its vivid description of London streets concerns. Assumedly, by 1800 Wordsworth would not have disagreed with Hartley’s point.

It is reasonable that the amplified statement of “Preface”(1802) does not

particularly emphasize the importance of the lamp, the emotional light the poet projects on to objects. The poet is, Wordsworth thought, the man who ‘considers man and objects that surround him as acting and re-acting upon each other, so as to produce an infinite complexity of pain and pleasure.’ (ibid. 605) Consequently, the pre-established harmony of the mirror and object relation in passion, which was confirmed in “culture” of ‘[l]ow and rustic life’ in “1800 Preface,” seems to have become vulnerable or threatened in 1802. In other words, that ideal situation in which ‘the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature’ (“1800 Preface” 124) seems to be undercut. Actually at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the primitive society in which Blair’s expressionist theory is deeply rooted is disintegrating, as is depicted in Thomas Gray’s *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* (1751). In such a social context, Wordsworth must have apprehended at least the incompatibility between ‘objects’ and ‘nature,’ and he tried to take another viewpoint, on which he later focuses in Book VII of *1805 Prelude*. What Wordsworth tries to accomplish there is to give appropriate expression to the grim reality of the race of man split in twain and fractionized: ‘from humanity divorced/The human form, splitting the race of man/In twain, yet leaving the same outward shape.’ (VII 424-6) In order to give an appropriate expression to this misery, Wordsworth seemed to evaluate objective description rather than emotional rhetoric.

( 4 )

In the so-called Wordsworth circle, Hazlitt must have been an ideal reader. In his essay “My First Acquaintance with Poets,” remembering the year 1798, Hazlitt described Wordsworth reading some of the poems in *Lyrical Ballads*, such as “Thorn,” “Mad Mother,” and “Complaint of a Poor Indian Woman,” and noted that he ‘felt that deeper power and pathos which have been since acknowledged “[i]n spite of pride, in erring reason’s spite,” as the characteristics of this author; and the sense of a new

style and a new spirit in poetry came over me.’ (Harold Bloom & Lionel Trilling eds, *Romantic Poetry and Prose*, 702) Hazlitt cleverly complied with the poet’s request ‘that the Reader would abide independently by his own feelings.’ (*The Prose Work*, 154)

Hazlitt’s indulgence in feeling is a laudable qualification of the reader. Two years later, in the 1802 letter to John Wilson, Wordsworth has divided the readers into two groups; cooperative readers and non-cooperative. From his viewpoint, “The Idiot Boy” provides a reading aptitude test:

Some have little knowledge of natural imagery of any kind, and, of course, little relish for it, some are disgusted with the very mention of the words pastoral poetry, sheep or shepherds, some cannot tolerate a poem with a thing carnal and libidinous, some cannot bear to see delicate and refined feelings ascribed to men in low conditions of society, because their vanity and self-love tell them that these belong only to themselves and men like themselves in dress, station, and way of life: others are disgusted with the naked language of some of the most interesting passions of men, because either it is indelicate, or gross, or [vu]lgar, as many fine ladies could not bear certain expressions in *The [Mad] Mother and the Thorn*, and, as in the instance of Adam Smith, who [are] told, could not endure the *Ballad of Clym of the Clough*, because the [au]thor had not written like a gentleman;...

(*Letters*, “To John Wilson” 51)

By 1802 at the latest, Wordsworth evidently came to recognize that passion was not the cardinal constitutive element of good poetry. Rather, a good poem requires a combination of passion and knowledge:

Poetry is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge; it is the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all Science. The Poet binds together by passion and knowledge the vast empire of human society, as it is spread over the whole earth, and over all time.

(*The Oxford Authors*, 606)

W. J. B. Owen points out that Wordsworth’s emphasis on the role of science here reflects his reaction to the claims that Humphry Davy made on behalf of science,

particularly to his lecture given at the Royal Institution on 21 January 1802. (“Commentary” in *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, Vol. I, 181) Wordsworth’s phrase, the conjugation of ‘passion and knowledge,’ is deliberately made ambiguous at this stage. Seeing the time gap of three years between the composition of the “1802 Preface” and that of Book VII of the *1805 Prelude*, it can be safely asserted that this second preamble to *The Prelude*, Book VII was not written thoroughly immersed in the mood of assimilation to the cultural primitivism. In the meantime, Blair’s emotional definition of poetry is dwindling in Wordsworth’s mind. Within the context of his swaying stance toward the definition of imagination, the poetico-cultural transference is thus forcibly adjusted toward the scientific association theory.

In the “1802 Preface” (1802), Wordsworth’s shift in the cultural transference is not so conspicuous yet, so far as the parallel between poetry and science is given in a more explicit, but logically confusing, emphasis on pleasure. Wordsworth as one of the Poets declares that ‘[w]e have no sympathy but what is propagated by pleasure.’

Poetry is the most philosophic of all writing: it is so: its object is truth, not individual and local, but general, and operative; nor standing upon external testimony, which gives strength and divinity to the tribunal to which it appeals, and receives them from the same tribunal. Poetry is the image of man and nature. The obstacles which stand in the way of fidelity of the Biographer and Historian, and of their consequent utility, are incalculably greater than those which are to be encountered by the Poet who has an adequate notion of the dignity of his art. The Poet writes under one restriction only, namely, that of the necessity of giving immediate pleasure to a human Being possessed of that information which may be expected from him, not as a lawyer, a physician, a mariner, an astronomer or a natural philosopher, but as a Man. Except this one restriction, there is no object standing between the Poet and the image of things; between this, and the Biographer and Historian there are a thousand.

(*The Oxford Authors* 605)

On the surface level, this statement sounds like a warning to poets, saying that physical science is not yet suitable and matured material for good poetry. Behind this

almost irrelevant emphasis on Poetical Enthusiasm, as Owen suggests, an echo from John Dennis, one of the representative primitivists, may be perceptible : ‘It would be no hard matter to prove, that most of our Thoughts, are naturally attended with some sort, and some degree of Passion. And ’tis the Expression of this Passion, which gives us so much Pleasure.’ (“Commentary: Preface” *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth* 170). Meanwhile, in Book VII, Wordsworth did succeed in presenting city life as ‘the absolute presence of reality’ (l.249) epitomized in St. Bartholomew Fair. In the clamorous scene, the narrator deplures, saying ‘[t]he Whole creative powers of man asleep!’ (l.654)

All freaks of nature, all Promethean thoughts  
Of man – his dullness, madness, and their feats—  
All jumbled up together up to make up  
This parliament of monsters. Tents and booths  
Meanwhile, as if the whole were one vast mill,  
Are vomiting, receiving, on all sides,  
Men, women, three-years’ children, babes in arms.  
(Book VII 688–694)

In 1802, Wordsworth dares to place the subjective truth of the human soul above the objective truth, even if he relied much on Hartleyan concept of association which retains much of Newton’s science of mechanics. It is partly because he can still believe that the chain association of passion–thought–pleasure enables the different realms of human activities simultaneously working, that is, poetry and science, to commingle with each other.

In 1805, however, especially in Book VII, Wordsworth proceeds further to exhort his fellow poets to acquire knowledge of science. This exhortation becomes meaningful at the critical moment when creative powers ban the power of passion from tingeing the expression with itself. In such an intensified moment, poetry often lies in torpor and his text corrupts itself. It is because, as Geoffrey H. Hartman cleverly suggests,

‘[p]erhaps Wordsworth never did emerge to an assured sense of self or a decisive poetry.’ (*Wordsworth’s Poetry 1787–1814* xvii) When he states in 1802 that only the poet can bind together ‘by passion and knowledge the vast empire of human society,’ Wordsworth, however, was well aware of the significance of objective description congenial to the scientific knowledge. In the powerful images of Book VII, in the list of the gross realities observed by the poet-narrator, the process of poetico-cultural transference is seen underway as an implicit criticism of the prevalent way of living in the City, even though Wordsworth’s basic sympathy for the people is still unwavering. The shift of emphasis from emotional to objective description in the framework of poetico-cultural transference is too subtle to be perceptible at this stage, though.

Although the mode of poetico-cultural transference in Wordsworth varies with time sequence, it also entails several stages of his maturing as a poet. At the same time, it is entwined with and accelerated by other socio-cultural determinants of the age, including the political unconsciousness. (See the detailed discussion in Chapter 4.) One conspicuous indicator to measure the proceedings of his political unconsciousness is found in Wordsworth’s conception of the relationship of music and poetry. Here the influence of Blair is discernible still. Embedded deep in the cultural context of the eighteenth-century Scottish literati, Blair insisted that poetry and music ‘have their foundation in the nature of man.’ (Blair 512) Behind this statement there lay Blair’s belief in a vast and long cultural heritage of oral literature descending from the Scottish bards, among whom the image of legendary Ossian was outstanding. (As for the detailed discussion on Wordsworth’s acceptance of *Ossian Poems*, see Chapter 9.) The importance of Blair’s argument lies in his egalitarian view of the ‘nature’ set within the human heart. Blair declares that ‘[m]an is both a poet and musician.’ (ibid. 513) If poetry and music are regarded as common denominators of human kind, everybody can be a poet. But Blair’s keen sense of history and special reverence toward the poet would not admit such an easy equation. He says: ‘when the progress of society brought on a separation of the different arts and professions of civil life, it led

also by degrees to a separation of the different literary provinces from each other.’ (ibid. 517) Blair emphasized that poetry should comprehend ‘the whole burst of the human mind; the whole exertion of its imaginative faculties,’ adding ‘[i]t spoke then the language of passion, and no other; for to passion it owed its birth.’ (Blair 518) No man can be a poet, unless supported by some elevated passion. Although poetry is in congruity with various movements of the mind, more emphasis is placed on the heart than on the mind here. Accordingly, what a potential poet needs to have will be ‘the ardent conceptions of admiration or resentment, of sorrow or friendship.’ (ibid. 518) ‘Under the influence of any strong emotion, objects do not appear to the poet-narrator as they really are, but as passion makes him see them.’ (ibid. 513)

Blair’s aesthetics, however, failed to answer the bewildering question on a truth of oneself which haunted Wordsworth throughout his life. Knowing his relation to nature is unpredictable, especially when he was in search of the words to write of ‘things silently gone out of the mind and things violently destroyed,’ (“1802 Preface,” *The Oxford Authors* 606), Wordsworth ‘adopts the stance of surmise which points to liberty and expansiveness of spirit’ (Hartman 9); namely, the stance of detachments. Actually he was overwhelmed by ‘the sorrow of the passion’ (Book VII 434) when he was in the chaotic situation which was caused by the overflowing crowd on the streets of London. At that decisive moment, Wordsworth the poet-narrator came to believe in the possibility of combining passion and knowledge on the basis of the association theory. A scientific attitude of detachment enables him to see ‘the parts/As parts, but with a feeling of the whole.’

But though the picture weary out the eye,  
By nature an unmanageable sight,  
It is not wholly so to him who looks  
In steadiness, who hath among least things  
An under-sense of greatest—sees the parts  
As parts, but with a feeling of the whole.

(VII 707–712)



Needless to say, science deals with substance as object, for it purports to observe and describe substance's form and movement by detaching itself from them. Usually, what a poet concerns is how the object is felt and how to convey the feeling with his exquisite expression rather than how to analyze the data obtained by observation. Whether the object is substantive or not does not count so much for the expressionist poet, to whom the subject always holds priority over the object. An eccentricity of Wordsworth's idea of imagination is derived from his arbitrary enlargement of Blair's idea of poetry by intermingling it with that of Hartley. Ironically, it was Blair who had prepared the way for Wordsworth to realize the importance of understanding 'the matter' objectively. Wordsworth's personal way of feeling the matter as something unsubstantial does not always validate the word expressed in poetry, especially in such a crucial passage of Book VII of *The Prelude*; [t]he matter detains me now.' (488) Accordingly, it became indispensable for Wordsworth to determine which to choose, an extensive application of Blair's idea or another kind of poetic discourse, when he tried to decipher a much more complicated social situation and to depict it in Book VII. The complexity puts language in 'the same perpetual flow/Of trivial objects, melted and reduced/To one identity by differences/That have no law, no meaning, and no end.' (VII 701-4)

On the other hand, in Book VII the poet is confronted with several fundamental questions. When benumbed by emotional disturbance, what kind of poetry can the poet write? When the poet feels a strong emotion arising in response to the power of the people as he did it on the streets in London, can he give a congruous poetic expression relevant to those fragmented, mobilized and materialized crowd? On the condition that he accepts the crowd as standing for 'the objects' or 'things inanimate,' in terms of Blair, he cannot but be obfuscated. Thus, what the poet is obliged to achieve in Book

VII surpasses the limits Blair's definition of poetry as passion can cope with. In a psychic effect, his mind becomes self-divided. What are present before his eyes as an overdeterminate clarity of presence are the seeds of meaning. Accordingly, in a bewildered state of self-annihilation, what Wordsworth explores in Book VII is the pursuit of a language beyond passion. (As for Wordsworth's ideas on language, see Chapter 7.) By the aid of the general Doctrine of Association, it (his pursuit) was precariously attained.

Was human life perfect, our Happiness in it would be properly represented by the accurate Knowledge of Things, which a truly philosophical Language would give us. And if we suppose a number of Persons thus making a Progress in pure unmixed Happiness, and capable both of expressing their own Feelings, and of understanding those of others, by means of a perfect and adequate Language, they might be like new Senses and Powers of Perception to each other, and both give to and receive from each other Happiness indefinitely.

(Hartley 320)

What is evolved in Book VII is the fragmented description of the city and the vibration of its mobilized crowd who act like characters in a drama, while the isolated poet-narrator is thrown into the invisible involute movement of poetico-cultural transference. In other words, the surmised equation of the words and the things are severed in this involute movement, so that even a philosophical discourse, 'a perfect and adequate Language,' is obliged to change its quality. It cannot be an impassioned expression of feelings any more. It should be the tools to get inherent in scientific knowledge as 'new Senses and Powers of Perception.' But this process of transference is reciprocal, because both expression and perception 'give to and receive from each other.' Consequently, its meanings cannot but be swaying between subject and object, while generating new implications. Since a perfect and adequate Language stands on an unstable premise, the Association theory approves of the imperfection of Language. Herein lies Wordsworth's eccentricity, for he follows the regulations of Hartley's theory, which drive the poet to discover the autonomy of his imagination in the end.

Once the reciprocal process intrinsic to Language is applied to represent the movement of poetico-cultural transference, the shift of emphasis from emotion to understanding is dynamically seen projected in the metaphor of the vast empire of human society.

In a sense, Wordsworth successfully engrafted the context of the nature discourse embedded in the Blair's passion discourse into the involute movement of his poetico-cultural transference. The key word which denotes his personalized conjugation is 'nature.' He employs the word 'nature' in Book XII of *1805 Prelude*, but here its connotation is evidently under the influence of 'cultural' primitivism, though he insists that an external 'nature' should be equated with the internal 'nature' working within man's heart. Apparently, it follows Blair's definition of the simplicity of nature.

The elemental and uniform – and, therefore, the normal – aspects of human nature and products are to be found not only in 'chronological,' but in 'cultural' primitives, including people dwelling in civilized nations but insulated by caste or rural habitat from the artifice and complications of culture. In this aesthetic application, this presumption was one reason for the vogue in the eighteenth century of poets who were either peasants or proletarians...

(M. H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp*, 105)

Mary Collier, the Poetical Washerwoman, Henry Jones the Poetical Shoemaker, and Robert Burns the Poetical Plowboy could be counted among 'poets who were either peasants or proletarians,' (ibid.) but Wordsworth himself belongs to a different caste from theirs.

Unlike Blair, Wordsworth could not always resort to this cardinal standard, to the sentimentalized nature. For one thing, his usage of the word 'nature' is more complex than Blair's. It is based on 'a triple and primitive connotation' of the word: '[n]ature is the common denominator of human nature.' (M. H. Abrams 105) If nature should be equated with human nature, the proposition is liable to lead to a false conclusion by a logic of syllogism that simplicity (an elemental simplicity of thought and

feeling) is a part of human nature. In other words, simplicity is here regarded as an integral part of human culture as well. Wordsworth's nature discourse thus ought to carry the implication of cultural simplicity. In truth, 'Mr. Wordsworth's turn for SIMPLICITY' (*Biographia Literaria* 158), as Coleridge feared, invites some misreading of his literary theory among his posterity, as is quoted by Matthew Arnold as '[a.] false and malicious criticism.' (*Culture and Anarchy and other writings*, 27)

Though the idea of syllogism goes back to Aristotle, it was made much use of in the early eighteenth century, especially when it was purported to explain the static nature of Newtonian universe. The association theory itself is basically dependent on syllogism. Hartley borrowed Newton's theory to propose that repeated vibrations deposit minute vibrations in an object. When this scientific model is applied to mental experience, the logic of syllogism would have accounted for the mechanism of impressions occurring in frequent or intense conjunction with one another. Ultimately it embodies an integral unity which can subsume complex ideas.

In Wordsworth, on the other hand, Hartley's model of associated sensations paradoxically helps the nature discourse applicable enough to demonstrate the nature of involute movement in Book VII of *1805 Prelude*. The following explication of 'a parallel set of vibrations' is ingeniously suggestive of the presence of a parallel set of vibrations existing between the crowd as agglomerated particles and the poetic sensibility:

Sensation A is associated with sensation B, forming the complex idea (A\*B) with a parallel set of vibrations. If the association (A\*B) is strong enough, a subsequent sensation A will, through the action of the deposited trace vibrations (A\*B), raise the associated sensation B, even though the object or quality that originally produced B is absent.

(*Encyclopedia of Romanticism*, 12)

If sensation A is set to stand for the sensibility of the poet-narrator, sensation B stands for that of the crowd on the street, the deposited (A\*B) can trace vibrations in

‘one vast mill,’ even if the associated sensations B is absent in the poet–narrator. In Wordsworth’s own words, the ability to discern ‘[a]n under–sense of greatest’ relies ‘[o]n sundry and most widely different modes/Of education.’ (VII 714–5) Figuratively speaking, when with passion (sensation A) the rational analysis of the confused sense of ‘things that are, are not’ (VII 642) (sensation B) is combined, the deposited trace vibrations (A\*B) will result in the poetry, even if associated sensation B in the reader is absent. Similarly, when things are fragmented into particles and then forcefully bound up together, they will make up another conglomeration in the involute movement.

The vibrations emerging from this new complex gets the narrator to feel another sensation of ‘one identity,’ or ‘the same perpetual flow/Of trivial objects, melted and reduced/To one identity by differences,’ (VII 701–3) although the readers’ responses are not expected. In terms of association, ‘the same perpetual flow’ in ‘one vast mill’ brings out the sense of ‘one identity,’ although the object or quality which was original sensation B of the crowd or the mob is dwindling. The reasoning in reverse is possible, when that invisible quality B is designated as the imaginative power. It is because it can not exist apart from ‘an under–sense of greatest,’ nor from ‘gross realities,/The incarnation of the spirits that moved/amid the poet’s beauteous world’ (VII 508–510) in the logic of association.

It is through ‘most widely different modes/Of education’ (VII 714–5) that such a subtle transference among contiguous differences can be expressed. In Wordsworth, ‘an unmanageable sight’ (VII 708) lurking in these different modes can not be distinguished as a coherent entity ‘[b]y nature’ (VII 708), and it can be perceived by ‘[a]n under–sense of greatest’ (VII 711), the subconscious imagination in association, which ‘sees the parts/As parts, but with a feeling of the whole.’ (VII 711–2) He claims this imaginative power can be acquired by ‘sundry and most widely different modes/Of education.’ (VII 714–5) In this line of argument, the processes of poetico–cultural transference should be set in different modes simultaneously, among which the mode of education is presupposed. When Wordsworth refers to ‘a feeling of the whole,’ it

justly signifies not only 'comprehensiveness and memory' (VII 717) of the educated but also those of the crowd on the streets.

As regards the notion of 'comprehensiveness,' Hartley steps forward to provide us a literary model, asserting, 'Language is not only a Type of these associated Combinations, but one Part of the Thing typified.' (Hartley 320) There can be no absolute, perfect, ideal Language, Hartley says, for 'all our Languages must, from the Difference of our Associations, convey Falsehood as well as Truth.' (ibid.) Herein lies a reason for Wordsworth's reluctance to adopt the nature discourse as a cardinal principle in his pursuit of genuine language. On the other hand, since Hartley equates 'a perfect and adequate language' (6) not only to the philosophical language but also to poetry, Wordsworth's belief in '[t]he changeful language' still subsists throughout, because 'he like Hartley saw in language a millenarian possibility.' (Jonathan Wordsworth, *The Borders of Vision*, 129) Jonathan Wordsworth points out, '[a]rt cannot *be* life, but life might still have its acknowledged voice—a language that has the special appropriateness, and thus the permanence.' (ibid. 128) In terms of Hartley, though a human life is a mixture of happiness and misery, quite a few persons can make 'a progress in pure unmixed happiness' by 'expressing their own feelings, and understanding those of others' (Hartley ibid.) through 'a perfect and adequate language.' Language (=poetry) is indispensable to human life.

For Wordsworth the pursuit of a perfect and adequate poetry is the paramount duty the poet has to fulfill. It does not and cannot disregard the poetical conventions. In 1802 "Preface" to *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth succeeded in explicating why he wrote poems in a ballad form. He says that it is characterized by a strong combination of imagination and the whole way of life of the people. He explains in a strong argumentative way why the "Tale of Goody Blake and Harry Gill," which he thinks 'one of the rudest poems of this collection,' is to be told in metre. First he emphasizes that the important role the story plays is to draw readers' attention to the matter of truth. Then he explains why a poetic rendering of the story is more likely to evoke the

power of human imagination, which even produces miraculous, incredible changes in physical nature.

And I have the satisfaction of knowing that it has been communicated to many hundreds of people who would never have heard of it, had it not been narrated in a Ballad, and in a more impressive metre than is usual in Ballads.

(*The Oxford Authors* 611-2)

Accordingly, if once set in the context of Hartley's association theory, the poetic transaction of the fact in ballad and the imagination would become more understandable. Combined with special language metre, in the deposit [A\*B], ballad, the fact as the matter [A] could lead the reader to a process of happiness, even when the reader's appropriate imagination [B] is absent. Hartley's model suggests that an aesthetic fiction created by the poet has the power to evoke real sensations in the reader.

In the "Essay, Supplementary to the Preface" (1815), however, the mechanism of this simple transaction changes its focus from Hartley to cultural context, for, in addition to language, the concept of 'taste' is introduced. Wordsworth's definition of 'taste' here becomes far more complex notion than the one he used as referring to a part of culture. His premise in 1815 is that poetry should 'be comprehended *as a study*.' (*The Prose Works of William Wordsworth* III 62) He maintains that even a natural sensibility can be 'tutored into correctness without losing anything of its quickness.' (ibid. 66) In the Regency period of early 1800s, Wordsworth was still endeavouring to find a middle ground between Taste and Imagination, but, in 1815 "Preface," the fulcrum itself has become indefinite. The word 'Imagination' comes to mean more concrete substance which can 'meet the demands of the faculty which is perhaps the noblest of our nature,' whereas the word 'Taste' is coerced to stretch its meaning from *passive* to *active*, so as to signify something 'paramount among the faculties conversant with the fine art.' (ibid. 81) However subtle it may appear, during

1807 and 1815, the change of Wordsworth's notion on Nature's language has evidently been underway in the involute movement of poetico-cultural transference, while his idea of imagination is seen prodding on its necessitarian course toward a millennium.

#### NOTES:

(1) 'It is an interesting possibility that Coleridge may have derived some of his terms for specifying the imagination from the associationists he opposed. Hume, e.g., had said that ideas are impenetrable, but that impressions and passions, "like colours, may be blended ... perfectly together."' (*Treatise*, 366; cf. Gerard, *Essay on Taste*, London, 1759, p.171)

(2) 'The Fancy is indeed not other than a mode of Memory emancipated from the order of time and space; and blended with, and modified by the empirical phenomenon of the will, which we express by the word CHOICE. But equally, with the ordinary memory it must receive all its materials ready made from the law of association.' (*Biographia Literaria*, James Engell and W.Jackson Bate eds. Princeton University Press, I Chapt.13, p.305)

(3) 'Nature is the common denominator of human nature; it is most reliably exhibited among men living "according to nature" (that is to say, in a culturally simple, and especially a rural environment); and it consists primarily in an elemental simplicity of thought and feeling and a spontaneous and "unartificial" mode of expressing feeling in words.' (M. H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp*, Oxford University Press, 1971, p.105)

(4) According to Wu, it was Coleridge who borrowed the second volume of Hugh Blair, *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* from the Central Library of Bristol. The volume contains the famous Lecture XXXVIII, 'in which Blair makes a number of statements that had a strong influence on the author of the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*.' (Duncan Wu, *Wordsworth's Reading 1770-1799*, Cambridge University Press, 1993, p.182)

(5) Theodore L. Huguelet suggests that Wordsworth had borrowed or absorbed the essentials of Hartley's associationism in *Prelude* to explain some of 'the primary laws of our nature: chiefly, as far as regards the manner in which we associate ideas in a state of excitement.' ("Introduction," *Observations on Man*, Facsimile Reproduction, p.xvii)

(6) 'Was human Life perfect, our Happiness in it would be properly represented by that accurate Knowledge of Things, which a truly philosophical Language would give us.' (Hartley 320)



## Chapter 2

### Wordsworth and the Word Culture

( 1 )

Admittedly, during the Romantic period, the societies in Britain witnessed the political and economic transition. But few might refer to the fact that they saw an overall social, cultural change as well.<sup>(1)</sup> During this transitional period, Wordsworth wrote the *1805 Prelude*. Accordingly, his poetico-cultural transference could not enjoy the privilege of those who witnessed this great structural upheaval as a by-stander; that is, his transference reflects the upheaval. He represented the cultural situation in terms of his own personal narrative, so that his own personal experiences were fused with his narrative.

The *1805 Prelude* is written in a poetical rather than in a prosaic form. He recognised in 'Preface' to *Lyrical Ballads* (1800) that there should be 'no essential difference between the language of prose and metrical composition.' Accordingly, it is without question that Wordsworth did so with his self-consciousness as a poet. If he had not done so, he could not have dealt with his 'romantic obsession with fractured, disjointed, and disruptive temporalities.' (Makdisi 9) His choice allowed him to unify two areas; one of facts and of imagination.

Curiously enough, it is in Book XII of *1805 Prelude* that Wordsworth uses the term 'culture' for the first time. Before it, he never referred to the term. Then he seems to try to disconnect the contemporary arbitrary correspondence between the signifier and the signified of the word "culture," though he recognizes a fissure inherent in the connotations of that word, and represents it in a symbolic image of 'a blue chasm.' (*1805 Prelude* XIII 56) What Wordsworth aimed at is the poetic representation of contradictory social/cultural transformation he observed in this

particular period. It leads the poet Wordsworth to transcend the limits of mimesis by the aid of Association theory which can ‘create/A like existence.’(XIII 95) Actually, the British Associationism goes back to Aristotelian concept of mimesis, though its most systematic treatment was proposed by David Hartley (1705–59). It started from the Lockean model of the mind. To some degree, it worked as a sort of metafiction attached to Wordsworth’s poetry, as is evidently demonstrated in Book VII of *1805 Prelude*. (See the discussion of the previous Chapter.) Hartley’s model of Associationism is closer to Coleridge’s conception of fancy, rather than of imagination. Though associational concepts can explain most characteristics of romantic obsession, but Wordsworth was not satisfied with them. They are too much occupied with the materiality, focusing on ‘all the objects of the universe.’(XIII 92) Book XIII of *1805 Prelude* concludes that the exclusive engagement with that special transaction between the fact and the perception cannot be expressed without recourse to ‘absolute strength/And clearest insights, amplitude of mind/And reason in her most exalted mood.’(XIII 168–170) It is this power of the imagination, ‘exalted by an underpresence,/The sense of God’(XIII 71–2), Wordsworth believes, that the conjunction of the soul and the imagination creates poetry.

To the contrary, in Book VII of the *1805 Prelude*, he has already perceived ‘[a]n under-sense of greatest’(VII 711) ‘among the least things.’(VII 710) The poetico-cultural transference in Wordsworth, accordingly, has to tackle with different kinds of perception, i.e., ‘an under-sense’ of ‘a feeling of the whole’ and ‘an underpresence’ ‘that feeds upon infinity.’(XIII 70) Both substantives possess the prefix ‘under-.’ Although they are essentially antithetical, in this context they are supposed to comprise the possible contiguity of the companionship and of the sublime. In that special transaction, ‘all the objects of the universe’ and ‘the image of a mighty mind’ are unstably joined by force, i.e., by the prefix ‘under-,’ in that precarious conjunction. Wordsworth seems to believe that the special cultural activity of ‘acting, thinking, speaking man’(VII 605) is performed in that precarious area. Thus ,‘[a]n

undistinguishable world to men' enables the poet to represent both the object and the image in, '[t]he changeful language.' (VII 727) Our study of poetico-cultural transference is inevitably oriented to clarify these contradictory processes, on the assumption of the partiality of meaning, because in linguistics of his age, , 'Language is not only a Type of these associated Combinations, but one Part of the Thing typified.' (Hartley *Observations on Man* 320)

The question at issue is to what extent the phases of his poetico-cultural transference reflect his contemporary reading. The flow of a poetico-cultural transference in Wordsworth, even though it is particularly self-centred, has something to do with his peculiar selective attitude toward a diverse and heterogeneous series of cultural engagements which conform to the process of modernization. His poetical thoughts are not distinctly separate from his social and political stances, though striving to construct a symbolical fantasy in the end. This chapter is to pursue how his poetico-cultural transference is accomplished by keeping an eye on the subtle changes in the Wordsworth's use of the word, 'culture.'

Wordsworth's use of the word, 'culture,' implicates his own cultural identity, while its connotation implicates its close relationship with the multitudinous political and economic facets of modernization.<sup>(2)</sup> This relationship makes it difficult to regard the word, 'culture,' as signifying a part of, 'underpresence.' (1805 *Prelude* XIII 71) Undoubtedly the connotations of 'culture' in Wordsworth are no more different from our notion of culture than those of his 'underpresence' are from the unconscious. Actually the word sometimes connotes the political un-consciousness of the people.<sup>(3)</sup> His peculiar divergence or distortion in the use of 'culture' is not simply due to the historical fact that Wordsworth is almost half a century senior to Matthew Arnold (1822-88) nor to the fact that in his days the achievements of Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) were not known.

Born in the gentry of his age, no wonder Wordsworth was educated to regard the word *culture* in connection with *taste* which mostly signifies manner and learning

requisite to the members of his class. According to his republican view, nevertheless, it is regrettable that the grace of this culture denoting taste is propagated only to those who have been brought up ‘within the very light and air/Of elegances that are made by man,’ (1805 *Prelude* XII 191–2) as well as to those who have acquired ‘Language purified/By manners thoughtful and elaborate.’ (1805 *Prelude* XII 189–190)

When thus linked with the concept of taste, the word ‘culture’(=taste) naturally comes to connote ‘excellence’ as OED defines it. (4) It features the self-restrictive class consciousness of ruling class, and is congenial to the framework concept of *The Excursion*, which sets the boundary of its reading public by taking the measure of how much a person acquires ‘culture(=taste).’ Since ‘humanized society’ exists only among ‘Albion’s noble Race in freedom born’ (*The Excursion* Book IX 393), the number of those who can enjoy the privilege of ‘culture’ is to be limited.

Change wide, and deep, and silently performed  
This Land shall witness; and as days roll on,  
Earth’s universal frame shall feel the effect;  
Even till the smallest habitable rock,  
Beaten by lonely billows, hear the songs  
Of humanized society; and bloom  
With civil arts, that shall breathe forth their fragrance,  
A grateful tribute to all-ruling Heaven.  
From culture, unexclusively bestowed  
On Albion’s noble Race in freedom born,  
Expect these mighty issues:  
(*The Excursion* IX 384–394)

Furthermore, the implicit linkage of culture with imperialism is suggested in the honorable mission of those who are educated in this ‘happy Island where ye think and act.’(IX 412) Now that ‘ye/Are at its centre, British Lawgivers,’(IX 399), the Sage admonishes those chosen few;

Now, when destruction is a prime pursuit,

Show to the wretched nations for what end  
The powers of civil polity were given.  
(413-5)

Although Wordsworth's vague awareness of the interrelation of culture and imagination is fairly perceived in the metaphor of usurpation in *The Prelude*, it is in *The Excursion* that his distinctively personalised use of the words 'culture' and 'cultured' became more conspicuous. *The Excursion* was composed during the Regency and published in 1814 as a sort of recapitulation of the effects of French Revolution '[o]n Man, on Nature, and on Human Life, /Musing in solitude' ("Preface to the Edition of 1814," *The Excursion* 1) at large. While the concept of culture carries an undertone of superiority within the framework of *The Excursion*, his egalitarian ideal is being warped toward that of elitism and imperialism. It is a peculiar mode of cultural transference in Wordsworth.

As Wordsworth's concept of 'an under-presence' (*1805 Prelude* XIII 71) is indefinite, so is 'culture.' Both of them can connote something that evokes an inner vastness, the power of imagination within the individual mind. But in *The Prelude*, 'under-presence' is set relevant to, though vaguely, the pious feeling evinced among the ordinary people, '[t]he sense of God, or whatsoe'er is dim/or vast in its own being.' (*1805 Prelude* XIII 71-3). In *The Excursion*, however, an uncertain kinship between 'under-presence' and 'culture' no more exists, and the power of 'culture' is seen transferred to the monopoly of those who are exclusively chosen or hereditarily endowed. From 1809 to 1814, during which *The Excursion* was being completed, the millennium vision of the Radical Years (which overtly existed among the British radicals, at least till the publication of *Lyrical Ballads*) had been fading into a fantasy. The advent of Napoleon as the despotic commander with not only military but also political power brought a fissure to this fantasy world. Wordsworth's usage of 'culture' implies indefiniteness that his poetico-cultural transference wavered between the sympathy with the people and the admiration for the dictator.

When Wordsworth took the sympathetic attitude toward the people under the repression, the word 'culture' ceased to signify Blair's notion of taste. Hugh Blair in *Belles Lettres* (1783) defined taste as 'the power of receiving pleasure from the beauties of nature and of art.' He declares it to be 'a faculty common in some degree to all men.' (Blair 10 & 11) This is a deviation from the literary convention of the 18th century. According to Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723-92), an accurate taste in poetry and in all the other arts is an acquired talent.<sup>(5)</sup> The idea that culture is not innate and that a true understanding of culture is acquired only by effort and by exposures to the results of the efforts of previous generations is to be later affirmed by Victorian moralists, especially Matthew Arnold in his *Culture and Anarchy*. (1869) Consequently, most readers who are destitute of such a special training are to be carefully excluded from this sophisticated writer/reader communication. This situation seemed intolerable to the young radical Wordsworth. Throughout his poetic career, Wordsworth continued to hold the Republican belief, which is supported by Hartleyan association theory on the basis of 'the Generality of Mankind, learned and unlearned, philosophical and vulgar, in all Ages.' (Hartley, *Observations on Man* 143) Admitting the significance of the associated 'compound Tastes,' (Hartley 322) Hartley would not admit culture (of knowledge and excellence) as an attribute of few privileged people. In the social and cultural context of *The Excursion*, however, these rules and restrictions congenial to taste are seen in the process of being disintegrated and reorganised.

Curiously, it is only in Book XII of *1805 Prelude* among all the texts of Wordsworth that the term 'culture' made its first appearance. It is interesting to know that Book XII is mainly a discursive argument on love and human nature; moreover, it is set in an ambiguous position as if it were a commentary or a continuation of Book XI, which contains two famous scenes of 'Spots of Time.' In the larger context of culture of modernity which depends much on an apparently smooth and irrepressible flow of world-time, its appearance itself seems rather irrelevant.

[T]he spot of time can only be defined against the very modernization...must be understood dialectically, not as a reaction but rather as a mutual process of constitution through which both the inside and the outside of the spot of time emerge in relationship to each other neither privileged with ontological priority.  
(Makdisi 16)

Moreover, the 'culture' discourse in Book XII accompanies a sideway reference to Adam Smith (1723–90), the inaugurator of the modern Economics as the parameter of modernization: 'The utter hollowness of what we name/The wealth of nations.' (XII 79–80). In this denigrated allusion to *Wealth of Nations*(1776) by Adam Smith, the narrator insinuates his emotional affiliation for the people who, he thinks, do possess deep innate souls, 'under-presence.' His tone of censure against the superficiality of the cultured class sounds like a variation of Wordsworth's criticism against the educated in his letter to John Wilson dated 7 June, 1802. Wordsworth insists that some of the men of taste 'cannot bear to see delicate and refined feelings ascribed to men in low conditions of society, because their vanity and self-love tell them that these belong only to themselves and men like themselves in dress, station, and way of life.' (*Letters of William Wordsworth*, 51) In the same Book XII, the narrator himself confirms his sympathy for the people, proclaiming 'I love a public road.' (XII 145)

The lonely roads  
Were schools to me in which I daily read  
With most delights the passions of mankind  
There saw into the depth of human souls—  
(XII 163–5)

The passage echoes his comradeship to the people, which was both powerfully and beautifully expressed in the discharged soldier episode in Book IV of *The Prelude* (see Chapter 4). In a sense, the 'culture' discourse in Book XII is an indictment against the intellectual's betrayal of the people from the Republican point of view. It is full of the remorseful feelings toward those who presume themselves to be the only possessor

of 'delicate and refined feelings.' In the same letter addressed to John Wilson, Wordsworth refers to Adam Smith as a man of prejudice, 'who, we [are] told, could not endure the Ballad of Clym of the Clough, because the [au]thor had not written like a gentleman.' (ibid.)

Furthermore, Wordsworth's tone of censure resonates with his political belief as is shown in the famous letter of December 4, 1821, which was addressed to his radical friend James Losh (1763–1833). Against Losh's accusation that he had deserted the political principles they had shared in youth, Wordsworth vehemently retorts stressing his sympathetic and unwavering stance toward the oppressed nations. Wordsworth regards himself to have 'stuck to Principles.' (*Letters of William Wordsworth*, 215) (6) Perhaps, his words to his old friend could be accepted at face value, if we take account of his long friendship with Losh. (7)

No wonder that the gentleman narrator in Book XII of *The Prelude* is depicted as a young master who is familiar with the contemporary arguments either in politics or in economics of his age. Like young Wordsworth, he was conversant with 'the science of government.' ("A letter to the Bishop of Llandaff," *The Prose Works*, I 48) Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that, even though young and radical he was, Wordsworth in 1792 was already well aware of 'the consequence of such fatal delusion' (ibid.) that the political leaders of the Revolution wrongly tried to push forward. His 1800 "Preface" to *Lyrical ballads* already shows his acute sense of the increasing division of labour emerging apparent in the modernizing economies and its malicious effects on sensitivity.

[A] multitude of causes unknown to former times are now acting with a combined force to blunt the discriminating powers of the mind, and unfitting it for all voluntary exertion to reduce it to a state of almost savage torpor.

(*The Prose Works of William Wordsworth* I, 128)

Nevertheless, he insists that 'the feeling therein developed gives importance to the action and situation and not the action and situation to the feeling.' (ibid.) Accordingly,



the city dwellers who are overwhelmed by ‘gross and violent stimulants’ should break down the distinctions between work and leisure by way of an energized and productive reinvention of pleasure, ex. Literature and art. The emotional undertone of this paradoxical self-reference is implied in such expressions as ‘the utter hollowness’ (XII 79) or ‘the crook of eloquence,’ (VII 563) used in criticizing Adam Smith’s economics. A similar satirical tone can be perceived, when Wordsworth uses the phrases such as ‘science of government’ and ‘the crook of eloquent.’ (VII 563) These phrases allude to the superficiality of theatrical preacher.

Meanwhile the Evangelists, Isaiah, Job,  
 Moses, and he who penned, the other day,  
*The Death of Abel*, Shakespeare, Doctor Young,  
 And Ossian (doubt not, ‘tis the naked truth)  
 Summoned from streamy Morven—each and all  
 Must in their turn lend ornament and flowers  
 To entwine the crook of eloquence  
 (VII 557–563)

The contradictory viewpoints are seen entangled in Wordsworth’s ‘culture’ discourse. Firstly, this theatrical preacher, ‘a comely bachelor,’ (VII 547) is a caricature of Cowper’s character. (*Task* II 430–54) Secondly, the names referred to in this passage represent the multiple viewpoints co-existing in the synthesized mind of the narrator. The legendary bard Ossian concerns more with the implicit ‘culture’ of the people handed down through oral transmission, while Doctor Young, Thomas Young (1773–1829), refers to the explicit culture of the educated.<sup>(8)</sup> Great Shakespeare stands in the middle, although the names this fashionable preacher actually referred to are those of the authors of the most popular works in the late 18th century.<sup>(9)</sup> However contradictory his speech may sound, because of his emotional eloquence, the preacher is depicted as someone who does possess the power to drive the people according to the Will of God, in terms of Hartleyan Free-Will. Although Religion is ‘the Regulations of our Associations and Actions according to the Will of

God,' says Hartley, Religion 'requires voluntary Powers over our Affections and Actions, or Free-Will in the popular and practical Sense.' (Hartley 53-4) Thus, association in respect of Religion can conjoin the general passions, thoughts, and feelings of men, even in 'the State of Madmen, Idiots, Children, and Brutes.' (ibid. 54) On this premise, the words of theatrical preacher in Book VII precariously bridge over the cultural split between his surface meaning and the content. His speech represents a form of parody, in which the social and cultural distance between the people and the educated is thus shown, momentarily, 'entwined' and nullified.

( 2 )

The culture discourse in Wordsworth carries the fundamental contradictions in it, because it contains what David Simpson calls 'the social-historical situatedness of judgements of taste.' ("Transcendental philosophy", *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism* V 90) As was argued in the previous chapter, young Wordsworth intentionally confounded a synchronical viewpoint on culture and a diachronical one. The former regards 'good taste as an attribute of polite culture, and a force in the dissemination of civility and social discipline,' while the latter accepts the tenet that art and literature are an index of the state of culture itself in different times and places.' (ibid.) However hard the self-conscious narrator tries to keep his stance of an outsider, he inevitably became integrated in the entire system of cultural representation. In the Regency, his stance became synchronous with the culture of the educated of his age. How his standpoint explicitly conforms to the social and historical context of the Age is shown in *The Excursion*, where culture is 'unexclusively bestowed/On Albion's noble Race in freedom born.' But his particularized 'culture' does not have nor recognize its privileged sense of the cultural integrity of Empire, which post-colonialism today is keenly aware of and even tries to demolish. The tone of assertive sovereignty propagated in the Sage's voice is very

close to that of imperialism which definitely asserts the domination and usurpation of the indigenous culture. His voice does not contain any sense of self-indictment nor foretell any alternative to imperialism. It lacks sympathy toward the colonized people.

So long as the keynote of Romanticism is tuned up to 'feelings' rather than from 'reason,' culture structure becomes inevitably indeterminate, vulnerable to the involute flow of transference. In other words, it is in these subtle moments of transference between the factual, historical truth and the imaginary, invisible truth that Wordsworth's effort to search for 'something ever more about to be' (*1805 Prelude* VI 542) resides. The search is carried out on the vehicle of imagination which is always oriented toward the invisible in nature or in the mind of man. But at the height of the social and cultural upheaval, the poet felt, the invisible truth is caught under the usurpation. Wordsworth impressively uses the usurpation metaphor in connection with imagination in Book VI of *the 1805 Prelude*.

Imagination!—lifting up itself  
Before the eye and progress of my song]  
Like an unfathered vapour, here that power,  
In all the might of its endowments, came  
Athwart me. I was lost in a cloud,  
Halted without a struggle to break through,  
And now, recovering to my soul I say  
'I recognize thy glory'. In such strength  
Of usurpation, in such visitings  
Of Awful promise, when the light of sense  
Goes out in flashes that have shewn to us  
The invisible world, doth greatness make abode.  
(*1805 Prelude* VI 525–536)

The image of 'unfathered vapour' suggests the authority and rectitude that come to dominate with greater power and scope. Alan Liu pointed out that this image of usurper is underlined with the apparition of Napoleon.<sup>(10)</sup> Thus, the historical reality and the visionary become one in this poetic passage. If we accept Alan Liu's definition of culture, that '[c]ulture is the process of interpreting, knowing, and believing in

referential truth,'<sup>(11)</sup> in this passage also is disclosed the contradiction in Wordsworth's culture discourse. While denying or discarding the historical facts by means of fantastic figuration, Wordsworth frees his imagination to constitute a literary text. But there also lurks an arbitrary difference between the literary text and its historical context. Culture as the process in terms of Liu ought to comprehend in advance a 'dynamic mass of differences with marked breaks and shaped absences that determines the text by spelling out in advance the shaped *absence* of context – negative yet determinate – that is defamiliarized text.' (Liu 46) Wordsworth in his peculiar poetico-cultural transference must have noticed the possibility of this form of defamiliarization. Text can shape itself in '*absence* of context,' as the parody of theatrical preacher suggests.

Nevertheless, Wordsworth seems skeptical of the dynamic function of culture which is capable of producing a 'defamiliarized' text. For one thing, Wordsworth was so deeply caught in the framework of association theory that he could not have accepted the simple fact that collective thought and language are trans-individual, and that, accordingly, it is imprecise. The theory of association in general posits that '[t]he most general of our Desires and Aversions are factitious; *i.e.* generated by Association.' (Hartley 370) While the importance of the individual and arbitrary becomes more congenial to our modern thinking, the notion of emotive Will, a desire or aversion, which dominates the mechanically regulated universe, seems more congenial to him. Moreover, it presupposes that 'the Substitution of these Words for the Word *Will* may be justified by the common Usage of Language.' (Hartley 371) Whether *Will* is factitious or not depends on the nominal function, 'the common Usage of Language.' The fictitious *Will* is thought to be conveyed by vibration, and through this arbitrary media *ether*, in terms of Hartley, reality reaches truth in vibration; 'A motion and a spirit that impels/All thinking things, all objects of all thought,/And rolls through all things.' ("Tintern Abbey")<sup>(12)</sup> This Hartleyan idea of organic unity of 'All

thinking things, all objects of all thought' lies at the core of the contradiction inherent in Wordsworth's culture discourse as well as in his poetico-cultural transference.

On the other hand, the egalitarian view of the taste was derived from Blair's expressionistic notion. The understanding that all the facts, 'all objects of all thought,' are essentially tinged with something emotional is not so incongruous with the historical context, in which Wordsworth lived. As Matthew Arnold (1822-88), a prominent Victorian moralist, once observed, 'the true key to how much in our Byron, even in our Wordsworth, is this - that they had their source in a great movement of feeling.' (Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy and Other Writings*, 31) The term culture, at least in Wordsworth, is basically tied up with those feelings, as the famous statement 'the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings' (13) in "Preface" to *Lyrical Ballads* indicates. The discrepancy between the factual and the emotional truth is usually left unsolved, but it could be deliberately united together as was shown in the relation of imagination and poetry in Wordsworth. Historically, the inherent contradiction between materiality and spirituality, which excludes the intentional defamilialization of the text in terms of New Historicism, is to be resolved by Arnold, though one-sidedly.

According to Wordsworth, poetry can be expressed simply at that rare moment of 'usurpation' when reason, 'the light of sense,' diminishes in 'flashes.' (VI 534-6) Culture has much to do with the very context in which these fragmented moments flare up. To the poet Wordsworth, poetry and culture are in concurrence with each other in this imaginary context, searching truth on the borders between the visible reality and the invisible greatness. Nevertheless, Wordsworth accepted the concept of "culture" as something deeply embedded in the feelings of the people, which ultimately diversifies itself into 'nonhegemonic cultural' voices in terms of Frederic Jameson (Jameson 86). Wordsworth's personal experience taught him its presence. He lived and learned life in the midst of two Revolutionary commotions, that is, the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution. We can safely assert that the former affected

his inner thought, while the latter gave him a new concept of culture substantially related to the political movement which gradually proceeds toward Imperialism.

Remarkably, the decade of the political commotion of the French Revolution coincided with Wordsworth's most creative period 'the Great Decade' (1797-1806), during which he produced *The Borderers* (1796), *The Ruined Cottage* (1797), which is to be included as a part of *The Recluse*, *The Lyrical Ballads* (1798), *The Two-Part Prelude of 1799*, *Ode: Intimations of Immortality* (1803), *The Five-Book Prelude* (1804), *The Thirteen-Book Prelude* (1805) and "Elegiac Stanzas" (1806). The young poet Wordsworth was inspired by the French Revolution as the historical reality.<sup>(14)</sup>

During the critical period of the Industrial Revolution, a new and important meaning to the word "culture" was formulated in the context of culture of feeling. Unlike the English Revolution of Charles First's time (1649), the French Revolution took a political and practical character. It was motivated by a unique and living power of the people and their culture, the essence of which is feeling. Wordsworth learned this culture of feeling by participating in the French Revolution out of pure sympathy. As the portrait of Michel Beaupuy (a patriot among French royalist) in Book IX of *1805 Prelude* <sup>(15)</sup> suggests, Wordsworth in 1791 was full of political naivety. He makes an emotional response to Beaupuy's account of the starving girl as a sign of social injustice. Especially his words "'Tis against that/Which we are fighting' (IX 509-10) moved him. Because of his emotional commitment, Wordsworth was doomed to be thrown into such a state of impotence and disappointment as alluded to in the London mob scene of Book VII.

Although both French Revolution and Industrial Revolution took place in a field of social, economic and political life, their effects did not remain in these infra-structures. A number of important reactions against these great historical changes are assembled to make up the constituents of modernization. A large-scaled process of capitalistic industrialization caused by the mechanically measurable time leads gradually to an inevitable cultural transformation not only in the working-place but in the way of all life

itself. According to Raymond Williams, in the 19th century, as a consequence of Industrial Revolution, on the word “culture” are imposed at least 4 significant meanings:

- (1) a general state or habit of mind, having close relations with the idea of human perfection,
- (2) the general state of intellectual development, in a society as a whole,
- (3) the general body of arts and
- (4) a whole way of life.

*(Culture and Society, xvi)*

Williams’ classification suggests that most of these historically developed meanings are integral to the recognition of the whole field of human activities. Especially after the Industrial Revolution, the meanings of culture bring in a major change in the writer–reader relationship, and ‘a different habitual attitude towards the “public”’ (*Culture and Society* 32) came to be established. Wordsworth was not isolated from the flow of these changes. If we map these political, social, and economic changes in the life and work of Wordsworth, we can safely say that his indefinite use of “culture” approximately corresponds with the definitional items of “culture” Williams enumerated. In other words, a personal inquiry into the articulated and the implicit “culture” provides the new context for young Wordsworth the poet, but his poetical insight rooted in association cannot but be seized by the social historical changes after the Regency.

The connotations of “culture” vary not only with the external influences Wordsworth the poet receives but also are correlative with the deepening of his thought and imagination. Around 1814, he deplores ‘lack of culture’ (*The Excursion* I 82–3) in the silent poets, the rural poets, ‘the Poets that are sown/By Nature; men endowed with highest gifts, The vision and the faculty divine...’ (I 77–9) Because they

are not properly educated, 'wanting the accomplishment of verse' (I 80), they are unknown and have to 'go to the grave, unthought of.' (I 91) Here, we can see Wordsworth's denial of his statement proudly made in "Preface" to *Lyrical Ballads*. It is full of enthusiastic praises of 'the real language of men.' In *The Excursion*, the depressed voice rings out criticizing the hollow Causes of Revolution, but the importance of culture as education gradually increases; 'none, / However destitute, be left to droop/By timely culture unsustained.' (IX 303-5) This slight difference became more conspicuous in *1850 Prelude*. The final correction of the 1850 text took place in 1839, two decades after Regency.

According to Jonathan Wordsworth, *1850 Prelude* is a sad edition, in which 'the Climbing of Snowdon,' the great climax of *The Prelude*, 'is fudged into unmeaning by Wordsworth frightened at the boldness of his own earlier self. His poetical intuitions may not have changed so much, but times had—and attitudes, and the language of spiritual experience.' ("Introduction," *The Prelude: The Four Texts (1798, 1799, 1805, 1850* xlvi).<sup>(16)</sup> This sad change reflects Wordsworth's inability to catch up with the change of the flow in the political situation as well as that in the reading public. The image of 'full-orbed Moon,' in the 1850 version, however, is an allusion to Queen Victoria, whose coronation took place just 2 years before the final revision in 1837. Wordsworth came to realize the political and social stability of British Empire under the Reign of Victoria. Since he was appointed Stamp-Distributor for Westmorland in 1813, his conformity to the Empire must have been obliged to the established. The process of forming the imperialism, which corresponds to that of cultural imperialism, is accompanied by the rereading and rewriting of the hegemonic forms. As Jameson points out, the imperialism 'can be grasped as a process of the reappropriation and neutralization, the cooptation and class transformation.' (Jameson 86) Wordsworth, who became Poet Laureate in 1843, was performing his duty as an integral part of this vast cultural context. There was no considerable room for the skepticism on a radically



unstable reality, nor for the perturbing question of the relationship to other cultures in the *1850 Prelude*.

In 1814, Wordsworth thinks that poetry is more than anything else ‘the songs/Of humanized society’ (*The Excursion* Book IX 388–9), while culture, especially ‘timely culture’ (ibid. 305), can still play a role of the border area, of an interchangeable media through which the mind of Man and Human Life can communicate with each other. But in *1850 Prelude* his vision of the paradise begins to lose this interchangeability. It is not a mere vision. An earthly paradise tinged with a realistic colour is offered as something attainable, if only it be built on ‘the cultured Vale’ (*1850 Prelude* I 326), where the independent farmers can enjoy farming by cultivating the land and the mind, as well as benefiting from the industrial commodities offered by timely culture. This notion of cultured vale did not appear yet in the book on childhood and school-time, Book I of 1805 version. The Book depicts the child hanging above the raven’s nest ‘on southern bank’ (*1805 Prelude* I 333). The happy child, a symbol of ‘the vital soul’ (1805 I 161), can disregard ‘general truths, which are themselves a sort/Of elements and agents, under-powers’ (1805 I 162–4), because he thinks them as ‘[s]ubordinate helpers of the living mind.’ Assured of implicit ‘culture’ within himself, the child does not mind whether the vale, the natural environment, is ‘cultured’ or not. His act of stealing eggs from the raven’s nests, plunder, is permissible, so long as the boundary of implicit “culture” is set beyond the regulations of culture, ‘under-powers.’

( 3 )

The mutational changes of connotation of the word culture in Wordsworth do not align with the straight line of material progress performed within the large context of culture of modernity. For one thing, he was too ego-centric conformist to admit the points his opponents claim. The descriptive sketch of the crowd on the streets of

London in Book VII of *1805 Prelude* insinuates his opinion as a member of the institutionalized social class. He could not tolerate the presence of the subliterate genres of mass culture. His hatred is directed toward the fundamental absurdity of human existence denigrated in ridiculous forms. His ambivalent attitude to the crowd characterizes the poetico-cultural transference enacted in Book VII.

How often in the overflowing streets  
Have I gone forwards with the crowd, and said  
Unto myself, 'The face of every one  
That passes by me is a mystery.'  
Thus have I looked, nor ceased to look, oppressed  
By thoughts of what, and whither, when and how,  
Until the shapes before my eyes became  
A second-sight procession, such as glides  
Over still mountains, or appears in dreams, ...  
(*1805 Prelude* VII 595-604)

Needless to say, for Wordsworth, the kinship between universalized culture and pure poetry is more precious than the rules and regulations of culture as taste. But as a reference to the Lake District tradition of spectral horsemen, 'procession, such as glides/Over still mountains,' implicates, what he confided is the sympathy for the *implicit* culture signifying a whole way of life of the low and rustic people, whether they live in a rural area or in the city. If this implicit culture is taken into account, the communicative transaction between the narrator and the crowd can not always be carried out in an articulate language, for not all of the people are qualified enough to participate in joyous communion through literature. Even through pageant, non better verbal communication is possible. In 1805, Wordsworth was basically loyal to the egalitarian view of Blair. It means that he is vulnerable to the attacks from unconscious binary opponents who alternate their positions between the self and the other on the streets. Unlike Arnold, he would not have willingly accepted the ethical function of culture (of the educated) at this stage, as the image of a happy child in *1805*

*Prelude* suggests. Wordsworth would no more admit the existence of class, national, and racial differences yet than he was aware of the presence of Other itself. As Jameson points out, 'the concept of good and evil is a positional one that coincides with categories of Otherness.' (Jameson 111) His imperceptiveness to Otherness of the 'low and rustic' working class people on the streets characterizes Wordsworth's contradictory stance toward culture in 1805. Fortunately or unfortunately, even after the Regency, he could keep the outsider's position apart from the struggle linked with violence and repression. It is partly due to his geographical position of his residence in the Lake Districts. Nevertheless, the changing social and political conditions forced his narrative voice to be split in diversity, while he tried to stand on equal footing with the reader in an effort to make sense out of the language common to both of them. In *The Excursion*, the Solitary represents his early exultation in political idealism, the Wanderer who speaks the message of love shares the central belief of young Wordsworth, and the Pastor the voice of Anglican reassurance. Nevertheless, the community the Pastor celebrates is being destroyed by an irreversible Revolution. Being aware of those harsh realities, Wordsworth refuses to take sides in a struggle between embattled groups.

In spite of their common social class consciousness as the gentry, apparently Wordsworth's stance toward culture is more contradictory and wavering than Arnold's. Actually, his inarticulate norm is subversive enough to overturn Arnold's definition of culture which is based essentially on inclusive plurality. Matthew Arnold (1822-88) scrutinized the disruptive nature of working-class culture in a more lucid way than Wordsworth did, paying a greater attention to another aspect of culture as a standard of moral and aesthetical excellence. He insists that standard is 'having its origin in the love of perfection; it is *a study of perfection.*' (*Culture and Anarchy* 59) The aim of culture is to set people 'to ascertain what perfection is and to make it prevail.' (ibid. 61) In a sense, Arnold's definition of culture is succeeded to in the 20th century. It was revised by Raymond Williams in the first and second definitional

items. In determining what human perfection is, Arnold says, 'religion reaches a conclusion identical with that which culture...likewise reaches.' (ibid.) Williams the Marxist implicitly refers to religion as 'a general state or habit of mind, having close relations with the idea of human perfection,' but he adds that '[t]he general state of intellectual development' is attained only through culture. (Williams xvi)

We can ascribe what differentiates Wordsworth's definition of culture and Arnold's to their incompatible religious views. In determining what perfection is, Arnold insists that culture seeks it through 'all the voices of human experience which have been heard upon it, of art, science, poetry, philosophy, as well as of religion, in order to give a greater fullness and certainty to its solution.' (ibid.) He thus evaluates the historical experience accumulated in all the human activities. He prescribed the use of culture as a sort of ethical antidote to the vice abundant in the Victorian society. The society was in the midst of Industrial Revolution, and was, in his view, getting deteriorated, being threatened to fall into an anarchical state. He set culture as a sort of spiritual safeguard to defend the individuals and the society from the chaotic anarchy. The points of Arnold's argument are obviously aligned with his class consciousness, which is at enmity with the working class. In Arnold's work, as John Storey points out, 'the term "anarchy" operates in part as a synonym for popular culture.' (Storey *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture*, 19) For the most part, the term anarchy alludes to the feeling of resentment accumulated in the oppressed class. Both Wordsworth and Arnold were indifferent to this suppressed feeling in Otherness, though. Wordsworth's insensibility to the class consciousness seems queer, for it is unbalanced to the inner conflicts and agonies Wordsworth suffered after the real experience of the French Revolution.

Apparently, *The Borderers* (1795-6) is full of Wordsworth's social comment and political philosophy meant to justify the cause of Revolution. He kept on asking—Is it rational? In July 1794, however, Robespierre was executed, and Wordsworth refers to this event in 1805 *Prelude* X 530-657, stating his reaction to subsequent events, and

his revulsion at events in Britain. Wordsworth could not tolerate 'the maddening factions' (X 554) 'who with clumsy desperation brought/Rivers of blood.' (X 546-7) In order to overcome this internal wound of political disillusion, Wordsworth tried to find some solace in the extreme forms of political philosophy in William Godwin's *An Enquiry concerning the Principles of Political Justice, and Its Influence on General virtue and Happiness* (1793). Godwin argued that the basic right of humankind is derived from individual judgment based on reason, and political justice is possible as reason increases with the development of the mind. Nevertheless, gradually Wordsworth succeeded to wean himself from Godwin's stance which emphasizes individual judgment based on reason. Being a dissenter and atheist, Godwin explored the complicated relationships of individual rights concerning property, marriage and the political justice, but he essentially kept aloof from the culture of feeling. In 1796, Wordsworth made friends with Coleridge, and their remarkable friendship bore a wonderful fruit, *Lyrical Ballads* (1798).

In *The Excursion*, apart from his biographical facts, his poetico-cultural transference between the fact and the imagination is seen more explicitly implanted within the culture-oriented context. Thanks to his own experience, Wordsworth is immune from Arnold's political concept, especially that of exclusive dichotomy of anarchy (=popular culture) and culture (=class distinction), though Wordsworth approaches near to Arnold's stance, understanding the concept of culture as a study of perfection. Like Arnold, he internalized the concept of culture as an ethical fence against the rationalized desire expressed in '[e]arth's melancholy vision.' (*The Excursion* V 936) However, in Book V of *The Excursion*, where the parson tells the story of the humble life of the sequestered couple who had kept 'a plot of cultivated ground' (V 676) as 'attractive brightness' (V 678) among the barren wilderness of rocks and stones, the connotation of culture is forcefully set equivalent to the constituents of some ideal unity where consciousness and experience are peacefully united on the basis of the ability of rational reasoning. This couple might have been

ranked as lowest '[i]n powers of mind,/In scale of culture,' (V 716-7) the parson says, but 'best gift of heaven hath fallen on them.' (V 720)

Similarly, Wordsworth's conception of the general truth does not exclude the notion of plurality. He always endeavored to search the true image of man and nature, whether it is the real object, or the imaginary illusion, and intended to bind them together by passion and knowledge within that realm, within 'the vast empire of human society, as it is spread over the whole earth, and over all time.' (1802 "Preface", *The Oxford Authors*, 606) He even foresaw the critical moment in the culture of modernization. A cohesive identity stratified on the basis of romantic aspiration is destined to disintegrate. Wordsworth apprehended, though vaguely, the imminent danger, that a diverse range of engagements with modernization should inevitably fall apart because of its frail cultural structure itself. The painful task to listen to 'all the voices of human experience' and to give each of them a significant utterance so as to give it a new context, 'something evermore about to be,' forced him to keep a cautious watch on the mode of involution which emerges at the point of a cultural transference.

In the post-colonial perspective, as Edward W. Said puts out, these pluralities lead to the dramatic discrimination movement on one hand, and to the returns to the indigenous culture and tradition on the other. The collective consciousness in our contemporary world is usually organised around the perception that some imminent oppressive power threatens the survival of a group. Multiculturalism proposed by Arnold becomes the essential feature of the post-colonialism.

These "returns" accompany rigorous codes of intellectual and moral behavior that are opposed to the permissiveness associated with such relatively liberal philosophers as multiculturalism and hybridity.

(*Culture and Imperialism* xiii)

Although Said is critical of the political stance of Raymond Williams, censuring him for being not sensitive enough to the nature of imperialism, Wordsworth would not disagree to define culture following what Said says about imperialism, even though it might require the broadest range of connotation as well. Sad historical experiences the nations suffered during World Wars taught us that we cannot carry out the humanistic liberation of the people without the proper knowledge of the cultures of the people, or the appreciation of their cultures at their true values. When the presence of the rulers with imperial purposes is snubbed or ignored, as Said suggests, the followers of nationalistic fundamentalism are liable to fall into this battleground where they denigrate or fight against others, whether they are representatives of aggressive usurpers, the colonial rulers or not. Not only the form of violence and repression but also that of the struggle between embattled groups would become more fierce and bitterer than Wordsworth's age.

Accordingly, contrary to our expectation, Wordsworth's notion of 'the vast empire of human society' does not overlap nor transcend the contemporary boundary of imperialism. It signifies something constitutive of the nature of the political and social order of his time. As shown in Book VII of *1805 Prelude*, London streets were already full of the miscellaneous races the British Empire brought into from abroad. *The Excursion* published in 1814 was meant to convey, in a poetic form, the author's process of 'interpreting, knowing, and believing in referential truth' (Liu op. cit. 42) of the political and social order, the entity of British imperialism. *The Excursion* thus anticipates and reflects, though implicitly, the growing rift among the nation concerning religious and social attitudes in the second decade of 19th century, when British imperialism was taking a solid form. The change of infrastructure is essentially alien to the culture of feeling that the imagination of young Wordsworth relied on. The culture of feeling itself is shown in his text as something undergoing painful transference.

As an example of this internal rift, Wordsworth in the conclusion of *the Excursion* in its conclusion refers to the limitedness of the number of those who can appreciate the beatific vision of 'culture.'

That paradise, the lost abode of man,  
Was raised again: and to a happy few,  
In its original beauty, here restored.  
(Book IX 717-9)

This vision of paradise reveals the change of connotations of culture in Wordsworth. The blessed vision is shifted from an indefinite way of life of the rural community to a segregated habitat for a happy few. The change is not separable from the disappearance of Wordsworth's concrete vision of "culture" of feeling. It is evidently announced in the much disputed passage on the invocation to Imagination (1805 *Prelude* VI 525-572), and, in no less symbolic way, in the description of the blind beggar in Book VII. In the former, symbolically, he touches on the confluence of the levels of culture of the different social groups (blossoms upon one tree.) It is available for the struggle (giddy prospect) during the political and social upheaval of the Revolution (the sick sight).

... the sick sight  
And giddy prospect of the raving stream,  
The unfettered clouds and regions of the heavens,  
Tumult and peace, the darkness and the light—  
Were all like workings of one mind, the features  
Of the same face, blossoms upon one tree,  
Characters of the great apocalypse,  
The types and symbols of eternity,  
Of first, and last, and midst, and without end.  
(VI 564-572)

Nevertheless, Wordsworth would not relinquish a hope of attaining the eternal life of man and 'culture' at the same time. The equivocal phrase 'characters of the great



apocalypse' suggests the intensity of this hope. In Book VII of *The Prelude*, however, his acute insight perceives a pathetic process of cultural alienation in a socially marginalized outcast. Watching the moving pageant of the big city London, observing the manners and behaviours (culture) of theatre goers, the poet is suspended in a tension between poetic self-assertion of culture in himself (taste) and the wish to immerse in 'culture' (implicit way of life) of the people, while he recognises himself as an echo-chamber for these destabilizing multiplicity of plural voices (cultures). He finds himself bewildered 'in the overflowing streets' (VII 954) and was shocked to encounter 'a blind beggar' (VII 611) who '[s]tood propped against a wall' (VII 612), while his life history is written on a paper attached on the tiny chest he was carrying. The beggar is robbed of not only the eyesight but also the means of communication in an articulate language, "culture." The miserable state of the beggar who scarcely finds his stay on the wall symbolically depicts his status in the universe. He is the symbol of the socially marginalized in time and space. Diachronically time has the segmentation of 'first, and last, and midst' but synchronically it can integrate itself with eternity 'without end.' The beggar thus represents the type of cultural alienation.

As the tone of the theatrical preacher episode and that of the blind beggar clearly suggest, Book VII of *1805 Prelude* is nothing but a satire of disunity. Although the street crowd in London is represented as part of brotherhood, unlike the familiar nature and the people in his rural community, the impassive crowd throws the poet into the utter desolation, '[t]he present and the past, hope, fear, all stays/All laws, of acting, thinking, speaking man - /Went from me, neither knowing me, nor known.' (VII 604-6) An isolated situation is emphasized in the scene in which people making a parade do not know the narrator nor the narrator is known to them. This insecure relationship invites a dynamic flow of poetico-cultural transference to move on. Wordsworth's apprehension of disintegration is essentially modern. The poetico-cultural transference thus leads him to a perception of inevitable aspects of

modernity. On the London streets, the mechanical movement of confluence occurs where individualized, independent cultures are to be processed as if in a vast mill.

( 4 )

In spite of his acute insight into the modern form of cultural alienation, when we read them within the context of cultural development, Wordsworth's works are not always persuasive enough. It is partly due to Wordsworth's want of knowledge which Arnold's authoritative voice criticizes.

I admire Wordsworth, as he is, so much that I cannot wish him different; and it is vain, no doubt, to imagine such a man different from what he is, to suppose that he *could* have been different. But surely the one thing wanting to make Wordsworth an even greater poet than he is,—his thought richer, and his influence of wider application,— was that he should have read more books, among them, no doubt, those of that Goethe whom he disparaged without reading him.

(“The Function of Criticism,” *Culture and Anarchy and other writings*, 30)

Arnold's damaging measure has long influenced the appreciation of our Wordsworth till the end of the 1980s, while New Criticism subsided. Since then, reevaluation and interpretation of his works have started in revisionary as well as revolutionary directions. Great poet as he was, deeply involved as he was in the great historical movement of Revolution, Wordsworth was long considered to be a mediocre poet lacking culture, that is, the ideal of self-transformation, of growing ability toward some measure of sweetness and light not yet reached. Only estimated by Arnold's Victorian prejudice, Wordsworth's personality has long been humiliated as an immature one in a sophisticated cultural context. It accords with a profile of Wordsworth outlined from his biographical background. He is the poet who converted from a political activist to a retired gentleman concentrating on poetry.

As a great Victorian poet-critic, on the other hand, Arnold demonstrated the intimate connection between the task of the poet and that of the critic. He believes in an axiom that poetry is a criticism of life, 'to interpret human life afresh, and to supply a new spiritual basis to it.' (*Complete Prose Works* III 381) He delineated the laudable image of reverend moralist in Wordsworth. From his criteria, Wordsworth is praiseworthy, because he 'plunged himself in the inward life,' and voluntarily 'cut himself off from the modern spirit.' (*Essays in Criticism*, 108) Arnold set Philistinism as conspicuous entity of the modern spirit, and condemns it for a product of the British Constitution, 'a colossal machine for the manufacture of Philistines.' (*Culture and Anarchy*, 42) Thus severing Wordsworth from the Victorian hypocrisy, Arnold professed that he owed so much to Wordsworth in forming his notion of literary criticism. The impressive phrase, 'to interpret human life afresh,' echoes, though faintly, Wordsworth's definition of the poet's role in "Preface" to *Lyrical Ballads*. So far as he presupposes the poet as an autonomous self, living in the historical event and judging its meaning, Arnold is an orthodox inheritor of romantic individualism. The cult of the self has been long regarded as the independent and generative focus of the literary work, and function of criticism is set equal to an effort to discern its contour.

It must be stressed that Arnold's indifference to Wordsworth's implicit definition of 'culture' of feeling does not depend on his misunderstanding of the culture based on the function of fancy, which demands the reciprocal understanding between the author and the reader. Arnold simply could not understand the special form of subjectivity in Wordsworth which ought to be set in the incommensurability of modernity. Its contradictory nature concerns more with the consciousness of simultaneous desire and terror that 'the matter' and 'the curious props' in Book VII provoked in him.

In the 1980s, with the emergence of New Historicism, implicit cultural values in Wordsworth's texts began to attract our attention. The new movement intended to interpret literary texts' significance in terms of their involvement with other contemporaneous past discourses, especially those of non-literary fact, that is, of

social, economic and political history. Marilyn Butler, one of its representative scholars, even proceeded to subvert the cult of the Romantic writer who has long been thought to have a coherent identity.

We are in danger of treating the relationship between author and text as a closed system, when really the process of literary production must be open at both ends. The writer takes in words, thoughts and structures from a babel around him, and his text is a giving back into the same discussion, part, in short of a social process...

*(Romantics, Rebels, and Reactionaries, 9)*

The current criticism of Romanticism assumes that literature, like language, is ‘a collective activity, powerfully conditioned by social forces’(ibid.) and ‘[a] book is made by its public, the readers it literally finds and the people in the author’s mind’s eye.’(ibid.) In our era of post modernism, the autonomous self, which Arnold venerated, is reduced to a humiliated position. It is nothing but the delusion or a myth ‘a collective activity’ generates, and the veneration for the creative process is expelled from the arena of political unconscious as well. As de Man suggests, ‘the work of art as a self-engendered world of the subject’s own making is formed historically as the central myth of romantic literature.’ (Paul de Man *Romanticism and Contemporary Criticism*, 8-9) Accordingly, in interpreting Wordsworth’s poetry in the social, cultural context, setting it in the stream of living power of the French Revolution, that is, of the people and culture, we should have our eye on the long neglected, ‘humble’ statement he made in Book VII. The poet seems to have lost his identity in the moving pageant of the crowd, feeling ‘things that are, are not.’(VII 642)

Scenes different there are—  
Full-formed—which take, with small internal help,  
Possession of the faculties: the peace  
Of night, for instance, the solemnity  
Of Nature’s intermdediate hours of rest  
When the great tide of human life stands still,

The business of the day to come unborn,  
 Of that gone by locked up as in the grave;  
 The calmness, beauty, of the spectacle,  
 Sky, stillness, moonshine, empty streets, and sounds  
 Unfrequent as in deserts; at late hours  
 Of winter evenings when unwholesome rains  
 Are falling hard, with people yet astir,  
 The feeble salutation from the voice  
 Of some unhappy woman now and then  
 Heard as we pass, when no one looks about,  
 Nothing is listened to. But these I fear  
 Are falsely catalogued: things that are, are not.  
 (VII 625–642)

Thrown into the chasm between the real, ‘outward things’ (VII 624), and the imaginary scenes recollected with the help of ‘internal help’ (VII 627), the poet cannot but declare the renouncement of ‘the lofty themes,’ divesting himself of the mask of the bard recording heroic deeds of Sublime. He tries to assimilate himself to a peaceful, pastoral community of the Lake District on one hand, and on the other he took a particular interest in ‘the curious props’ of the mundane world, ‘real grandeur’ of ‘gross realities.’ The way the narrator was conscious of these matters, and how he recognised the issues involved in them are very meaningful to understand the subjectivity of the poet Wordsworth, for they have much to do with the crucial phase of his poetico-cultural transference. As Makdisi points out, he is essentially a modern poet who can cope with the experience of modernity which is essentially incommensurable.<sup>(17)</sup> Still under the influence of Hartleyan notion of mechanical universe, Wordsworth hoped that these matters, gross realities, will be able to rescue him from the rift of vacuity between the superficiality in which ‘[w]ords follow words, sense seems to follow sense’ (VII 540) and ‘[t]he spirit of Nature...[t]he soul of beauty and enduring life.’ (VII 736–7)

If aught there were of real grandeur here  
 ’Twas only then when gross realities,

The incarnation of the spirits that moved  
Amid the poet's beauteous world – called forth  
With that distinctness which a contrast gives,  
Or opposition – made me recognize  
As by a glimpse, the things which I had shaped  
And yet not shaped, had seen and scarcely seen,  
Had felt, and thought of in my solitude.

(VII 507–515)

In the blind beggar episode, the prop is materialized as *a wall* against which the beggar propped himself, while the curious props are equated with feelings as 'gross realities' (VII 508), which lie 'beyond the suburbs of the mind.' (VII 506) On one hand, the curious props described in London experience are the metaphor to sustain Wordsworth's poetic insight while struggling to catching up with the various voices (cultures) of the crowd, 'that have no law, no meaning, and no end.' (VII 904) Their indeterminate multiplicity, against which the narrator finds himself 'fundamentally incommensurable' (Makdisi 69), does contain a danger which threatens the reversal of undersized definition of taste, as a cultural artifact. Wordsworth was conscious of these contradictions inherent in Romantic cultural discourse. Nevertheless, his perceptions are always drawn to the involute action of a poetico-cultural transference with its peculiar temporal and spatial experience.

Notes:

(1) 'Economically, the romantic period in Britain marked a shift from the primacy of trade and commerce towards the primacy of industrial production, and hence towards a properly modern mode of capitalism (albeit one that at the time often took only an embryonic form). Politically, the period marked a rupture in paradigms and policies of imperial power, and a shift in the locus of intense imperial activity from the western to the eastern hemispheres, as well as a dramatic intensification in the exercise of state power in response to the revolutionary situation within Britain itself.' (Saree Makdisi, *Romantic Imperialism: Universal Empire and the Cultrve of Modernity*, Cambridge University Press, 1998, p.5) Book VII of *1805 The Prelude* is in a sense a descriptive sketch of this *Cultural* change.

(2) Basically my argument owes much to the suggestion made by Saree Makdisi, who insists that ‘I want to suggest the romanticism can be partly understood as a diverse and heterogeneous series of engagements with modernization.’ (*Romantic Imperialism*, p.6)

(3) As Frederic Jameson suggests, if we could set a political unconscious behind Wordsworth’s ‘underpresence,’ it would become a very effective tool in textual analysis in exploring ‘the multiple paths that lead to the unmasking of cultural artifacts as socially symbolic acts.’ (Frederic Jameson, *The Political Unconscious* 20)

(4) 4. *fig.* The cultivating or development (of the mind, faculties, manners, etc.); improvement or refinement by education and training.

5. *absol.* The training, development, and refinement of mind, tastes, and manners; the condition of being thus trained and refined; the intellectual side of civilization.” (Oxford English Dictionary)

The item 5 picks up the lines 197–8 from *1850 Prelude* XIII; ‘where grace/Of culture hath been utterly unknown.’

(5) At least Wordsworth thought so, as his statement clearly indicates: ‘an *accurate* taste in Poetry and in all the other arts, as Sir Joshua Reynolds has observed, is an *acquired* talent, which can only be produced by thought and a long continued intercourse with the best models of composition.’ (“Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (1800),” *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, I, 156)

(6) ‘If I were addressing those who have dealt so liberally with the words Renegado, Apostate etc, I should retort the charge upon them, and say *you* have been deluded by Places and Persons, while I have stuck to Principles—I abandoned France, and her Rulers, when they abandoned the struggle for liberty, gave themselves up to Tyranny, and endeavoured to enslave the world. I disapproved of the war against France at its commencement, thinking, which was perhaps, an error, that it might have been avoided—but after Bounaparte had violated the Independence of Switzerland, my heart turned against him, and the Nation that could submit to be the Instrument of such an outrage. Here it was that I parted in feeling, from the Whigs, and to a certain degree united with their Adversaries, who were free from the delusion (such I must ever regard it) of Mr. Fox and his party, that a safe and honourable Peace was practical with the French Nation, and that an ambitious Conqueror like B[uonaparte] could be softened down into a commercial Rival.’ (*Letters of William Wordsworth*, Alan G.Hill(ed), Oxford University Press, 1984, 215)

(7) Wordsworth first met Losh in Paris during the commotion of the Revolution, and since then he remained a lifelong but uncritical friend of Wordsworth.

(8) He had a facility for languages and became accomplished in Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Italian, and later several Middle Eastern languages. In 1795, he attended the University of Göttingen and received his degree as Doctor of Physics, Surgery, and Midwifery. Degrees in medicine at Cambridge followed, and in 1803, at age 30, he received his M.D. From 1801 to 1803, Young was Professor of Natural History at the Royal Institution. From 1804 on, he maintained a private practice in London and was

elected physician to St. George's Hospital in 1811. Young served as foreign Secretary to the Royal Society from 1803 until his death in 1829.

(9) 'Solomon Gessner's *Death of Abel* (1758, translated by Mary Collyer, 1761), Edward Young's *Night Thought 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. (Jonathan Wordsworth, "Notes," *William Wordsworth: The Prelude*, p. 606)

(10) 'After 18 Brumaire, "usurper" was applied to Bonaparte in English parliamentary speeches, pamphlets, and newspapers with the consistency of a technical term and irrespective of party affiliation or sympathy with French Republic.' (Alan Liu, "Introduction", *Wordsworth: The Sense of history*, Stanford University Press, 1989, p.26)

(11) 'In short, referential knowledge may be an insoluble problem at the level of individual and his language. But I believe it to be soluble at the level of culture and the *language* of collective interpretation. Culture *is* the process of interpreting, knowing, and believing in referential truth; and such is true even if the arabesque of structure thus created seems from the standpoint of our later antipositivistic positivity to be wholly arbitrary, ungrounded, decentred, undecidable, labyrinthine, or otherwise *poststructuralist*.' (Alan Liu, "Introduction," p. 42)

(12) The most appropriate explication of these lines could be found in Hartley.

'Vibrations differ in Degree, according as they are more or less vigorous; *i.e.* as the Particles oscillate to and fro, through a longer or shorter very short Space; *i.e.* as the Impression of the Object is stronger or weaker, and thus affects the medullary Particles more or less vigorously, either directly and immediately, or mediately, by generating a greater or less Degree of Consideration in the Pulses of the Aether.' (David Hartley, *Observations on Man, His Frame, His Duty, and His Expectations* (1749), Scholars, Facsimiles & Reprints, New York, 1976, pp.30-31)

(13) Those are the points Wordsworth stressed in "Preface" to *Lyrical Ballads* (1800), and repeated in every version of *Lyrical Ballads*. He says, 'all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings...our continued influxes of feeling are modified and directed by our thoughts, which are indeed the representatives of all our past feelings.' (*The prose Works*, I, p.126)

(14) Nicholas Roe points out the importance of *Les Amis de la Constitution* in forming Wordsworth's emotional republicanism. 'These emotive, democratic proceedings of *Les Amis* provide the background to Wordsworth's emergent republicanism, although his political bearings were more precisely by the immediate influence of two individuals: Michel Beaupuy and Bishop Grégoire.' (Nicholas Roe, *Wordsworth and Coleridge: The Radical Years*, Oxford, pp. 50-51)

(15) Wordsworth probably met Michel Beaupuy at the meetings of *Les Amis de la Constitution* at Blois, which by aligning with the Gironde in 1792, "followed the most progressive political group then in power." (Roe 50) Beaupuy took an active part in





## Chapter 3

### Forms of Poetic Imagination in Wordsworth

#### —The transference of two ‘Spots of Time’ in *The Prelude*\*

( 1 )

...my theme has been  
What passed within me. Not of outward things  
Done visibly for other minds—words, signs,  
Symbols or actions—but of my own heart  
Have I been speaking, and my youthful mind.  
...but in the main  
It lies far hidden from the reach of words.

(*The Five-Book Prelude* III 171–184)

In March 1804, Wordsworth deplored his inability to express his inner thoughts. His depressed mood continues, until it is summarized in “Essays upon Epitaphs, III” in 1810. In this essay, Wordsworth underscores his implicit mistrust for the ambivalent function of language, saying ‘[w]ords are too awful an instrument for good and evil to be trifled with.’ (*The Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, II 84) The poetico-cultural transference in Wordsworth is not separable from this underlying mistrust that meanings of word are essentially unstable. His incredibility in words is revealed even in *The Excursion* (1814), which deals with the contradictory moral reactions embedded in the mind of the people during and after the French Revolution. Now that the theme of *The Prelude* mainly refers to the growth of the poet’s mind in accordance with the varying circumstances in which he lived<sup>(1)</sup>, the consistency of imagery remains intact in spite of the alteration of connotative meanings of words. Nevertheless, if any version is taken up out of the representative ones, for example, *The Two-Part Prelude* (1799), *The Five-Book Prelude* (1804), *The Thirteen-Book Prelude* (1805), *The Fourteen-Book Prelude* (1850)<sup>(2)</sup>, none of them is in a finished state. From the poet’s

view point, all the versions of *The Prelude* are in constant flux. Each version, therefore, requires the deciphering of meanings within the scope as large as possible, even though they were set in the same structural order of wordings as in other versions. Due to the perpetual revision, the relationship between reality and meaning becomes habitually disjointed. As is obvious in the extended version of *The Thirteen-Book Prelude 1805*, which came out of *The Five-Book Prelude 1804*, the structural design itself changes, which accompanies the shift of connotation as well. The unending revision of the unpublished manuscripts, stemmed from his involvement in contemporary cultural circumstances, enables *The Prelude* to accommodate several loosely related groups of poems at any occasion of reconstruction. This rearrangement inevitably causes a sort of lacuna between objectified reality, especially the landscape, and the verbalized construct. Wordsworth seems to illustrate this paradoxical hiatus in the superb image of ‘a blue chasm’ (*1805 Prelude* l.55) and ‘[a] deep and gloomy breathing place,’ (l.57) which the poet witnessed on top of Mt. Snowdon. There, Nature appeared before him as if it were ‘the perfect image of a mighty mind.’ (l.69) His mistrust in language still hangs over this scene. In reading closely, this beautiful metaphor of lacuna, ‘a blue chasm,’ is to stand for the inner landscape of the poet, where he is capable of making a sort of communication with some transcendental presence.

Points have we all of us within our souls  
 Where all stand single; this I feel, and make  
 Breathings for incommunicable powers.  
 (*The Five-Book Prelude* III 185-7)

Whereas, in *The Thirteen-Book Prelude 1805*, such metaphors as ‘the express/Resemblance’ or ‘a genuine counterpart’ establish a precarious analogy of Nature and the creative power of Imagination. In this context, the essential function of his poetic imagination works like ‘the vapours.’ (l.47) His imagination starts to

reread and fill in the internal discontinuity between the outward form and ‘the temporal slippage’ of the mind, while the under-soul itself endeavours to perceive and recapitulate the vision. (3) Ironically, in spite of the sublime beauty expressed by these metaphors, the cleavage between form and soul is deepening and widening. They are undercut by some inexpressible fear and anxiety as expressed in the two ‘Spots of Time’ episodes. In the meantime, the poetic imagination simultaneously embellishes everything like the mist, attempting to restore repeatedly the memory of imaginary wholeness. Many revisions carried out by the poet leave the traces of his faltering hope to establish a subjective reconciliation between himself, the observer, and Nature, his environments. These traces of his perpetual elaboration of the verbal construct itself, i.e., *The Prelude*, although left in the numerous manuscripts and drafts, imply a courageous effort to overcome his mistrust in language. The structural transference of two ‘Spots of Time’ episodes in the First Part of *The Two-Part Prelude* (1799) to Book XI of *The Thirteen-Book Prelude* (1805) epitomizes the nature of Wordsworth’s discontinuity of the vision and his ambivalence toward the function of language that delves the cleavage between the perceiving self and the surroundings. Consequently, the self, which is not always antithetic to its historical conditions, can generate several subtexts. The poetico-cultural transference is a significant form of this transaction.

As Tilottama Rajan suggests, in their writings the Romantic poets presuppose several versions of subtext, generated, in a more or less fictional mood, ‘the subjunctive mood of desire.’ (4) Admitting that their ideology is based upon ‘the belief that poetical works can transcend historical divisions by virtue of their links with Imagination,’ (5) the contrastive treatments of the two ‘Spots of Time’ episodes in the 1804 and 1805 *Prelude* reveal the mystery of how the subtexts are created in Wordsworth. The structural transference of two ‘Spots of Time’ implicates the multiplication of the subtexts in which the nexus between social or cultural points of reference and the purely imaginative idea is severed and reformed, but at the same time the severance predicts his dangerous misgivings of how the history

transubstantiates itself into a frail story of the nation. This theme is later developed in a romance form in *The White Doe of Rylstone* (1815). (As for the detailed discussion, see Chapter 12.) The coexistence of different implications suggests, on one hand, the contradiction between the narration and the poet's personal experience in France under the vehement storm of the Revolution. When an empirical fact is expressed in a subjunctive mood, a secondary form of reality 'resemblance' is formed in the verbal construct. It is based on the assumption that the mind itself was active in perceiving 'a dim and undetermined sense of unknown modes of being.' (*The 1805 Prelude* XI 419–20) As Hugh Sykes Davies pointed out, in this subjunctive mood, in which the perception process itself is transformed, some experiences exhibit no clear, observable distinction between the abstract and the concrete. (6) Accordingly, the distinct lacuna between abstract ideas and concrete substances of Nature begins to blur its margins one after another, finally it is to dissolve into an animated unity, in the mist, at this locus. On the other hand, a verbal construct is formed consisting of several versions of subtext as a result of repetitious revision. But none of them can be decipherable, unless it is united with and verified by the outer texts. The deciphering process becomes complete only through the aid of fictitious imagination, i.e., fancy. As the schema above indicates, the poetico-cultural transference in Wordsworth assumes that a special, reciprocal kind of imagination is prerequisite in the author-reader relationship.

Wordsworth first defined fancy in his "Note to *The Thorn*" (1800) as 'the power by which pleasure and surprise are excited by sudden varieties of situation and by accompanied imagery.' (7) Wordsworth's concerns in this problem of what fancy is and how it should be related with imagination remains intact, until he writes "Preface" to *Poems* (1815), in which he follows Coleridge's definition of fancy as 'the aggregative and associative Power.' Fancy organizes the text, *The Prelude*, as a narrative fiction. Consequently, any reader can share the joy of fancy's deciphering process. The two 'Spots of Time' in Book XI (1805) thus offer the space as well as the time in which

variable interpretations are possible and permissible. Simultaneously, they offer the locus where contradictory subtexts established by the reader can be integrated into a total 'meaning' of the text. It is at this special locus that a poetico-cultural transference enacted by Wordsworth emerges from the mist.

( 2 )

Assumedly, Wordsworth in 1832, who revised the 1805 version to the 1850 version of *Prelude*, was a 'devoutly religious Victorian English man,' who tried 'to explain, to rationalize, to moralize' what he experienced with a belief in the God of the Anglican Church. (8) It is because the latest 1850 version presents a different persona of the poet-narrator from that of the 1804 or the 1805 *Prelude*. In the 1790s, and up to the early decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century at the latest, he was in dejection, trying to probe the meaning of his still fresh experiences in France. The lacuna between the poet and his persona obviously persists in working throughout his career. In the recently edited *The Five-Book Prelude* (1804), Wordsworth makes no mention of the French Revolution, nor his sense of betrayal by its leaders as well as by the People and Napoleon. His reticence would explain eloquently probable causes for the impairment of imagination. Although the two 'Spots of Time' episodes close the emotionally preoccupied version of 1804, they do not solve his personal problems which underpin his loss of confidence in the political ideology. In his 1805 version, the poet, though reluctantly, could give himself to understand the meaning of the invisible words which had been restored in the form of memories. Strangely enough, much earlier in 1799, just after the collapse of Robespierre's radical regime, he could still sing joyously, conversing with inanimate things through the workings of his poetic imagination. Thanks to them, the barrier between the apparently unbridgeable realms of life and death is broken down, and the poet's self is embraced in the replenishing virtue of Nature.

In all things  
I saw one life, and felt that it was joy;  
(*The Two-Part Prelude* Second Part 459-460)

This optimistic faith in the pagan notion of “One Life” could not last so long. Neither in the *1804* nor in the *1805 Prelude*, could he confidently perceive one-life, the existence of a shared life force between himself and the inorganic things. The 1805 edition still retains the sense of a precarious monistic vision as ‘something evermore to be.’ This vague sense concurs, however, with an image of the divine soul, which can exert its influence on the subjective mode of being. The poet-narrator apostrophizes the divine soul as follows:

Wisdom and spirit of the universe  
Thou soul that art the eternity of thought.  
That giv’st to forms and images a breath  
And everlasting motion—  
(I 427-431)

The poet then proceeds to sing of the joy he feels in its presence. Neither the outward forms nor the figurative representations underscore this special feeling, but in the meditative mode he apprehends its presence tensely.

I felt the sense of being spread  
O’er all that moves, and all that seemth still,  
O’er all that, lost beyond the reach of thought  
And human knowledge, to the human eye  
Invisible, yet liveth to the heart,  
O’er all that leaps, and runs, and shouts, and sings,  
Or beats the gladsome air, o’er all that glides  
Beneath the wave, yea, in the wave itself  
And mighty depth of waters. Wonder not  
If such my transports were, for all things  
I saw one life, and felt it was joy;

(II 420–430)

This indestructible ‘being’ exists only when the poet feels its presence on a supernatural level or in the invisible. The poet entertains a certain joy on the condition that nature, as the forms and images of the divine soul, is subordinate to his creative sensibility at the emotional moment of ‘[his] transport.’ (II 395)

The obscurity and self-contradiction we observe in the way of presenting the two ‘Spots of Time’ in the *1805 Prelude* is somewhat interconnected with this fissure that has crept into this paradoxical, emotional tension of ‘transport.’ This cleavage is inherent in the interplay between the poet’s imagination and his sensations formed by reality, and it haunts the poet throughout his career. It has crept into this self-sufficing unity of being, ultimately threatening to decompose it. The happy ‘unconscious intercourse’ he experienced in the childhood between his mind and the external world surrounding him is thus forced to change its quality.

Even then

A child, I held unconscious intercourse  
With the eternal beauty, drinking in  
A pure organic pleasures from the lines of  
Of curling mist, or from the level plain  
Of waters coloured by the steady clouds.

(I 588–594)

From a structural point of view, in the *1804 Prelude*, three of the ‘Spots of Time’ episodes were adopted from Part I of *The Two-Part Prelude of 1799*. Among them, in the *1805 Prelude*, two ‘Spots of Time’ episodes were moved to Book XI, and, in the more lengthy 1850 version, they are transferred to Book XII. Whatever intentions the poet might have in each rewriting, the meanings of these ‘Spots of Time’ are thus separated from the actual experience. These structural changes seen in the subsequent versions go farther and overflow from the border of the poet’s personal context. This circumstance corresponds to an integral phase of poetico-cultural transference. When



the fictitious time is dislocated from the historical time sequence, a free passage prepares for a poetico-cultural transference to enact its role.

In *The Two-Part Prelude of 1799*, the 'Spots of Time' sequence is introduced in the First Part within the context of winter Domestic Games, such as Tick-tack-toe, whist or loo. It follows the disturbing episode of the drowned man, whose ghastly figure bolted upright out of the water. After the discussion of the value of memories, the 'Spots of Time' are referred to rather abruptly.

...with forms  
That yet exist with independent life,  
And, like their archetypes, know decay.

There are in our existence spots of time,  
Which with distinct preeminence retain  
A fructifying virtue, ...  
(*The Two Part Prelude of 1799*, I 285 &290)

Accordingly, a special attention needs to be given to the two 'Spots of Time' episodes in all the four versions. Even in the *1799 Prelude*, both experiences were made duly meaningful in the formation of his poetic mind. The first episode recalls the experience of a lost child, aged five. In the Penrith Moor, the child first witnessed a decaying gibbet standing at the bottom of a hill, and, after having ascended again, saw '[a] naked pool,' '[a] girl who bore a pitcher on her head' and 'the beacon on the lonely eminence.' Undoubtedly, 'the visionary dreariness' permeated in this episode is evoked in the associations evoked by the bleak landscape depicted in detail. This scene is intentionally set in contrast to the happy, innocent memories of 'a five year's child/ A naked boy' in Book I. The water-loving child could enjoy 'one long bathing of a summer's day,' or like '[a] naked savage' could run out to sport 'in the thunder-shower.'

Another episode of 'Spots of Time' recounts what the 13-year-old poet-narrator witnessed on the first day of the Christmas holidays. It is narrated in a

more symbolic way. Waiting in the stormy weather on a crag near Hawkshead Grammar School for the carriage to take him home, upon his right hand side was ‘a single sheep’ and on his left ‘[a] whistling hawthorn.’ This waiting episode is followed by a sort of anti-climax, his father dying ten days after the event. In order to perceive the oddity of this episode, one should be aware of another passage in which Wordsworth, at the age of 13, came to be aware of the beauty of verse through acoustic perception.

Thirteen years

Or haply less, I might have seen when first  
My ears began to open to the charm  
Of words in tuneful order, found them sweet  
For their own sakes.

(V 575-579)

In the fictional context of the *1805 Prelude*, the age of 13 signifies a sort of inauguration for the precocious boy to become a poet. He was made aware of the importance of hieroglyphic Nature as well as poetry. This poetic recognition was set at the age of 6, but its true meaning came out for him at the age of 13.

From the structural perspective, therefore, the split and transference of the two ‘Spots of Time’ episodes in the *1805 Prelude* leads to a simple question of how many episodes should be counted as ‘Spots of Time.’ In other words, it is the problem, as Jonathan Bishop suggests, of whether we should enlarge the border of this oxymoron so as to bind in it almost all the important episodes in *The Prelude*.<sup>(9)</sup> Even if we limit the range of ‘Spots of Time’ to only two episodes in question, we encounter another problem of whether we should accept David Ellis’s argument on Wordsworth’s scrupulous effort to evoke his former state of mind,<sup>(10)</sup> which prefigures the clear-cut idea of David E. Simpson. He censures Wordsworth for his refusal to accept readers’ interpretations.<sup>(11)</sup> Hugh Sykes Davies’ argues whichever direction one might take in interpreting these episodes prepares the way to bridge the lacuna the generative text is constructing. He reveals the author as a reader, and proposes the point that his

isolation in the text from the primary experience brings about the memory 'to be re-lived as new elements of experience with richness of associations gathered from later experiences' (Davies 133). As these arguments suggest, the poet cannot identify himself with any persona that exists as a single, objective entity. He needs to be regarded as 'a convenient fiction—or, more precisely, a theoretical construction—which enshrines any or all of those emotionally-derived stances which its creators require.'<sup>(12)</sup> The inconsistency of the persona found in different versions partly explains the presence of historical, cultural shadow cast over *The Prelude*, the largest of which is the French Revolution. A poetico-cultural transference of Wordsworth is enacted under these menacing shadows as well.

In the *1805 Prelude*, the two 'Spots of Time' prepare the way for the final epiphany on the top of Mt. Snowdon, while the poem itself discusses the growing process of Imagination and its apotheosis. The structural ambiguity caused by the transference of these episodes both in time and space prevents our direct access to the essential function of the imagination, that of the fictitious imagination, Fancy. To make the discussion simple, our scope of comparison is limited to that of *The Two-Part Prelude of 1799* and the *1805 Prelude*. In the latter, especially, time does not flow linearly like a river. As M. H. Abrams pointed out,<sup>(13)</sup> it is only intermittently that the narrative order coincides with the actual order of events. Within the framework of narration, time retrogresses.

[S]o have we long time  
Made motions retrograde.  
(IX 7-8)

The order of actual occurrence in the historical context has been thus fragmented, and yet the time sequence in narration itself is made to be overlapped or reiterated. The notion of integral whole is expressed metaphorically as 'active universe,' that is 'something evermore to be.' (VI 542) If the retrograding,

complicated time order could account for the structural weakness of the two ‘Spots of Time,’ the presence of active but amorphous unity would account for the possible reasoning behind contradictory interpretations of ‘Spots of Time.’ The two ‘Spots of Time’ function as a metaphorical emblem of the interface between the imagination as power and the verbal construct as its external form. These contradictory forces lie at the crux of two cyclic movements of *The Prelude*. This arabesque movement of involution helps to liberate the collective differentiation of reality made by the readers from the rigid continuous stem of the past in reality, i.e. history. Similarly, it activates the movement of a poetico-cultural transference, in which the poetic imagination moulds itself into the ‘under-soul.’ (III 541)

According to the rhetoric of the *1805 Prelude*, the time of narration involves two observable kinds of consciousness—half-perceiving and half-creating simultaneously. These two contradictory forces unify the work *The Prelude*, when they are motivated by the double time-consciousness, that of time present and of time past.

...so wide appears  
The vacancy between me and those days  
Which yet have such self-presence in my mind  
That sometimes when I think of them I seem  
Two consciousnesses—consciousness of myself  
And of some other being.

(II 28-33)

The act of narrating *The Prelude* is double-edged; it urges the poet to be watchful of what he is doing, and simultaneously forces him to probe hidden meanings of what he saw and felt in the self same act of narrating past events. In this way, the unconsciousness is reconstructed by the ‘I,’ the present narrator on one hand, but it does not necessarily coincide with the actual consciousness which the ‘I,’ the agent, had at the time of that particular event. There always lurks a wide ‘vacancy’ between these two consciousnesses signified by the two first persons, that is, the present

narrator and 'some other being' or 'the foregoing state of mind or feeling.'<sup>(14)</sup> The poetico-cultural transference is rooted deep in this paradoxical time sequence. The complicated presentation of time in *The Prelude* is a device to fill up the lacuna, 'vacancy' between the subjunctive mood of wishful thinking and the real experiences. The poetico-cultural transference is accelerated in this device. The self projection does not always concur with this device, for it is made under the dominance of the imagination as power where the objective reality is bound up in quotidian time and space. The awareness of disjunction in time is mainly concerned with the reader's side, when positing how the poet recognizes Imagination.

Within the scope of structural unity of *The Prelude*, the time lag is no less important than the space expansion. The poet's sense of precarious materiality as 'an inmate of the active universe' (1805 II 266) is momentarily projected on and is transferred to his experience in space. At that moment, the experience itself is made to transcend the limits of quotidian life, and to reach, as Jonathan Wordsworth suggests, a border experience.<sup>(15)</sup> In this surrealistic region, the consciousness is to be transformed to a poetic-self, 'the under-soul.' It is made to reach the transcendental level. Apart from an assumed effort of the author to unify time and space order, however, the disjunction of the two consciousnesses goes on its own way. The imagination as 'power' (XI 183) is set equivalent to 'a sense...to perceive/Something unseen before.' (XII 303-305) Being in this particularized transcendental realm, the poetic-self is allowed to perceive Nature as 'a soul divine,' (V 16) an animated thing. Paradoxically, in order to visualize 'nature's self which is the breath of God,' (V 222) the poet-narrator should always put himself in that precarious, intermediate area, tuning to 'something evermore about to be.' (VI 542) His effort might be consummated momentarily, but not forever.

Wordsworth the poet recognised the function of poetry as 'light divine.' (V 626) He thought it the proper means to transmit the aspects of Nature through words, through his verbal construct. In this sense, poetry should be formed as 'the

transparent veil' through which 'a dim and undetermined sense/Of unknown modes of being' (I 419-420) of Nature can be shown in a palpable form. Moreover, he believes the verbal construct as 'the express/ Resemblance' (XIII 87) could be built up to be 'a like existence' (XIII 95) of Nature. This mimetic, would-be 'genuine counterpart' (XIII 88) is, however, under the threat of being undercut, of being involved in the clash of 'the enduring and the transient' (XIII 97) it encompasses within itself. Unless the message of 'the under-soul' (III 540) which is occasionally enclosed within the form of hieroglyph is properly decoded, this clash would be inevitable.

Even forms and substances are circumfused  
By that transparent veil with light divine  
And through the turnings intricate of verse  
In flashes, and with a glory scarce their own.  
(V 625-629)

Imagination as 'Power' manifests itself as the light divine to ignite these 'flashes' so as to illuminate what was going on at this interface of creation and the deciphering process.

On the other hand, Wordsworth's eccentric poetics allows the two 'Spots of Time' in the *1805 Prelude* play the role of a crossing or flip-flop between the amorphous unconsciousness and its verbal expression.

The days gone by  
Come back upon me from the dawn almost  
Of life; the hiding-places of my power  
Seem open, I approach, and then they close.  
( XI 333-336)

At these spots, a lapse of time enables a series of unstable, almost dream-like figurings to emerge on the same material object as well as on the actual experience, because

‘the figurings of the moment are always displaced, often painfully, into subsequent and ongoing refigurings.’ (16)

This process of ‘refigurings’ opens the way for readers including the poet to be involved into the movement of poetico-cultural transference. The act of ‘refigurings’ urges the poet engaged in revision to share the similar experience with the poet immersed in an isolated, subjunctive mood of wishful thinking. The readers must grasp the meaning at the very moment the slipping or the fading out of the stratified implications occurs. The readers must grasp the meaning at the very moment the slipping or the fading out of the stratified implications occurs. The ordinary reader is required simply to decode the hidden parts untold by the poet-narrator through the aid of the images obscurely figured out through the vapours of verbal construct, which are always in the state of ‘something evermore to be,’ This is, in Ellis’s terms, the act of ‘filling-up.’ (17) The self same duty is required to the poet engaged in revision. The two ‘Spots of Time’ offer the locus of these interactions of the readers’ ‘filling-up’ activities, and allow their Fancy in full motion. The poetico-cultural transference is not alien to these interactions.

Deprived of light divine, the two ‘Spots of Time’ are characterized by ‘the vision of dreariness.’ ( XI 310) It refers to the mind in suspension.

...as if the mind  
Itself were nothing, a mean pensioner  
On outward forms—  
(VI 666-668)

This depressed mind dominates the two ‘Spots of Time’ scenes in the *1805 Prelude*. It is only implicitly referred to, though.

This efficacious spirit chiefly lurks  
Among those passages of life in which  
We have had deepest feeling that the mind

Is lord and master.

(XI 268-271)

Plunging deep in this abyss of feeling, we, the readers, are also forced to watch the presence of an unnoticed wound, if there is any, and of the fact that it has been 'invisibly repaired.' (XI 264) The phenomena of 'the passing away' and 'the filling-up' are in a complementary relation as opposed to the profound experience of revelation ignited by the light divine. The poet had been first given moments of revelation in the glorious morning light near his home in Book IV and a second time it appeared in the solemn moonlight on top of Mt. Snowdon in Book XIII. These revelations tell of the exhilarating moments of perceiving '[a] soul divine' (V 16) or 'an under-presence' (XIII 71) directly. Thus, they refer to that moment of epiphany, the bliss 'to hold communion with the invisible world' (XIII 105) by the aid of 'the moving soul.' (XIII 171) But it is without any interim of verbal construct, because the higher reason, 'reason in her most exalted mood,' (XIII 170) is to carry out this transaction in the realm of the intellectual love.

Once the mind's perception of the invisible is captured in words, the creating process, poetry, begins to work, in turn, to elucidate the hidden parts of the mind of the poet. In both transactions, his imagination undertakes the ritual of creating verbal constructs in which it faces two different directions: one is toward the omnipresence, the other is focused on his own individuality. Wordsworth clearly recognised these two complementary functions of imagination as imagination and fancy, though not in an exact assimilation to Coleridge. (18) At a moment, Wordsworth seemed to intentionally avoid the secondary imagination, condemning it as false.

Thou (i.e., Coleridge) art no slave  
Of that false secondary power by which  
In weakness we create distinctions, then  
Deem that our puny boundaries are things  
When we perceive, and not which we have made.



(II 219–224)

Ironically, it is only at this particular moment when the secondary power of imagination, i.e., fancy, surrenders itself to the autonomous power of imagination so that the poet's mind can make out the coherent unity in his verbal construct. It is the moment when the divine power of imagination entralls the poet's mind 'like an unfathered vapour,' (1805 VI 527) in which objects lose their distinct countenances of materiality. They show their invisible appearances to the poet's mind.

In such strength  
Of usurpation, in such visitings  
Of awful promise, when the light of sense  
Goes out in flashes that have shewn to us  
The invisible world, doth greatness make abode.  
(VI 532–536)

These two kinds of imagination, which are usually in a vague convolute state in the poet's conscious mind can be loosened at particular moments and places. Consequently, as was once foretold in "Tintern Abbey," the poet can be a lover

Of all the mighty world  
Of eye and ear, both what they half-create,  
And what they perceive;...  
("Tintern Abbey" 106–8)

The two 'Spots of Time' in the *1805 Prelude* are mainly concerned with these rare moments when a repressed power 'flashes,' but 'light divine' is subdued only to 'gleams.' The secondary imagination 'to create distinctions' dominate the scenes. It demands the reader to decipher the invisible words, the hieroglyphs. The

transference process of these reciprocal activities is symbolized in the two 'Spots of Time' scenes.

( 3 )

Wordsworth declared at the beginning of Book XI of *The Prelude* that its theme is the speculation of how the imagination undertakes the work of establishing relationships between the love of humanity and 'the life, of Nature, by the God of love.' (XI 99) Set within this context, the two 'Spots of Time' carry the burden of signifying what is and can be enfolded in the name of spiritual love. The burden requires an almost impossible reconciliation, unless they are set in the subjunctive mode.

Linking the memories of the regicide of Louis XVI to the Gibbet episode of the first 'Spots of Time,' Jonathan Bishop suggests that these memories are 'the emotional sources of Wordsworth's disquiet.' He points out several factors working as 'a displacement of feeling from the evidences of crime and punishment to accidental concomitants of an experience too overwhelming to be faced.' (19) Confronting this moral crisis against humankind, a mood of despondency undercuts the two 'Spots of Time.' Both 'the visionary dreariness' (XI 310) of the gibbet scene and what the thirteen-year-old boy 'watched/Straining' (XI 360-361) with his expectant eyes on 'a day/Stormy, and rough, and wild' (XI 355-356) signify not only the possibility of humanistic love working in cooperation with the divine love, but also the keen perception of the paradox that mingles these two kinds of love. This paradox could be resolved on condition that the apocalyptic meanings of the letters inscribed on the turf under the gibbet by 'some unknown hand' should be deciphered, and, moreover, that the uncertainty about which of 'two highways' the figure in the mist 'advanced in such indisputable shapes' (XI 381) might take be predicted beforehand. These impossible riddles are not separable because of the indefiniteness of the messages these two spots

carry with them. The stratification of the implications of virtue, embedded in the dreary landscape of the two 'Spots of Time,' is thus derived from those obscure conditions. The mystery of meaningful signs is presented in this cooperation of divine and human love. So long as Nature is instinct with spiritual life, it is the task of the poet to decipher the mystery with the help of Imagination working cooperatively with Fancy. Nevertheless, Imagination sometimes refuses to deal with the materials of Fancy. The real objects, in reverse, demand the poet to exert a unity of self-conscious and internal contemplation. The two 'Spots of Time' episodes thus explicate the duty of a poet thrown into this paradoxical situation.

How Wordsworth could manage to fill up the vacancy between these two incongruous kinds of love and consciousness? Ellis's suggestion of a presupposed psychological trauma is convincing enough, because it puts an emphasis on the particularities of these two 'Spots of Time.' Having recourse to Freudian psychology, he interprets them as a particular place where the poet unconsciously faced human mortality in solitude. And yet, why do these two 'Spots of Time' need to be transferred to Book XI in the *1805 Prelude*? Unlike the *1804 Prelude*, they precede the contemplation scene on the top of Mt. Snowdon.

There are in our existence spots of time,  
Which with distinct preeminence retain  
A renovating virtue, whence, depressed  
By false opinion and contentious thought,  
Or aught of heavier or more deadly weight  
In trivial occupations and the round  
Of ordinary intercourse, our minds  
Are nourished and invisibly repaired—  
( XI 257-264)

The substantive 'virtue' was modified by 'fructifying' in *The Two-Part Prelude of 1799*, as well as in *The Five-Book Prelude of 1804*. The revision of the word entails the change of its signified as well. In the intermediate stage of revision, especially in de

Selincout's text of 1805, it was modified by the epithet 'vivifying.' (20) In that expression, 'vivifying virtue,' according to the note given by Shunichi Maekawa, (21) the spots acquire a wider geographical implication, because he assimilates these spots to 'green spots' in the desert (X 440).

And as the desert hath green spots, the sea  
Small islands in the midst of stormy waves.  
(X 440-441)

The geographical entailments of 'Spots of Time' thus provide the reader with a clue to probe its essential nature. In addition to the paradox of divine and human love, 'Spots of Time' is given a spatial expanse where both nature and moral can spread out.

Apart from the psychological and the geographical interpretations of 'Spots of Time' as were discussed above, Bishop's argument focuses on the significance of memories the time sequence of the *1805 Prelude* brings about. In the passage which runs through between the two episodes of 'Spots of Time' in Book XI, Wordsworth insists upon the importance of childhood memory.

The days gone by  
Come back upon me from the dawn almost  
Of life; the hiding-places of my power  
Seem open, I approach, and then they close;  
I see by glimpses now.  
(XI 333-337)

Metaphorically speaking, the spots as 'the hiding-places' consolidate the geographical specialties throughout *The Prelude* so as to bring about the healing effect to the poet in depressed mood. Several geographical places in *The Prelude* have a special personal attachment of the poet invoking his happy memories. Moreover, these are the spots where some solitary figure, or the borderer, in Jonathan Wordsworth's

terms, came into view in accordance with the working of the poet's fancy, i.e., the fictitious imagination. For example, in Book VIII, the two special spots are referred to; the shepherd lad in "Matron's Tale" cherished the special 'spots' (VIII 256) where he used to graze his father's sheep. There was a special 'spot' near the poet's cottage which enkindled '[a] willfulness of fancy and conceit' (VIII 520) in the poet so as to make simple objects in Nature 'burnished' in his imagination, but he had never dared to visit the place. It was to the place near 'the elder-tree that grew/ Beside the well-known charnel-house,' (1805 VIII 526-527) where the vagrant woman with her babe, (22) 'a widow staggering with the blow/Of her distress' (VIII 533-534) had made a visit the whole year round. It was 'a black rock' (VIII 566) within a copse opposite his cottage which always glistened like 'a burnished shield, I fancied, /Suspended over a knight's to me' (VIII 573-574) in the declining sun. Whether drawn from the real world or from the imaginary world, these spots are accompanied with the poet's sweet memories of childhood. At the decisive moment when the two 'Spots of Time' are severed from his personal context, Fancy comes into play at these special loci, and the geographical implications accelerate the movement of poetico-cultural transference.

To the contrary, in Book X, the word 'spot' appears twice with impressive emotional load of fear. One is 'the last punctual spot of their despair' (X 17), which is encircled by the elated crowd just after the execution of Louis XVI. Through the fearful image of regicide, the glory of the chivalrous past begins to deteriorate into obsessive fear. The other spot is referred to with the memories of the French Revolution. It recalled the room in the hotel near the place of Carousel where the poet had stayed in the midst of great social upheaval. It was 'a spot/ That would have pleased me in more quiet times.' (X 58-9) These geographical places in Book X are thus interrelated with the social and cultural origin of fear. Through the poetico-cultural transference the obsessive fear finds an appropriate expression at 'Spots of Time,' though implicitly. In other words, geographical spots help the expression to weld and solidify the overall design of *The Prelude*. The cycle of terror and nightmare which is set opposed to that

of spiritual revelation is assimilated to and accelerated in the involute movement of poetico-cultural transference. This explicit fear is depicted at the St. Bartholomew Fair of Book VII:

What a hell  
For eyes and ears, what anarchy and din  
Barbarian and infernal — 'tis a dream  
Monstrous in colour, motion, shape, sight, sound.  
(VII 659-662)

The description above outlines one mode of imagination under which 'the eye was master of the heart.' (XI 171) This positive aspect of Imagination as Power can intermingle with the sense perception directed toward the real in a mimetic mode. Consequently, in this mode, every act of imagination is to be usurped by the despotic sense of sight to relinquish its critical examination of initial human insight. The emotion evoked in this deteriorating cycle is fear and guilt, which is similar to the one shown in the famous skiff stealing episode in the 'Spots of Time' series. After having committed the act of stealing, the boy is tormented by the dark mood of his conscience. (23)

The geographical implications of the spots, wavering between the chivalrous, innocent past and the realistic social fear, are expressed being commingled in the involute of memories. All of them are derived from the dream-like consciousness. In addition to the dislocated time sequence, the extended space helps the poetico-cultural transference consummate these invisible movements obscurely as if in a gleam. In a series of 'Spots of Time,' poetic imagination is introduced to the context of dream vision, 'gleams.' Several spots are especially dear to the poet, for they evoke those visions shimmering in gleams, in 'gleams like the flashing of a shield,' (I 614) 'gleams of moonlight' (II 143) or 'gleams of water.' In connection with the chivalrous past, the old White Lion at Bowness is introduced, focusing on the engravings on its front door, 'with chaises, grooms, and liveries.' (II 130) They kindle a faint longing for the chivalrous past, as did the burnished rock figuring the shield in the coppice. In its

garden, the poet paid attention to 'a grove, with gleams of water through the trees/And over the tree-tops.' (II 165-166) On his return home, the boy poet had a dream-like vision in the tunes of a flute-playing comrade who was intentionally left on the island.

...while he blew his flute  
Alone upon the rock, oh, then the calm  
And dead still water lay upon my mind  
Even with a weight of pleasure, and the sky  
Never before so beautiful, sank down  
Into my heart and held me like a dream.

(II 175-180)

All these familiar spots are dear to Wordsworth, because they invigorate his love for ordinary things in Nature as well as for fellow human beings. His love is not necessarily related with the sublime 'light divine,' the spiritual revelation.

The power of imagination, working in 'gleams,' gives motion to the unconscious, in a half-receiving and half-creating state at the two 'Spots of Time.' The imagination is waiting for the moment to be ignited from within, even in the conscious mind. Since the poet is still shut out from a flash of the 'empyrean light,' not only he but also the spots themselves aspire to the very moment to be ignited by 'an auxiliary light/Came from my mind' (II 387-388) all the more intensely. An 'auxiliary light' at those spots is still in a state of gleam accompanied by the fear and the dream. If a central Romantic preoccupation is to seek reconciliation between the perceptive and the creating minds, Wordsworth thus prepares the locus for that peculiar reconciliation by substantiating two complementary opposites in time and space, as the oddly transferred positions of two 'Spots of Time' implicate. What Keats found in Wordsworth as 'the wordsworthian or egotistical sublime' (*Letters of John Keats*, 157) is always under the threat of collapse.

In the *1805 Prelude*, the natural world reflects the poet's inner mind, a mental structure of consciousness. Accordingly, the deciphering process needs to be assisted not only by the sight alone but also by the 'mind's eye.' In the passage referring to the two 'Spots of Time,' (Book XI 257-264) the power to carry out some 'renovating virtue' refers to 'this efficacious spirit (that) chiefly lurks/Among those passages of life.' (XI 267-268) Naturally, it presupposes the working of the secondary imagination, fancy. While 'this efficacious spirit' is at work perceiving 'the transient' in the visible world, it is liable to evoke some power which is capable of subverting the context of imagination. The poetic imagination cannot be the transcendental power 'to hold communion with the invisible world.' (XIII 105) Wordsworth's definition of the Imagination inevitably necessitates the subsidiary power working in that communion. The subsidiary power plays a role of generating subtexts to extract a new meaning from simple realistic forms. It should be noted that this generative power is not derived from the mimetic function of the imagination but from 'a willfulness of fancy and conceit,' (VIII 522) although it sounds a little paradoxical. A poetico-cultural transference of Wordsworth concurs mostly in this paradoxical function of the imagination.

The poetico-cultural transference, on the other hand, presupposes the ability to decipher the stratified layers of meaning, of figurings, for the hieroglyphs of divine love demand the workings of 'a sensitive, and a creative soul.' (XI 256) This soul is set almost equivalent to a fictitious imagination working in an aggregate state. As it is oxymoronic, the concept of 'Spots of Time' in the *1805 Prelude* connotes this loosely combined aspect of imagination. It comes near to Fancy, in terms of Coleridge, which merges willfully with any arbitrary subtext and almost arbitrarily created by fancy and conceit on the reader's side.

In the two 'Spots of Time,' especially in the Hawkshead episode, this ambiguous secondary imagination, fancy and conceit, brings forth an apocalyptic significance set in the mode of anxiety. As Geoffrey H. Hartman pointed out, the 'anxiety of hope' is



symbolized in the position of the thirteen-year-old boy on the crag at Hawkshead, who was overlooking the meeting points of two highways, while stationed by a single sheep on his right hand side and a whistling hawthorn on his left. His position suggests as if he were 'at the centre of a stark clock.' (24) His alienated position is apocalyptic, symbolizing his cultural as well as social status itself. He is isolated from the society as a marginal presence. Paradoxically, his isolated posture and alienation from the community allows him to loiter freely in the middle of maternal Nature. In the subsequent episode of his father's death, which took place only 10 days after this scene, this apocalyptic configuration becomes more conspicuous. It is shown as something not necessarily tied with the intuition to perceive the divine vision. It is not directly connected to the inner revelation of the sublime will: it only made the boy feel that he was unruly chastised by God.

Located at the crossing point of what had happened and what might have happened and visited by the intermittent duplication of the visible and the invisible in the mist, the boy-poet might have experienced 'those mysteries of passion which have made...One brotherhood of all the human race.' (XI 84 & 88) But a similar anxiety inherent in human beings is compatible with the hope he might experience in a similar circumstance. An anxiety and fear invite human beings to unite in 'one brotherhood.' In this context, the boy appears to reiterate the selfsame experience the humble shepherds once had near Bethlehem on Christmas Eve. Nevertheless, it is the poet's particularized anxiety that forced him to attribute the meaning of his experience to this symbolic ritual. Thus, the sordid reality of his father's death can adjoin the personal meaning to the apocalyptic meaning of redemption. On the other hand, the intrusion of perverse subtexts, for example, the coming of Hamlet's ghost or of Napoleon, subverts the reality which is rooted in a quotidian life. The movement thus involves the unspoken sorrow, the non-verbalized desolation of the boy-poet at his father's death as well as his depression when he witnessed the coming of the dictator into the power.

The poetico-cultural transference involves such an adjoining movement of the personal to the historical meaning.

At particularized geographical spots where the secondary imagination as an associative power dominates, the landscape begins to transform, wearing 'the shapes/Of wilful fancy.' (VIII 584-585) The results affect the connotations of the situation as well as of the real objects. In these plausible, subjunctive places fit for the metamorphoses, the neutralization and animation of natural objects take place as well. In this poetical transfiguration, the paradox of divine love and human love is to be intensified by duplicating the figure of the shepherd and the boy-poet on the crag in this scene. (25) The role of the shepherd is not restricted to that of the seer with profound cognizance. He can be the emblem of spiritualistic presence at the misty interface between imagination and religious faith. The unreal shepherd in this border vision can signify the 'efficacious spirit.' Thus, shedding off his reality, he transforms himself to the typical border vision.

A solitary object and sublime,  
Above all height, like an aerial cross.  
As it is stationed on some spiry rock  
Of the Chartreuse.

(VIII 407-410)

Paradoxically, in the apocalyptic level of reading, where the boundary between spirituality and the material is intentionally blurred, a shepherd as a common man appears in the mist putting on this materialized aspect. The apocalyptic configuration is not necessarily secured by intuition. If the figure of Christ is to be perceived as the covenant of the Love of our Father, the reader tends to see it in such obscure, undefined natural phenomena as the mist, the clouds, or the wind. Actually, the poet perceived this visional process of coagulation in gleams of his inner revelation, which are the components of border experiences. In other words, the poetico-cultural transference is carried out in this making process of border visions.

The self-contradiction contained in the text/subtext relationship in Wordsworth demands the reader to give attention to two factors in the first episode of Penrith Moors. The episode concerns the gibbet the five-year-old child witnessed and the implicit reference to the crime the murderer committed. Whether fictional or self-conscious, several intentions accumulate themselves to form layers of meaning in the episode. Both the gloomy images of the gibbet and the murder are not free from colourings of fiction, though. When told in the perspective of chronology, nevertheless, the time invites the dreary impressions of the spot to transform themselves into the place of a golden dream fiction. It refers to the experience of the seventeen-year-old poet who paid a visit to this same place with his future wife, Mary Hutchinson, and his sister, Dorothy, on one hand. These contradictory images and visions the poet-narrator attached to this spot indicate that the important connotations of the 'Spots of Time' are supported by a Romantic preoccupation to seek a unity of self-conscious and internal contemplation. How to decipher layers of connotations is, accordingly, passed over to the readers, including the poet devoted to revisionary work, by making the most of the secondary imagination. With a retrograding time order, the reader is barely able to deconstruct the stratification of meaning. In other words, he can reconstruct his own text out of the offered materials in those accumulated meanings. This author-reader relationship is an inevitable aspect of the poetico-cultural transference.

Besides the time sequence, signs of vagrancy offer useful clues to the reader. The signs appear in the forms of mist, in characters on the turf, or in the woman with her skirts vexed in the wind.<sup>(26)</sup> They make points of reference either to reality or the imaginary, like a flip-flop where the reader's secondary imagination is invited to join that of 'a soul divine.' (V 16) In the *1805 Prelude*, the two 'Spots of Time,' as the locus of involution, make up a fictitious mechanism where the human form is divorced from humanity as well.<sup>(27)</sup> The secondary imagination, working to decipher the subtext, does not always aim at revealing the sublime in Nature. What is reconstructed and

refigured in the image of verbal construct prepares the way to the plurality of interpretations, but it is always under the threat of fading away. The unstable verbal construct is always undercut either by the self-generative subtext, which tries to seek the restoration of the suppressed voice, or by the numerous outer texts generated out of the readers' fancy, even if it is aimed at what the text does not say.

Finally, at the interface of the two 'Spots of Time,' which were structurally set in a transferred position in the 1805 version, the two-fold, essentially contradictory function of poetic imagination—one working as mimetic and the other as apocalyptic—provides the perpetually moving locus of the involute. There, the spiritual autonomy of the poet, 'egotistical sublime,' resides the poem on one level, but the boundless and indefinite, that is, cultural readings on the other concur to fill in the lacuna of subject vs. object, while the cleavage perpetually widening between reality and the verbal construction. Symbolically, the two 'Spots of Time' in *The Prelude* implicate the internal structure which substantiates the process of how Wordsworth's fancy selects the variable meanings in the creative process to construct them in a poetic form. As the following chapters show, his subjective pattern of intentional selection operates essentially in the same way in his poetico-cultural transference. It is set in accordance with the mode of cultural transference. It is a pity that by 1832, when he completed a final revision of *The prelude* to give it a form of *The 1850 Prelude*, Wordsworth seemed to feel the loss of the original strength of imagination the two experiences at those 'Spots of Time' had provided him. He believed that this special locus could ignite and vivify the inspiration, and that a process of unconscious reparation should be exclusively carried out there. For Wordsworth, the factual reality itself is not worth representing, unless it refers to the invisible order perversely in retrograde order.

NOTES:

(1) See William Empson, "Sense in the *Prelude*," *The Prelude; 1799, 1805, 1850*, Jonathan Wordsworth, M. H. Abrams, and Stephen Gill eds., London: Norton, 1979, pp.625-641.

(2) See Jonathan Wordsworth ed. *William Wordsworth: The Prelude; The Four Texts*, Penguin, 1995.

(4) 'While the ambivalence of Romantic poems is sometimes reflected in a stylistic heteronomy within the poem, at other times it is expressed less dubiously through ambiguity in the illocutionary force attributed to the argument of the text. Both Prometheus Unbound and Coleridge's conversation poems uneasily hypostatize mental representation, by using modes of discourse that claim the status of affirmative statement for a vision that is elsewhere conceded to exist only in the subjunctive mood of desire.' (Tilottama Rajan, *Dark Interpreter*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980, p.24)

(5) Jerome J. McGann, *The Romantic Ideology*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1983, p.100.

(6) See Hugh Sykes Davies, *Wordsworth and the Worth of Words*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986, p.133.

Applying the Freud's theory of the actively selective powers of perception, Davies insists that the essential isolation of 'Spots of Time' and their difference from the usual texture of experience make them distinct and vivid in the memory, and that the richness of associations gathered from the later experiences enable them to be re-lived as new elements of experience. Accordingly they can grow and change in their own fashion. Wordsworth's sense of the involute and of the processes of involution in experience, Davies says, is best shown in the word one, in which both thought and feeling are to be involved within the concrete experience.

(7) Later in "Preface" to *Poems* (1815), he elaborated the definition following William Taylor's "Synonyms discriminated by W. Taylor" and Coleridge's distinction of fancy and imagination polarity.

(8) As Helen Darbishire points out, in the revised 1850 edition of *The Prelude* we can easily perceive Wordsworth as 'a devoutly religious Victorian Englishman who earnestly tries to translate his thought into the terms of an orthodox Christian creed.' (Helen Darbishire, "Wordsworth's Prelude," *The Prelude*, Casebook Series, W.J. Harvey and Richard Grail eds., London: The Macmillan Press, 1979, p.91)

(9) 'Using the phrase in a loose sense, the "Spots of Time" must include the descriptions of Wordsworth's boyhood exploits as a snarer of woodcocks, a plunderer of birds nests, a skater, a rider of horses, and such single events as the famous Stolen Boat episodes, the Dedication to Poetry, the Discharged Soldier, the Dream of the Arab-Quixote, the memory of the Winander Boy, the Drowned Man. Entering London, the Father and Child and the Blind Beggar. Simplon Pass. The Night in Paris. Robespierre's Death, and Snowdon. Some would wish to include the memories of childhood play as Cocker-mouth, and the moment under the rock when Wordsworth heard 'The ghostly language of the ancient earth.' (1805 II 309) or such border-line

cases as the Druid Reveries.’ (Jonathan Bishop, “Wordsworth and the ‘Spots of Time’,” *The Prelude*, Casebook Series, pp.134–135)

(10) ‘In nearly all the major episodes in *The Prelude*, except the two spots of time, Wordsworth is scrupulously attentive to the evocation of what might be called the foregoing state of mind of feeling.’ (David Ellis, *Wordsworth, Freud and the spots of time*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985, p.6)

(11) ‘This cycle of experience, involving the correction of the interpretations held at the moment by the perceptions of another, is exactly what we find exemplified in the passages illustrating the ‘Spots of Time’...There are two of them, the experience of the pond and the gibbet (XI 279ff) and that of the father’s death (XI 346ff).’ (David Simpson, “The Spots of Time: Spaces for Refiguring” *Modern Critical Interpretations: William Wordsworth’s The Prelude*, New York: Chelsea House, 1986, pp.139–140)

(12) Duncan Wu, “Introduction,” *The Five-Book Prelude*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1997, p.17.

(13) ‘I have remarked that *The Prelude* has a circular organization. This circularity of its form, we now see, is correlative with the circularity of its subject matter.’ (M. H. Abrams, “The Design of *The Prelude*,” *The Prelude 1799, 1805, 1850*, p.594)

(14) David Ellis, *Wordsworth, Freud and the spots of time*, p.64.

(15) ‘There are no more trances, moments of exaltation in which the individual enters into direct contact with the principle of being; but the border vision—in abeyance as one would expect while the poet felt himself to be a borderer—has returned in a vividly imaginative form.’ (Jonathan Wordsworth, *The Borders of Vision*, Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1984, p. 26)

(16) David E. Simpson, *Wordsworth and the Figurings of the Real*, The Macmillan Press, 1982, p.63.

Simpson thinks what the “spots of time” passage exemplifies is the cycle of the interpretations held at one moment by the perceptions of another, for the mind can contain, says he, “a whole range of formulations of the mind-world relation.” (ibid. p.65)

(17) ‘It could be that Wordsworth’s two spots of time would not have retained their interest, both for him and then for his readers, if they were entirely coherent...the consequence of this failure is that the spots are likely to remain impenetrably obscure in several of their details and that some element of ‘filling-in’ is therefore unavoidable in any attempt to make sense of them.’ (David Ellis, *Wordsworth, Freud and the spots of time*, pp.81–82)

(18) As to the interpretation of Coleridge’s definition of the primary and the secondary imagination, I take sides with Walter Jackson Bate and his disciple Jonathan Wordsworth: the perception and the creation in the infinite I Am (the primary imagination) is to be echoed in the finite, restricted self-consciousness (the secondary imagination): (see Jonathan Wordsworth, *The Borders of Vision*, pp.83–86)

(19) Jonathan Bishop, “Wordsworth and the ‘Spots of Time’,” *The Prelude*, Casebook Series, p.145.

(20) 'Wordsworth's third attempt at this highly important adjective, and certainly the neatest, though less striking in its implications, than, either "fructifying" (1799) or "virifying" (the intermediate stage, printed in de Selincourt's text of 1805, but in fact corrected very early to "renovating" in both faircopies.' "Notes," *The Prelude: 1799, 1805, 1850*, Norton, p.428)

(21) Shunichi Maekawa, 'Notes,' *The Prelude by William Wordsworth*, Tokyo, Kenkyusha, 1971, p.188.

(22) She reminds us of the figure of Martha Ray in "The Thorn" or of Margaret in *The Ruined Cottage*.

(23) Later in the narration, the poet experiences the same pattern of the threatening conscience at Paris in the middle of the tumult of French Revolution; he seemed to hear as if he were Macbeth, 'a voice that cried/ To the whole city, 'Sleep no more!'' (X 76-77)

(24) Geoffrey H. Hartman, "The Poetics of Prophecy," *High Romantic Argument*, Cornell University Press, 1981, pp. 81-82.

(25) First it was the shepherd who made the poet aware of the love for humankind, as was told in Book VIII.

My first human love,  
As hath been mentioned, did incline to those  
Whose occupations and concerns were most  
Illustrated by Nature, and adorned,  
And shepherds were the men who pleased me first. (V111 178-182)

(26) For example, when 'mists and steam-like fogs' are hanging over, and gleams of sunshine are being cast 'on the eyelet spots' (VIII 88) upon the mountains, and in that small enclosure a shepherd and his dog seemed to appear like 'an aerial island floating on.' (VIII 98)

(27) When a series of woman figures in *The Prelude* are examined in detail, including 'a hunger-bitten girl,' (IX 512) who was motivated by Wordsworth's sympathy with the ideology of French Revolution, or a mysterious woman in the Penrith Moor with a pitcher on her head, they all function as a sort of nodes where the outer texts merge and flow into the verbal construct.

\* This Chapter is based on the paper originally given at "The Wordsworth Summer Conference at Dove Cottage 1989."

## Chapter 4

### The Transmutation of “The Discharged Soldier” under Social and Political Ideology\*

In 1970, Beth Darlington published a text entitled *The Discharged Soldier* in *Bicentenary Wordsworth Studies*. Since then, the text has been regarded as an independent and coherent poetical work by Wordsworth. It is true that the work has much strength and beauty as well as peculiar qualities seen in the poems written by young Wordsworth. Furthermore, such anthologies as *William Wordsworth* (Oxford Authors) and *William Wordsworth: an illustrated selection* (ed. Jonathan Wordsworth) include the text as an independent poem. But a similar text with a story of a discharged soldier can be seen in Wordsworth’s autobiographical poem *The Prelude* (Book IV ll.363–504 in the 1805 version, and ll. 369–468 in the 1850 version).

The episode has been regarded as one of the ‘Spots of Time’ sequences in *The Prelude*. But it is not included in the *Two-Part Prelude* of 1799. It is in Book IV of the newly arranged text of *The Five-Book Prelude* with slight modification that the episode first appears. For those who have had access to the poetical world of Wordsworth mainly through *The Prelude*, the text of *The Discharged Soldier* is disturbing enough, because it poses the question to the structural coherence of *The Prelude*. On the contrary, for those who evaluate the textual autonomy of *The Prelude* more than anything else, the text of *The Discharged Soldier* is superfluous, because the episode is properly embedded within *The Prelude* itself. A similar relationship can be seen between *The Prelude* and *There Was a Boy* as well as between *The Prelude* and *Vaudracoeur and Julia*. In order to decide which position is adequate, we should be reminded of the fact that *The Prelude* itself remained unpublished in his lifetime and constantly underwent revision as we examined it in the previous chapter.



When *The Discharged Soldier* is read as an independent poem, it is found to deliver a peculiar message of protest against social evil. The tone of social protest and human compassion is radically distinct from that of a similar episode in 1850 *Prelude*, which is meant to reverberate through the tone of benevolence of Victorian Christianity. Furthermore, this independent poem slightly contradicts the moral of the 1805 version, which puts an emphasis on the validity of creative process severed from divine inspiration. Thus, the text of the discharged soldier episode is linked to the dominant principle of each version of *The Prelude*. How much tightly the text is embedded within *The Prelude* is dependent on how much highly Wordsworth thought of the authorial intention over the textual priority.

( 1 )

Which is the authentic text among the four—*The Discharged Soldier*, and the episodes in *The Five-Book Prelude*, the 1805 and the 1850 *Prelude*? It is quite difficult to give a definite answer, because the text was preserved in a manuscript form, so that its literary authority is exempt from ‘the dialectic between the historically located individual author and the historically developing institutions of literary production.’ (*A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism*, 81) But if we dare to decide the authentic text, we should do so by solving an important problem: what is the alleged ‘intention’ of an author, which is apparently in a constant flux, because the author is often uncertain of his aim at the time of his revision.(1)

Very few versions of *The Prelude* were published during Wordsworth’s lifetime. And all the texts of the discharged soldier episode remained in manuscript form during Wordsworth’s lifetime. According to Beth Darlington, the external evidences shown in the manuscripts—The Alfoxden and Christabel Notebooks and MS.Verse 18A—suggest that Wordsworth possibly ‘considered including *The Discharged Soldier* in *Lyrical Ballads*(1800), but altered it, and then decided against publication.’ (Darlington

429) Nicholas Roe points out that Wordsworth intended that the ever unfinished poem *The Recluse*, which was more politically radical than philosophical, should include the text of *The Discharged Soldier* (2). These surmises are based on the evidence that its text was not autobiographical at the start. Moreover, many revisions, which date back to early spring of 1804, must have been first made at the time when Wordsworth incorporated the poem in Book IV of *The Five-Book Prelude*, and then in Book IV of the 1805 *Prelude*. According to Wu (Wu 34), it was in March 1804 when Wordsworth made a decision to extend the former into the thirteen-book form. Around 10 March, the *Five-Book Prelude* was either completed or came very close to it, but on 12 March he decided to reorganise his material and work toward the longer version of *The Prelude*. For that reason he seems to have cut out the text of MS. Verse 18A to 142 lines.

This brief textual history delineates at least two authorial intentions clearly: one is that the poem *The Discharged Soldier* was composed as a separate, independent poem, and the other is that during the revising or editing process the poet decided to incorporate it into *The Prelude*. Still the poet's motive is not yet revealed, although the above process suggests the inherent fictitious of the 1805 *Prelude*. Although the poet himself is responsible for this revision, unlike the *Two-Part Prelude* of 1799, both the *Five-Book* and the 1805 version were written with the intention to include un-autobiographical material from the start. In other words, the 1805 *Prelude* as well as the 1850 version occupies the precarious position. The author sets the limits of his own autobiographical material by freeing it from chronological order. As a result, the poetic mind of Wordsworth cannot but encounter the difficulty of maintaining the central concern of Romantic poets, 'something of the interacting unity of the self' as observed by Geoffrey H. Hartman. (*Beyond Formalism* 302)(3)

In order to emphasize the autonomy of the original text of *The Discharged Soldier*, the textual collation, based on documentation, would be an insufficient tool. Conversely, the authorial intention to incorporate the independent work *The*

*Discharged Soldier* into the autobiographical scheme cannot be separated from his internal as well as ideological necessity. Since this chapter aims at pinning down several problems derived from the fictitiousness of *The Discharged Soldier*, it is necessary to start with defining 'fictitious' as an unselfconscious medium in Hartman's terms. 'Consciousness' in the Romantic poet is, according to Hartman, 'only a middle term, the strait through which everything must pass.' (Hartman 303) This unselfconscious medium is that which the Romantic poets seek to establish as a literary work, and which is approximate to the verbal expression we call text. Admitting the literary work is more or less 'an unselfconscious medium for itself' (Hartman 302) and the Romantic "I" is 'the I toward which that I reaches,' (Hartman 304) even the observed, objective images of the author is destined to partially reflect not only the subjective desire of the author but also the circumstances in which he had to exist. On the other hand, the flow of authorial intention could be largely interrelated not to the anti-self-consciousness, that is, the rational, analytic intellect, but rather to the historical self-consciousness of the author. The self of the author is regarded as something that can be thus integrated in and around the verbal expression or the text. The author is located in the dynamic intertextual flow of the poetico-cultural transference as the corner stones on which social and cultural institutions are constructed. Reversely under that kind of historical condition, individual readers are allowed to become a part of the objectified authors.

Our argument of poetico-cultural transference is supported by the above premise. When we read the text as a social construct, as Michel Foucault suggests, the authority of the author is reduced to nothing but 'a certain functional principle by which, in our culture, one limits, excludes, and chooses' the textual relevance. (4) Another possibility, however, is that the authorial function is broader and more flexible than we expect especially when we assume the author to be an ideological figure. In the socio-historical dimension, he can be both the medium and the nature of social

unconscious of the society. The transmutation process of *The Discharged Soldier* into one episode in the *Prelude* is derived from this hypothesis.

( 2 )

When Wordsworth revised the manuscripts of *The Discharged Soldier* for its final publication prior to his death he seemed to have performed not only the role of a delimiting functional author but also that of the sympathetic reader. Evidently, at the time of revision, he was working with the eye of a reader fully equipped with the historical, political ideology of his time. He is the very person involved in the poetico-cultural transference of his time.

According to Darlington, both *The Discharged Soldier* and *A Night-Piece*, a short lyric which possesses an intrinsic similarity to *The Discharged Soldier*, were composed at Alfoxden in the winter of 1797–1798. The intention of the author at that time was to compose a poem which was completely separate from the *Two-Part Prelude*. Nevertheless, it should be noted that both poems were much indebted to Dorothy's *Alfoxden Journal*. For instance, the natural setting where the surrogate speaker encounters the soldier repeats the phrasing of Dorothy's *Journal*. Dorothy's description of the peaceful quietness and the solitude of the night were as follows: '[a]t once the clouds seemed to cleave asunder, and left her in the centre of a black-blue vault.' (5) This is echoed in 'The clear moon & the glory of the heavens./There in a black-blue vault she sails along' (lines 10–11 of *A Night-Piece*) or in 'the dark blue vault, and universe of stars' (line 20 of *The Discharged Soldier*, line 204 of *The Five-Book Prelude*, and line 384 of the 1805 version). This phrase is deleted in the 1850 version. Nonetheless, there is a reference to a strange, uncouth howl of the manufacturer's dog in Dorothy's *Journal*, which disturbed the natural tranquility, 'all was peace and solitude.' She writes, 'It howls at the murmur of the village stream' (Dorothy Wordsworth 4). In lines 81–83 of *The Discharged Soldier*,

The chained mastiff in his wooden house  
Was vexed, & from among the village trees  
Howled never ceasing.

The howling of the dog implies its uncanny sensation that some alien existence is approaching. The discharged soldier, guided by the speaker, is introduced as an unreal, nightmarish presence, while the speaker himself is vexed at the soldier's 'murmuring voice of dead complaint.' (line 79) The howling of the mastiff thus intensifies the emotional uneasiness of the speaker:

...the village mastiff fretted me,  
And every second moment rang a peal  
Felt at my heart.  
(*The Discharged Soldier* 130-3)

These vivid observations succinctly expressed disappear from *The Five Book Prelude* version onward.

Wordsworth's way of arranging this episode in the following *Prelude* versions helps to create much of its fictitiousness. The episode was grounded more on the unselfconscious medium, half created by the sensibility of the other self, the Romantic "I." The speaker was well aware of this fiction, or the superficiality of his self, created in the stillness of night and solitude.

Thus did I steal along that silent road,  
My body from the stillness drinking in  
A restoration like the calm of sleep,  
But sweeter far. Above, before, behind,  
Around me, all was peace and solitude:  
I looked not round, nor did the solitude  
Speak to my eye, but it was heard and felt.  
Of happy state—what beauteous pictures now  
Rose in harmonious imagery! They rose  
As from some distant region of my soul

And came along like dreams.

(*The Discharged Soldier*, 21–30, & *1805 Prelude* IV ll.385–394)

In this context of a dream-like vision, an obvious Miltonic echo intrudes both into *The Discharged Soldier* and the *Prelude*. In fact, the episode in Book IV functions as a sort of parody. In the two texts, the soldier appeared in front of the speaker as ‘an uncouth shape.’ The image is used to signify a ghost, as is obvious from the etymology of the word ‘ghastly’ in the following lines:

His arms were long, and bare his hands; his mouth  
Shewed ghastly in the moonlight.

(1805 IV 410–411)

When set in a Miltonic context, the figure implicates a type of Death.

The other shape,  
If shape it might be called that shape had none  
Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb,  
Or substance might be called that shadow seemed,  
For each seemed either...

(*Paradise Lost*, Book II 666–670)

While the materials of the *Two-Part Prelude* can be traced back to the poet’s personal childhood memories, the insertion of the discharged soldier episode in the *Five-Book*, the 1805 and the 1850 versions of *Prelude* is yoked to these intertextual restrictions, creating the fictitious and the grotesque. The episode got charged with the layers of implications. Although the actual materials came from Dorothy’s “Journal,” its intertextual relationship goes back to Milton, and to Dante and Shakespeare. In a sense, the image of the discharged soldier shares the permanent significance of all the deathly archetypes (6). The episode itself attains a certain dubiousness surrounding the authenticity of the autobiographical experience. The problem of textual authenticity apart, there occur a lot of naïve questions. Did the

speaker actually meet the soldier? If so, when did this in person meeting take place? What did he do to help the soldier? The unanswerable questions persist in vain.

As to the place of encounter, however, Jonathan Wordsworth points out that the poet had a special landscape in mind: the steep ascent where the speaker mounted up in the episode in Briers Brow, above the Windermere Ferry; ‘a sudden turning of the road’ round which the soldier was discovered is just past Far Sawrey, three miles from Hawkshead. In the lines of the 1805 version, the distance to ‘a village’ ‘whose roofs and doors/Were visible among the scattered trees’ (1805, IV 426–7) is referred to as ‘an arrow’s flight.’ (line 428) The actual distance from Far Sawrey to the place of encounter with the soldier is about three miles, as is implicated in the description ‘a milestone’ on which he is propped. The authorial intention to shorten the distance from the actual three miles to ‘an arrow’s flight,’ which is approximate to 300 yards, serves to intensify the fictitious nature of the episode.

There still remains a fundamental question: is the incident of the discharged soldier historically accurate? Referring to the soldier’s tale,

That in the tropic islands he had served,  
Whence he had landed scarcely ten days past—  
That on his landing he had been dismissed,  
And now was travelling to his native home.  
(1805 IV 446–449)

Jonathan Wordsworth again gives us the sufficient knowledge of its historical background. The soldier had been to the West Indies. ‘It is reckoned that by 1796 the British forces there has lost 40,000 men through yellow fever, and that as many again had been rendered unfit for further service—being no doubt dismissed on their return.’ (“Footnote,” *A Norton Critical Edition*, 148)(7) Duncan Wu also emphasizes the fictionality of the soldier’s tale, labeling it anachronism. ‘Wordsworth has in mind the campaigns against the French that occurred in the mid-1790s, although the encounter took place during the long vacation of 1788.’ (“Note” 43, 116) It becomes

clear that the discharged soldier episode itself acts as an enabled story which is synthesized not from direct autobiographical material but from fragments of various narratives. This episode is dealt with in the *Prelude* as a sort of joint to consolidate all the layers of fictitious within its loose boundary. Thus, it enables the poetico-cultural transference involving the social-cultural circumstances within it.

From the viewpoint of fictitious story, which allows one reality to be replaced by an illusion, the small alterations of the details catch our attention. For instance, in the 1850 version, the period of the soldier's military service was lengthened to 'three weeks' from the 'ten days' in the two previous versions. In the *Five-Book*, the height of the soldier was not especially mentioned; 'He was of stature tall.' (l. 224) But in the 1805 version, he is mentioned as '[a] foot above man's common measure tall' (l. 406), while in the 1850 version his height is exaggerated so as to become '[a] span above man's common measure tall.' (l. 391) Thrown into the liberated boundary of fiction in 1850 version, the soldier is given a mythical status. As regards the fidelity to the minute details, to think much of the particular palpable facts is of use to disguise and mitigate the dubiousness surrounding the subject matter. In the meantime, the reader, including the surrogate author at the time of the textual revision, is still hung in a suspended, restless position.

A more elaborate discussion is needed to validate these elements in the poetico-cultural transference, for it sometimes is accelerated by the narrator's defection from the governing political principle. The fictitiousness of the discharged soldier episode became rather roughly embedded in the 1805 and 1850 *Prelude*. In the *Five-Book Prelude*, the central theme of imagination impaired and restored governs the structure itself. The moral of this version is that the apparently opposed realms of life and death are unbridgeable. Consequently, there is no need to emphasize the ghostlike feature of the soldier. Whereas, the structural design of the 1805 version puts the discharged soldier episode just after the revelation scene. The contrast of the politically deserted soldier and the awakened poet provides a flip-flop between the



subject and the object relationship. In this beautiful revelation scene, the poet realizes that he was a chosen son of God, that 'bond unknown to me/Was given, that I should be—else sinning greatly—/A dedicated spirit...' (1805 IV 342–344) The moment of revelation visited him in the sublime natural setting of the sunrise, again, deliberately echoing Milton's lines:

The sea was laughing at a distance; all  
The solid mountains were as bright as clouds,  
Grain-tinctured, drenched in empyrean light.  
(1805 IV 333–335)<sup>(8)</sup>

In contrast to this solemnity, the discharged soldier episode reveals an oddity, mixing a historical self-consciousness and a parodic tone. At least, with regard to the Miltonic echo, it signifies the awareness of the speaker as a dedicated poet. However eccentric it may sound, this derogated recognition sets the keynote of *The Prelude*, and serves as an unselfconscious medium between the author and the reader. Even if we admit McGann's observation that one important feature of Romanticism is 'the belief that poetical works can transcend historical divisions by virtue of their links with Imagination' (Jerome J. McGann, *The Romantic Ideology*, Chicago 100), how far can concrete symbols such as the discharged soldier or the blind beggar 'forego any immediate social or cultural points of reference in order to engage with its audience at a purely conceptual level' ? (McGann 101) His assertion requires careful scrutiny, especially in the case of Wordsworth. As our discussion on 'Spots of Time' sequence in Chapter 3 suggests, Wordsworth is the poet who deliberately endeavours to sever the precarious link between the connotations of a symbol from its social and cultural points of reference in the course of his deliberate textual revisions. In the revising process of *The Prelude*, any symbol would become equated with a depicted scenery on one hand, while it is internally fissured and undercut by his deepening awareness of historical reality. As a result, the multiplicity of conflicting social codes are to be

unified into the “I,” the speaker. In “*The Discharged Soldier*,” however, a perspective of social relations remains intact among multiple voices of the speaker. The expectation was so great in this independent poem that it might provide an alternative framework for delineating the cultural politics of textuality. In other words, that is why a more comprehensive and flexible concept, the poetic-cultural transference, is needed to explain the essentials of Wordsworth.

To the poet narrator, the time gap between the summer vacation he spent in Hawkshead as a Cambridge student in 1788, when he might have encountered the real soldier, and the presumed, imaginary encounter with the soldier in 1796 must have meant internal turmoil and violent social changes that could not be summarized in a simple statement. In 1791 after graduating from Cambridge, he went to France and became a sympathizer of the Girondins. In 1792 in Orleans, he fell in love with Annette, and, presumably soon after the birth of his daughter, he returned to England. The war then broke out between Britain and France, inevitably preventing his return to France, and separating him from his French lover and daughter against his will. In short, during these eight years, he personally witnessed the glory and the failure of the French Revolution (9). His personal hope and peace were shattered. He came to realize that his millennium vision would be unattainable through political means.

Wordsworth seemed to have experienced profound mental agony, while trying to reconcile the ideal and the actual then. At one time, he sought a rescue in Godwinism. Nevertheless, in *The Prelude*, the commotion of those eight years was displaced by a verbal uncertainty sinuously implied in the adverbial phrases of ‘at that time’ (1805 IV 346) and ‘[t]hat summer’ (1805 IV 353). Naturally, neither *The Discharged Soldier* nor *The Five-Book Prelude* possesses a description of his internal reflection on the Revolution, ‘A parti-coloured show of grave and gay.’ (1805 IV 347) The discharged soldier episode was thus introduced in the 1805 and the 1850 versions by the manipulated use of adverbial phrases, making possible a smooth replacement of the actual by fiction. Furthermore, it is suppressed into the obscure phrase, ‘[s]trange

rendezvous.’ (1805 IV 346) The phrase ‘[s]trange rendezvous’ describes the speaker reminds ‘at that time’ (1805 IV 346) as one of the speaker’s experiences in ‘[t]hat summer, swarming as it did with thoughts/Transient and loose.’ (1805 IV 353) Only the loosened structural framework in the poetico-cultural transference could make this yoking possible between the particular experience and the general historical event. As the result, everything is to be integrated in the harmony and unity of the dream.

Oh happy state! what beauteous pictures now  
 Rose in harmonious imagery; they rose  
 As from some distant region of my soul  
 And came along like dreams—  
 (1805 *Prelude* IV 391–395)

The dream quality is intensified by the water image: ‘the road’s wat’ry surface, to the ridge/Of that sharp rising, glittered in the moon light.’ (*The Five-Book* 191–2; 1805 IV 371–2 ) Notably, this water image itself has already subsisted in *The Five-Book Prelude*. On the other hand, in the 1850 *Prelude*, the distortion of time sequence was reflected not in the dream but in the involute movement of time as such expressions as ‘the frown of fleeting Time’ (1850 IV 348) or ‘the hurrying world’ (1850 IV 354) suggest to us.

In addition to these devices to bridge over the time gap, the speaker’s attitude toward social evil particularly makes *The Discharged Soldier* distinguished from later texts. The poem includes lines describing the objective state of the suffering soldier. After his other-worldly quality was emphasized by his extraordinary height and lanky figure, there follows a very realistic description of the soldier’s gaunt figure.

There was in his form  
 A meagre stiffness. You might almost think  
 That his bones wounded him.  
 (ll. 43–5)

This realistic description of his appearance resembles that of the roaming soldier in the Salisbury Plains poems. It gives the reader an impression of utter helplessness. On the other hand, it was used paradoxically to underline his inner feelings of desolation and forlorn solitude.

He appeared  
Forlorn and desolate, a man cut off  
From all his kind, and more than half detached  
From his own nature.

(ll. 57-60)

If but a glove had dangled in his hand  
It would have made him more akin to man.

(ll.66-67)

It would not be exaggerating to suggest that, through this realistic presentation of the victim of the imperialistic war machine, Wordsworth wanted to express not only the haunted pathos of the soldier but also his own political protest against a ruthless national ideology with an intention of discarding the weak and helpless. Strange enough, this subdued tone of social protest is eliminated from the *Prelude* versions. The treatment of the discharged soldier episode thus reveals both internal and external changes in authorial authority.

( 3 )

Presumably in 1804, the revision of the *Two-Part Prelude* of 1799 to the 1805 *Prelude* took place. It required the integration of multiple narrating voices to organize the whole: the voice of Dorothy, of Milton, and the author Wordsworth during 1798-9. At that time, he could have believed in the potential capability of the unity of the self in the image of the One Life. Nevertheless, the *1805 Prelude* had to be constructed, retelling the materials of *The Five-Book Prelude* by the author Wordsworth in 1804.

Although by 1804 Wordsworth had already discarded the belief in One Life, he still held a Miltonic belief of Fall and Redemption as is evident in *The Five-Book Prelude*. In order to reconstruct the story of his own, Wordsworth attempted to stress the power of the Imagination as a surrogate scheme of religious belief in the 1805 *Prelude*. Accordingly, the transmutation of the text was carried out by converting the focus from realistic description to the unselfconscious medium of dream.

What puzzles the contemporary reader of the 1805 version, however, is the speaker's attitude toward the soldier. Why did he not take the suffering soldier to the near village, being the short distance of 'an arrow's flight'? He knew the soldier was weary and traveling home.

At this I turned and looked towards the village,  
But all were gone to rest, the fires all out,  
And every silent window to the moon  
Shone with a yellow glitter. 'No one there',  
Said I, 'is waking; we must measure back  
The way which we have come. Behind yon wood  
A labourer dwells, and take it on my word,  
He will not murmur should we break his rest,  
And with a ready heart will give you food  
And lodging for the night.

(1805 *Prelude* IV 450-459)

These lines are almost directly taken from *The Discharged Soldier*, except the description of the fires: 'all were gone to rest,/Nor smoke nor any taper-light appeared,/But every silent window to the moon,/Shone with a yellow glitter.' (105-108) In this poem, the detailed description of the village indicates the narrator's isolation in the community. So far as these lines show, the speaker himself is depicted as an outsider situated marginal to the community. Since '[n]or smoke nor any taper light appear'd,' (107) he seemed not to have the right to disturb the village people. If he dares to do so, he could perhaps be censured. Fortunately, these lines were cut off in the *Prelude* versions so that the consistency of the speaker as a good

Samaritan prevails. After having drunk of 'the stillness' (1805 IV 386), he may have possessed '[a] consciousness of animal delight.' (1805 IV 397) He does indeed feel like a surreal creature. The phrase depicting the soldier as 'a man cut off/from all his kind' (58-9) (deleted from the 1805 version) is covertly transferred to the speaker himself. He is made akin to some alien presence, like that of the ghastly soldier. For this reason, he hesitates to awake the sleeping villagers. This exclusion from society, probably due to it being a nighttime occurrence, the speaker or poet, marginal to reality, feels a sense of social solidarity with the discharged, suffering, apparition-like soldier in the poetico-cultural transference, although actually both of them are situated as outsiders, excluded from society preserving strict moral and material regulations.

In the section quoted above, the reader is informed that the speaker was firmly, ideologically tied to '[a] labourer' (1805 IV 45) in the wood. It would not be incongruous to suggest that the speaker of the 1805 version still holds to an ideology sympathizing with the French Revolution. The strange affinity between this discharged soldier and the hunger bitten girl cannot be ignored. The republican patriot Beupuy of Blois chivalrously claims in Book IX of *The Prelude*, ''Tis against that/Which we are fighting.' (1805 IX 519-520). Beupuy suggests the possibility of the imaginative identification of the girl as that of political idealism and equality of man, although the two figures share but solitude, leading the reader to visionary insight.

...in his very dress appeared  
A desolation, a simplicity  
That seemed akin to solitude.  
(1805 *Prelude* IV 417-19)

...the girl with her two hands  
Was busy knitting in a heartless mood  
Of solitude —  
(1805 *Prelude* IX 516-18)

Simultaneously we notice Wordsworth's doubt and anxiety about the dignity of poetic labour, as suggested by David Simpson in his analysis of "Gipsies." (David Simpson, *Wordsworth's Historical Imagination* 22–55)<sup>(10)</sup> However, the poet's self-projecting mood of 'anxieties about community and poetic labour,' (Simpson 34) is almost completely undetectable in the 1850 version. It is replaced by 'a round of strenuous idleness,' the phrase from a translation of Horace's *Epistles*, I. xi. 28.

...and the spirits overwrought  
Were making night do penance for a day  
Spent in a round of strenuous idleness—  
(1850 *Prelude* IV 375–7)

Within the organic unity of *The Prelude*, the episode of the discharged soldier is transformed and charged with the poetical identities of the fictitious poet-narrator. In other words, the process of metamorphosis revealed in the soldier figure represents the exchange of power relationship in poetico-cultural transference in Wordsworth.

By 1832, the approximate time for revising the 1850 version, Wordsworth had already transformed himself onto a Tory gentleman. Still, he kept the discharged soldier episode at the core of that loose, autobiographical structure of *The Prelude*, this episode expressing the significance of a first encounter with a type of Death in childhood. From the structural point of view, the episode prepares for the imaginary border vision of episode of the drowned man in Book V.<sup>(11)</sup>

In the 1850 version, the soldier's suffering was also deleted. Instead, his hermit-like appearance and deep religious belief were emphasized. He is no more 'the poor unhappy man.' (*The Discharged Soldier* 171, & 1805 IV 501) Rather, he is described as 'the patient man.' (1850 IV 465) He is transformed to one of Wordsworth's Old Testament patriarchs: a wise, old man with a staff like that of the Leech Gatherer, Michael, or the Old Cumberland Beggar. As the dominant mode of Wordsworth's writing shifted from the political imperative to imaginative receptivity,

the figure of social victim has been transformed from the marginal existence to that of the ultimate wisdom, thus transcending that obscure boundary which divides life and death. Although he is reduced to frightening inhumanity, he is also accounted for as one of the borderers. (12)

( 4 )

The argument on the fictitiousness in the discharged soldier episode necessarily requires an attention on the social and historical context in which the poet lived. In order to reveal the importance of 'the social and historical nexus which all literary works are involved with' (McGann 54), McGann cites the example of Uhland's works against Heine's critical commentary on them. In the historical discourse based on three different variants, 'the subject, the object, and the audience' (McGann 56), he observes the necessity of the reciprocal relation between Subject and Object. He insists, '[s]ubject and object must interchange their relations with each other' (McGann 56), referring to the case of Uhland's work and the Heine's changing response toward it.

Uhland's Romanticism causes his poetry to be completely imbued with that critical self-consciousness which becomes clarified in its self-consciousness. This characteristic of Uhland's poetical work forces a reciprocating historical self-consciousness upon Heine ...

(McGann 55-6)

His argument is very concise and persuasive especially when it deals with differences occurring in the same subject (i.e., Heine). In this case the subject might be as much 'subject to' the judgment of his critical 'object' (i.e., Uhland's work) so far as this object is necessarily under the sway of the subject-critic's judgment. But the case of the discharged soldier requires a different viewpoint.



When the transmutation of the discharged soldier episode is argued with an emphasis on the trajectory of authorial intention in his creative process, this schema of reciprocity does not show such a clear-cut outline. A good example is seen in the ideological difference between *The Discharged Soldier* and the two versions of *The Prelude*, *The Five-Book Prelude* and the 1805 *Prelude*. The variants themselves conflict with one another and move in a contradictory way, especially when they are set in different socio-historical dimension. In terms of McGann, the subject (including the audience) should confront the object changing with a subtle movement. Although Wordsworth did not mention it, a fundamental transformation of the base/superstructure relation is too fragile to explicate the nature of this subtle movement.

The authorial function provides the device to introduce several narrative contours and to consolidate voices, which constitute the society as such in the process of this poetico-cultural movement. In other words, it is an outcome of the historical institutionalization of textuality that allows the emergence of these multiple voices in “*The Discharged Soldier*.” In cooperating with this transient, transfiguring speaker within the socio-historical framework of reading, the audience, i.e., Wordsworth in his revising process, is, therefore, forced to concentrate on the reciprocating historical self-consciousness within the social communications held in loosely unifying cultural production. In the unselfconscious medium, that is, the story of the discharged soldier, the author, Wordsworth, cannot but be neutral. However, unlike the case of Uhland, all the connotations of historical self-consciousness in this alleged author were not previously embedded within the text itself. As we have seen, it changes in accordance with the formation of each version. As a result, this historical self-consciousness could not help taking a subdued, covert form of fictitious. For this reason, there has been and still is a varying fissure in characterizing the interdependency of each text. As a politically radical sympathizer, Wordsworth the Victorian changes his stance from a radical idealist to a religious conservative. On one

hand, his conversion is reflected in the 'object,' the text, at various stages of revision. This process as a whole is urged by and invigorates his life-long poetico-cultural transference. Consequently, each text carries the traces of shift in its narrative focus. In revising the poem, the poet not only read 'the poem itself,' but also re-experienced the poem as it had existed in the socio-historical space in which he had been living both as a poet and a reader.

#### NOTES:

(1) Wu questions the alleged 'intention' of the author itself, saying 'If, as Foucault suggests, the term "author" represents "the principle of thrift in the proliferation of meaning" (159), the allied concept of a specifically individual authorial intention must be equally suspect. This becomes all the more clearer when, as in the case of Wordsworth, we are confronted with a mass of manuscript material showing the alleged 'intention' to be in a constant state of flux, and, more importantly, uncertain of aim.' (Duncan Wu, 'Editing Intentions,' *Essays in Criticism*, Vol.XLI, January 1991, No.1, p. 4)

(2) '[T]he 1300 lines' of *The Recluse* would have comprised "The Ruined Cottage" and "The Pedlar," perhaps also "The Discharged Soldier," "Old Cumberland Beggar," and "A Night Piece." "Nature, Man, and Society" offers only a bare outline of Wordsworth's concerns in these poems, without suggesting any unifying philosophic intention. It does, however, recall very precisely Paine's formulation of democracy seven years earlier in *The Rights of Man*.' (Nicholas Roe, *Wordsworth and Coleridge: The Radical Years*, Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1988, p.34)

(3) 'Whether myth-making is still possible, whether the mind can find an unselfconscious medium for itself or maintain something of the interacting unity of self and life, is a central concern of the Romantic poets.' (Geoffrey H. Hartman, "Romanticism and Anti-self-consciousness," *Beyond Formalism*, Ithaca: Yale University Press 1970, p.302) The scrupulous revisions of *The Prelude* Wordsworth made throughout his life a touching attempt to find this evanescent reconciliation between an unselfconscious medium and the interacting unity of self.

(4) Unlike Hartman, who posits the author as an explorer who endeavours to make 'the journey beyond self-consciousness,' (Hartman 307) Foucault posits the author as 'the principle of thrift in the proliferation of meanings' on the ideological realm. 'The author is therefore the ideological figure by which one marks the manner in which we fear the proliferation of meaning.' (Michel Foucault, "What Is an Author?," *Textual Strategies*, Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1979, p.159)

(5) Dorothy writes on 25 January— ‘The sky spread over with one continuous cloud, whitened by the light of the moon, which, though her dim shape was seen, did not throw forth so strong a light as to chequer the earth with shadows. At once the clouds seemed to cleave asunder, and left her in the centre of a black-blue vault. She sailed along, followed by multitudes of stars, small, and bright, and sharp. Their brightness seemed concentrated (half-moon).’ (Dorothy Wordsworth, *Journals*, E. de Selincourt ed., 2 vols., Oxford, 1951, p.4)

(6) ‘As the discharged soldier is one of those shadowy figures clustered in *The Prelude*, such as the Arab with the allegorical shell and stone, or the blind beggar on the London streets, and they are those who do not belong to the ordinary world of time. He becomes a more imaginative figure when we project the image of ghost of *Hamlet* on him, or the role of Virgil of *Divine Comedy*. Since this scene is set just after the dedication scene in *The Prelude* Book IV. In fact the soldier is ‘a projection of the poet’s own personality, an embodiment of certain potentialities within himself which the poet chooses to confront and transform.’ (Herbert Lindenberger, *On Wordsworth’s Prelude*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1966, p.209), and his ‘ghastly figure has acquired an emblematic presence beyond the ‘simple fact’ of his personal history.’ (Nicholas Roe 143). Roe points out that the ‘old man’ resting at the stile in Chaucer’s ‘Pardoner’s Tale’ is called ‘dead-living swaine’ Malegar in Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene* (II. xi. 22) in addition to the example of Milton’s Death at the gates of Hell, and emphasizes his emblematic aspect.

(7) Although the real encounter with the soldier occurred during his stay at Hawkshead in the summer of 1788, Wordsworth intentionally gave a fictional detail to the soldier’s life history.

(8) Needless to say, the third pair of Raphael’s wings, which were actually his feet, were colored by ‘sky-tinctured grain’, that is, fast-dyed in sky-blue. But here the word ‘grain’ is associated with crimson. The revelation scene seems to refer to the poet’s personal experience during the summer in 1788, when Wordsworth, a Cambridge student, spent a long summer vacation at Hawkshead. After having enjoyed a country dance all night, he left close to dawn and when he witnessed the glorious morning scene and feeling a sense of inner revelation.

(9) We can see his naked, emotional response against its failure in the brief account given in *Memoirs*. At Paris his feelings were still disturbed by the abortive issue of Louvet’s denunciation of Robespierre: he began to forebode the commencement of the Reign of Terror; he was paralysed with sorrow and dismay, and stung with disappointment, at no paramount spirit had emerged to abash the impious creeds of the leaders of “the atheist crew,” and “to quell outrage and bloody power,” and to ‘clear a passage for just government, and leave a solid birthright to the state.’ (*Memoirs* i 76) (*Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, ed., Alexander B. Grosart, Vol. III, AWS Press, INC., New York, 1967, p.232).

(10) 'Wordsworth's poetry is constantly posing the question of its status as authentic labour.' (Simpson, *Wordsworth's Historical Imagination*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987, p.34)

(11) At the sight of a 'ghastly figure' of the soldier, the speaker boy had experienced 'a mingled sense/ Of fear and sorrow.' (1805 IV 421-2) This is in sharp contrast to the impassivity the nine-year-old boy speaker had at sight of the 'ghastly face, a spectre shape' (1805 V 472) of the drowned man who came out of the Esthwaite Water 'bolt upright' (1805 V 471) in a broad day light. Aside from this, there is the geographical nearness of Far Sawrey, where the imaginary encounter with the soldier took place to the Esthwaite Water, on the shore of which the boy witnessed the dead body in broad day light. This should be taken into account in light of structural continuity.

(12) 'To the poet in his creative reverie this seems a traveller who has returned from Hamlet's 'Undiscovered country'—he is a ghost, or, as the Miltonic echo implies, a type of death. And yet he is also one who has approached (and not yet crossed) the border, by virtue of his extreme suffering.' (Jonathan Wordsworth, *The Borders of Vision*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1984, p.14)

NB Since the recently established *Five-Book Prelude* also prints the page number of the 1805 version on the discharged soldier episode, the lines cited above follow those of the 1805 *Prelude*.

\*This chapter is a revised one out of the paper originally presented at the Wordsworth Summer Conference at Dove Cottage in 1991.

## Chapter 5

### Translation in the 1790's:

#### a Means of Creating a Like Existence and/or Restoring the Original\*

Romanticists' translation involves one of the main issues of Romanticism, not only because the art of translation served to extend the horizon of literature at that time, but also because it contained several points of central polemic on the conjunction of language and imagination. Since our argument on the poetico-cultural transference is largely concerned with Wordsworth's susceptibility to his contemporary cultural currents, relevant attention should be given to this critical issue as well. The circumstances are deeply related to the principles of translation in the 1790's which allowed a great amount of freedom in poetical translation especially. Unlike the rigidity of rules classical aesthetic of the 18th century demanded, the general tendency of the 1790's was toward innovation and novelty. Consequently, the request for translations of contemporary European literature, especially of German literature, became keen and they flourished in England in the 1790's. With a flood of translation of German literature flowing into England, starting from Schiller's *The Robbers* (1792), Romantic ambiguity, gaudiness, and extravagance prevailed in English literature. (1)

Plagiarism as unacknowledged copying has its roots in freedom of cultural transmission which translation made easy and accessible, and ultimately it brings about a simple questioning of the validity of translation. The issue of plagiarism, therefore, cannot be severed from contemporary polemic on the ideas of language as well as on the nature of imagination. Forgery, on the other hand, as is evident in the case of James Macpherson, signifies the blending of genuine material with the translator's own creations, so that it often contradicts and usually undermines the integrity of the creative imagination. The revolutionary movement to renovate poetic diction and style was accompanied by an intention to examine 'pre-established codes of decision,' (2)

which both Wordsworth and Coleridge had experimented with in *Lyrical Ballads*. Their intention is not unrelated to this cultural environment of the 1790's which encouraged the greatest liberty of translation in the appropriate process of poetico-cultural transference.

( 1 )

In order to explore the definition of translation in the 1790's, this chapter's view point is mainly set on *Essay on the Principles of Translation* (1791) by Alexander Fraser Tytler, Lord Woodhouselee. Tytler was one of the influential personages at the Royal Society of Edinburgh. His Essay was first published in anonymity, but in 1797 the second edition appeared, and the third edition came out in 1813 with additions and alterations. In the meantime in 1792, he published his own translation of Schiller's *The Robbers*. (G. G. J. & J. Robinsons: London, 1792) The *Essay on the Principles of Translation* is 'an admirably typical dissertation on the classic art of poetic translation, and of literary style, as the eighteenth century understood it.' ("Introduction," p. viii) In Chapter I, Tytler begins his discussion by referring to two opposite extremes in translation. At one extreme, 'the duty of a translator' is 'to attend only to the sense and spirit of his original, to make himself perfectly master of his author's ideas, and to communicate them in those expressions which he judges to be best suited to convey them.' (3) Notably, this idea of free translation had already been proposed by John Dryden in his "Dedication of the Aeneid," (1697) and Pope's translation of the *Illiad* could be counted as a good example. The other extreme idea is 'that, in order to constitute a perfect translation, it is not only requisite that the ideas and sentiments, of the original author should be conveyed, but likewise his style and manner of writing, which, it is supposed, cannot be done without a strict attention to the arrangement of his sentences, and even to their order and construction.' (Tytler 8) It would be appropriate to recall here that with such rigour Malcom Laing censured the work of

Macpherson in 1805. (*The Poems of Ossian, & containing the Poetical Works of James Macpherson, Esquire, in Prose and Rhyme, with Notes and Illustrations. By Malcom Laing, esq.*, Longman, 1805) It was from the camp of Gaelic scholars who were faithful to this line that Macpherson received a heavy blow. Tytler's definition of good translation is a very moderate one:

That, in which the merit of the original work is so completely transfused with into another language, as to be as distinctly apprehended, and as strongly felt, by a native of the country to which that language belongs, as it is by those who speak the language of the original work. (Tytler 9)

He deduced three laws from the above definition on this line:

- I. That the Translation should give a complete transcript of the ideas of the original work.
- II. That the style and manner of writing should be of the same character with that of the original.
- III. That the Translation should have all the ease of original composition.

(Tytler 9)

The 18th century critics as a whole would not admit the value of literary translation, because their view point is mainly set on the tacit understanding of imitation theory, the understanding that language is capable of making the tightly knit correspondence between the word and the object relevant.

It is rather surprising to know that at the end of 17th century, in 1697, Dryden had already proposed the idea of free translation and actually practised it in his version of *Aeneid*. In the long preface to this work, he declares that a free translation is a kind of means to destroy the Aristotelian mimesis. He begins his argument by refuting the necessity of three unities:

Tragedy is the miniature of human life; an epic poem is the draught at length. Here, my Lord, I must contract also; for, before I was aware, I was almost running into a long digression, to prove that there is no such absolute necessity that the time of a stage action should so strictly be confined to twenty-four hours as never to exceed them, for which Aristotle contends, and the Grecian stage has practised. (4)

Having discussed the genealogy of great poets, Dryden touches on a clear definition of plagiarism; it is to tell the same story under other names, with the same sequel. His point is that translation is not ‘a servile copying,’ while plagiarism is definitely such:

[b]y reading Homer, Virgil was taught to imitate his invention; that is, to imitate like him; which is no more than if a painter studies Raphael, that he might imitate Virgil, if I were capable of writing an heroic poem, and yet the invention be my own: but I should endeavour to avoid a servile copying. I would not give the same story under other names, with the same sequel; for every common reader to find me out at the first sight for a plagiary, and cry: ‘This I read before in Virgil, in a better language, and in better verse: this is like Merry Andrew on the low rope, copying lubberly the same tricks which his master is so dexterously performing on the high.’ (5)

According to Dryden, in a faithful, almost slavish copying which is equivalent to a plagiarism, no original invention by the translator could be perceived. What matters is an original intervention, not a faithful copying. Translation or transmission of an idea—either of truth or of beauty—could be achieved, only when the subjective, original intervention of the translator himself existed. In our own terms, therefore, ‘a servile copying’ is approximate to what a translating machine does. On the basis of his perspicuous recognition that there could be no exact translation between two different languages, Dryden insists, ‘therefore I will boldly own, that this English translation has more of Virgil’s spirit in it than either the French or the Italian.’ (6) Since no true picture of the original work could be attainable due to the essential difference of the languages, the best way is ‘not to translate a poet literally.’ (7) The criterion of



sincerity of translation should be set between ‘the two extremes of paraphrase and literal translation,’ (8) but at least, Dryden asserts, the relevance of translation should be measured by how much of the ‘spirit of the author’ and the ‘beauty of his words’ are transmitted into the translated work. As a model of his verse translation in English, therefore, Dryden had in mind the names of Spenser and Milton, great English poets who possess a great ‘spirit’ similar to Virgil’s:

[T]he words are, in Poetry, what the colours are in Painting: if the design be good, and the draught be true, the colouring is the first beauty that strikes the eye. Spenser and Milton are the nearest, in English, to Virgil and Horace in the Latin; and I have endeavoured to form my style by imitating their masters. (9)

But, in practice, Dryden refused to use their historical, rather archaic, language. Poetry should be written in spoken language that contemporary intellectuals might use:

[T]aking all the materials of this divine author, I have endeavoured to make Virgil speak such English as he would himself have spoken if he had been born in England, and in this present age. (10)

It is a remarkable statement indeed. Although all poetic revolutions try to move poetic language closer to common speech, Dryden as a reformer consciously manipulated the diction of his translation so as to assimilate it to the spoken language of the gentry or the intellectuals of his age. Although Dryden was not aware of it, his notion of language had already foretold not only the assertion made by Wordsworth and Coleridge a century later but also our contemporary view on language that the meaning is mainly determined in a circuit of discourse. It is the listeners or the readers who predetermine the kind of discourse an author should choose. His anti-diachronical position toward the idea of language is nearer to Coleridge’s than to Wordsworth’s.

In 1715, Alexander Pope declared that he would translate the *Iliad* into English. After spending five years, he finished the work, and then in 1726 his translation of

the *Odyssey* was published. Compared to the rival translation made by Thomas Tickell, a classical scholar, *The First Book of Homer's Iliad* (1715), it lacks accuracy, for it is full of the translator's imagination intervened at its utmost. According to Samuel Johnson, it is 'the noblest version of poetry which the world has ever seen,' and the stern academic, Thomas Bentley, might have said, 'it is a pretty poem, Mr. Pope... You must not call it Homer.' (11) Although he rebelled against the literary taste established by Pope and his followers, Coleridge admitted the value of Pope's translation of the *Iliad* calling it 'that astonishing product of matchless talent and ingenuity.' (12) Curiously enough, when translating a part of Schiller's *Wallenstein*, Coleridge's principle of translation was fidelity in attention to the original:

In the translation I endeavoured to render my Author literally wherever I was not prevented by absolute differences of idiom; but I am conscious, that in two or three short passages I have been guilty of dilating the original; and, from anxiety to give the full meaning, have weakened the force. (13)

Tytler himself naturally defended Pope, saying his 'liberty of translation was perfectly allowable,' (Tytler 32) although the latter had abundantly used metaphorical expressions which Homer himself rarely used.

Due to the contribution of Dryden and Pope, the range of freedom in translation has been widened, but at the same time the translator has been under a continual demand that all the talents are requisite for his work, that is, he has to have no less imagination than learning. Thus, the issue of translation leads to the question of how to define imagination in the Romantic period. Wordsworth's statement in "Preface" to *Lyrical Ballads* needs to be interpreted in this enlarged context of poetico-cultural transference.

The second premise, necessarily required in discussing what translation is, is that in the 1790's there emerged a confusion in the concept of language itself; and the fluctuation between the Nominalists and the Realists can be distinctly seen in Wordsworth's recognition of the nature of Coleridge's education at Cambridge.

In spite of Dryden's or Pope's achievements in translation, the eighteenth century would not admit the value of free translation, because of the Enlightenment intellectuals' ideas on language which were mainly nominalistic. They were structured, basically, on the tacit understanding of imitation theory. The concept of a great chain of being was still unbroken at the end of the century. According to mimesis, language is capable of keeping the tightly knit correspondence between the word and the thing. The purest form of this nominalistic correspondence is seen in the form of mathematical symbols. It is based on a simple belief that the essential root meanings of the word can be traced back to the things as referents. This notion is supported by the Epicurean observation that 'to think' is only 'to be thinged,' that is, to be represented by things, i.e. concrete objects ( *OED* thing v.2.) making use of external things within the range of the Adamic doctrine of the original perfect language. The double conformity that languages are in fundamental accord with nature so that all abstractions can be traced back to concrete words, nouns, or verbs, and that language is a simple nomenclature to the inventory of the world is severed by John Locke, though his famous model of mind as *tabula rasa* still retains the mirror image reflecting the authority of scriptural revelation. Locke declares man is a sociable creature and words are the voluntary signs of man's ideas; 'words in their primary or immediate signification, stand for nothing, but the ideas in the mind of him that uses them.' (*An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Book III, 364) The mind is a waxed tablet into which sensations, like seals, impress themselves.

As M.H. Abrams's ingenuous model of the mirror and the lamp suggests, the Copernican revolution in epistemology emerged in the metaphor of mind. The mind in perception is active. It contributes to the world in the process of perceiving the world,

discovering what it has itself partly made. Romanticism defines itself as an aggressive movement to shatter the mirror image by an inner light of passion and imagination. Romantic theory of language is, therefore, to rely on the expressionist theory in which language is tied much closer to the inner, subjective thinking process rather than the outward object or thing. (See the more detailed discussion in Chapter 7.) It is a theory which inevitably involves ambiguity and is liable to invite confusion, for it is regulated by a subtle ‘balance,’ an ‘interchange of action from within and from without’:

I seemed about this period to have sight  
Of a new world—a world, too, that was fit  
To be transmitted, and made visible  
To other eyes, as having for its base  
That whence our dignity originates,  
That which both gives it being, and maintains  
A balance, an ennobling interchange  
Of action from within and from without.

(1805 *The Prelude*, Book XII 370–377)

To specify the period mentioned in this passage would be almost impossible, because *The Prelude* is not a chronological-framed poem, but it is likely to refer to the period between 1791 and 1796. At the end of this period, Wordsworth became acquainted with Coleridge. In Wordsworth, the typical confusion of ideas on language in the 1790s can be seen, especially in the important passages of Book VI of *1805 Prelude*, which refers to his experience of crossing the Alps in 1790. Here, Wordsworth is concerned about Coleridge by means of contemplation about language; he thinks in terms of the mediaeval scholastic philosophy, that of ‘the schoolmen,’ and he wrongly censures Coleridge as a person deplorably absorbed in it:

I have thought  
Of thee, thy learning, gorgeous eloquence,  
And all the strength and plumage of thy youth,  
Thy subtle speculations, toils abstruse

Among the schoolmen, and Platonic forms  
Of wild ideal pageantry, shaped out  
From things well-matched or ill, and words for things—  
The self-created sustenance of a mind  
Debarred from nature's living images,  
Compelled to be a life unto itself,  
And unrelentingly possessed by thirst  
Of greatness, love, and beauty.

(1805 *The Prelude*, VI 305-316)

Coleridge used language for its own sake. In Wordsworth's view, it is '[t]he self-created substance of a mind,' and cannot be equated to the thing nor the perception, that is, 'nature's living images.' It is rather a means to express his own thoughts or his excited personal idealism, 'unrelentingly possessed by thirst /Of greatness, love, and beauty.' But Wordsworth did not make a definite statement about whether Platonism, 'Platonic form,' is the antecedent of Coleridge's Unitarian pantheism, 'a life unto itself,' or not. Coleridge's ideas on language are more clearly stated by himself later in *Biographia Literaria*, where he dared to reunite a Nominalistic division of things and thoughts in the dynamic nature of the total undivided philosophy. At the beginning, his idealistic standpoint is as follows:

[w]here the ideas are vivid, and there exists an endless power of combining and modifying them, the feelings and affections blend more easily and intimately with these ideal creations, than with the objects of the senses; the mind is affected by thoughts, rather than by things. (14)

As the editors of Princeton University Version point out, Coleridge, nevertheless, managed to reach a precarious conclusion that in the miracle of poetry things and thoughts join as one.

The conscious self becomes an intermediary for things and thoughts, and in the self they become one. If things and thoughts had a true interpenetration, then

Coleridge muses, that would be ‘the Iliad of Spinozo-Kantian, Kanto-Fichtian, Fichto-Schellingian Revival of Plato-Plotino-Proclian Idealism.’ (15)

The quotation of ‘the Iliad of Spinozo-Kantian, Kanto-Fichtian, Fichto-Schellingian Revival of Plato-Plotino-Proclian Idealism’ is from Notebooks entry 2784. Taking another course from German transcendentalism of a higher synthesis, Coleridge managed to make ‘a profound connection,’ which he intuitively had grasped already in “Kubla Khan,” and which Wordsworth could not.

Wordsworth’s ambiguous understanding of the relationship between logos and pantheism and of its subtle ‘balance’ might originate in his non-discursive language, but it can be ascribed to a more general view of ideas of language. Moreover, because of his ambiguity, his poetry is more vulnerable to the poetico-cultural transference than Coleridge’s. Wordsworth’s stance is akin to one of a universalist, however idiosyncratic as it could be. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, there were two fundamental schools of linguists: the relativists and the universalists. (16) The universalists maintain that the underlying structure of all languages is the same and, accordingly, it is common to all men, while the relativists hold that there are more differences than similarities in language and that those differences are the product of historical and cultural determinants. As a representative of the universalists, there stands Joseph Priestley. (*A Course of Lecture on the Theory of Language and Universal Grammar*, Warrington 1762) He professes his creed in a universal language, saying ‘a philosophical and universal language, which shall be the most natural and perfect expression of human ideas and sentiments, and much better adapted than any language now in use, to answer all the purposes of human life and science.’ (17) A lineage of relativists begins with Leibniz, Vico, Hamann, Humbolt, and the Schlegels, and, in England, Horne Tooke can be nominated. It appears that Coleridge follows the line of the latter under the influence of the Schlegels.

So far as his observation on Coleridge’s linguistic ideas in Book VI of the *1805 Prelude* concerns, Wordsworth seems to insinuate his opposition to the above

relativist's schema. According to Wordsworth's understanding, the Unitarian philosophy of oneness recognises and constructs the universe not in terms of Plato-Plotino-Proclian Idealism, but in terms of more tightly organized hierarchy of the Thomist Scholasticism. This schematization is too simple to explain the historical validity, and, accordingly, it also suggests some confusion lurking in Wordsworth's ideas of language. As Coleridge explicitly stated in Chapter 17 of *Biographia Literaria*, language comes into being through the voluntary act of the human being:

The best part of human language, properly so called, is derived from reflection on the acts of the mind itself. It is formed by a voluntary appropriation of fixed symbols to internal acts, to processes and results of imagination, the greater part of which have no place in the consciousness of uneducated man. (18)

Language cannot reproduce concrete things. Coleridge thus puts an emphasis on the true relation between words and ideas. Though language is an organised instrument to express one's inner act of the mind, it cannot be separated from the active act of reading and understanding by the aid of imagination. Coleridge is not a simple relativist who presupposes the voluntary application of word; that is, the arbitrariness of words as sign in order to fit them to that active, inner proceeding. Instead of the static rigidity of the Scholastic model, what Coleridge had in mind is an idea of language as an arbitrary sign of the mind. As George Steiner points out, Coleridge is one of the few critics who have said anything new and comprehensive about language, and who deserves to be ranked along with Vico, Humboldt, Saussure and Jakobson. (19)

For Wordsworth, however, especially at the time of composing Book VI of *1805 Prelude*, language did not necessarily signify "words for things." Instead, it should carry the burden of Logos so that it could convey the meaning of apocalypse in "symbols of eternity":

The rocks that muttered close upon our ears,  
Black drizzling crags that spoke by the wayside

As if a voice were in them, the sick sight  
And giddy prospect of the raving stream,  
The unfettered clouds and region of the heavens,  
Were all like workings of one mind, the features  
Of the same face, blossoms upon one tree,  
Characters of the great apocalypse,  
The types and symbols of eternity,  
Of first, and last, and midst, and without end.  
(VI 562–572)

Coleridge admires this passage, thinking it a typical example of ‘[t]houghts all too deep for words!’ (“To William Wordsworth”) For Wordsworth, ‘[s]ymbols of eternity’ are capable of keeping in touch with immortality. In this unpredictable region of eternity, there exists no barrier of seclusion between life and death, which rigidly exists in view of us the mortal creatures. Wordsworth would not fixate language as a separate, individualised entity. It should be flexible enough to be impressed by any outward mold, which expands its borders infinitely, even in the very process of the poetico-cultural transference in the historical dimension. In other words, his position is akin to the generalist theory of language. Here resides his idiosyncratic acceptance of the universalistic theory.

Later, probably between December 1809 and February 1810, Wordsworth discusses language as an emanation of the mind in “Essays upon Epitaphs.” Language can function most effectively when it is set on the point somewhere in the continuity of life and death or when the fantasy of death is thought to be an outgrowth of life. In this precarious region, the subtle balance of co-relativity or co-existence of language and object becomes conceivable as well as tenable. When this promise of precarious condition is not fulfilled, as a result, it breaks into the antithesis of language and object. There emerges a deep chasm of meaninglessness at this point. Once fallen into this chasm, the deteriorated and inflated language expressed in the clothing metaphor of ‘those poisoned vestments’ (ibid., 361) changes itself into evil, ‘a counter-spirit.’ (ibid.)



To the contrary, the apparent incongruity of life and death is stitched in the beautiful metaphor of incarnation:

Words are too awful an instrument for good and evil to be trifled with; they hold above all other external powers a dominion over thoughts. If words be not (recurring to a metaphor before used) an incarnation of the thought but only a clothing for it, then surely will they prove an ill gift; ... Language, if it do not uphold, and feed, and leave in quiet, like the power of gravitation or the air we breathe, is a counter-spirit, unremittingly and noiselessly at work to derange, to subvert, to lay waste, to vitiate, and to dissolve.

("Essays upon Epitaphs," 361)

This precarious conglomeration of the external and the internal is an alternative way of expressing the image of benevolence. It is verbalized in terms of Logos, which Wordsworth had long cherished. A similar expression is found in the image of blossoms upon one tree in the Simplon Pass episode of Book VI, *The Prelude 1805*. As was pointed out by Jonathan Wordsworth (20), the metaphor is of the same sort of Popean unity of mechanical universe filled with divine benevolence. Nevertheless, Wordsworth's deviation from Pope is conspicuous here:

All are but of our stupendous whole,  
Where body nature is, and God the soul  
That (charged through all, and yet in all the same)  
Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,  
Glow in the sun, and blossoms in the trees...

(*Essays on Man*, II 266-272)

While Wordsworth appears to have attacked what he thought to be a Scholastic idea of language in Coleridge in the passage of the *1805 Prelude* (Book VI), he still supported the idea of object-word equation. In the case of Wordsworth, the object is nothing but an emanation of divine presence, whatever form it may take. So long as Coleridge accepts the universalist's ideas on language (that is, the underlying structure of all the languages is the same), and so long as Wordsworth's admiration of

Coleridge's poetical genius continues, this organic structure could be arranged in order according to nearness to the original purity, Logos. For Wordsworth, the purest form of emanation is reduced to the Word as an incarnation, as he explicitly stated in "Essays upon Epitaphs." In this simplified notion of language, any abstractions, '[c]haracters of the great apocalypse,' can be traced back to concrete words, 'blossoms upon one tree.' In a sense, Wordsworth's idea of language is not logically consistent.

Wordsworth's rather idiosyncratic acceptance of the universalist theory plays a crucial role in translation. Even in 1850 "Preface," he even declares that the poet 'should consider himself as in the situation of translator.' (*The Prose Works*, 139) Moreover, according to his particularized scale of purity, the language of rustic people is to be ranked high. In this context, his deviation from the orthodoxy is as blatant as it was in 1800. To Wordsworth the poet, the language of these rustic men is 'purified indeed from what appear to be its real defects,' because 'the manners of rural life germinate from those elementary feelings.' (21) He declares without hesitation, 'such a language, arising out of repeated experience and regular feelings, is a more permanent, and a far more philosophical language, than that which is frequently substituted for it by Poets.' (ibid.)

Coleridge's idea of language, to the contrary, does not admit this linear scaling, nor the idea of imitation as copying which Wordsworth the radical proposed. Coleridge stands on the relativist stance which holds 'that there are more differences than similarities in language and that those differences are the product of historical and cultural determinants.' (22) In *Biographia Literaria*, he made a clear statement of his objection to Wordsworth's primitivism, which is, as a whole, an eccentric descendant from the theory of imitation on the basis of the universalist's ideas on language. As to the passage in "Essays upon Epitaphs" quoted above, Coleridge says,

I object, in the very first instance, to an equivocation in the use of the word “real.” Every man’s language varies, according to the extent of his knowledge, the activity of his faculties, and the depth or quickness of his feelings. (23)

In addition to the arbitrariness of the word as a sign, Coleridge presupposed the concept of *Parole*, the individual manifestation, set opposed to the social, collective *langue*, in terms of de Saussure. He even recognised the significant dimension of sociolinguistics:

Every man’s language has, first, its individualities; secondly, the common property of the class to which he belongs; and thirdly, words and phrases of universal use. (24)

From his viewpoint, more modern and more scientific than that of Wordsworth’s, the variant factors such as historical and cultural determinants become intensely meaningful. They are able to replace the simplified and purified, which are integral in Wordsworth’s notion of language. Coleridge refutes Wordsworth’s idiosyncratic monism in language. Once the symbolic equation between an object and a word is cut out, the meaning begins to acquire a potential duplicity or multiplicity:

[T]he language so highly extolled by Mr. Wordsworth varies in every county, nay in every village, according to the accidental character of the clergyman, the existence or non-existence of schools; or, even, perhaps, as the exciseman, publican, or barber happen to be, or not to be, zealous politicians, and readers of the weekly news-paper pro bono publico. Anterior to cultivation the lingua communis of every country, as Dante has well observed, exists every where in parts, and no where as a whole. (25)

Coleridge emphasizes that facts do not always mean truths. Only the imagination can reconcile the polarities of the spiritual and the concrete, i.e., idea and image, thought and thing, even if our experience tells us that a poet and a scientist could describe the same reality in different ways.

From the universalist's stance, which admits the premise of object-word equation, only the literary translation is permissible. While the characters and qualities of all languages can trace back their genealogy till they reach the same origin, translation functions as if it were clothing, sometimes obstructing and sometimes enabling our immediate contact with the naked truth. While he was writing "We are Seven," "The Idiot Boy" or "Goody Blake and Harry Gill," Wordsworth must have been eager to imitate and translate 'a plainer and more emphatic language' of these rustic people. Coleridge censures, however, such a type of representation as 'a species of ventriloquism.'<sup>(26)</sup> It means that the egotistic presence of the poet dominates the scene, and the language used in the poems is nothing but versions of his voice. The idea of free translation of 'the language of conversation in the middle and lower classes of society'<sup>(27)</sup> would not have emerged from Wordsworth's mind at all. Furthermore, in this kind of a materialistic or self-governed context, truth can easily slip into the thing, although the intuitive perception still lies at the bottom of abstraction. Free translation is an attempt to show it is not so. It is nothing but a relativistic feat. To deny the act of copying, as Coleridge suggested, is based on the concept that language is culturally and individually variable.

If the poet, the author, has clearly and rightly established in his own mind the class of the readers, to which he intends to address his communications, and if, in his choice as well as in the particulars of the manner and matter of the work, he conscientiously observes all the conditions which reason and conscience have been shown to dictate, in relation to those for whom the work was designed and realized the desired circumscription. <sup>(28)</sup>

Dryden's statements on free translation had been made on the basis of the denial of universality of language, or the historical truth. It is interesting to know that James Macpherson followed the footsteps of Dryden and Pope, who were acclaimed by Coleridge. From the perspective of eternal truth, as Wordsworth wrote in a Simlone Pass passage of Book VI, understanding and language are tightly united, for they 'were

all like workings of one mind.’ Relying on a similar recognition of the reader–response discourse, Macpherson, an eighteenth–century skeptic, took an imaginative approach to translation, which offered him much more freedom in translation. Unfortunately, it is a different path to approach free translation. Wordsworth followed him in manipulating Bürger’s ballads into his poem. His way of poetico–cultural transference is made through *via negativa* to the current intellectual stream.

( 3 )

When Macpherson was urged to translate the Ossianic poems in the Highland, only their fragments remained, most of them having been transmitted through the oral tradition. As an intellectual baptised by the Lockean skepticism, ‘Macpherson seemed to have shared a belief common in the Highlands that Ossian’s poems had been distorted by the succession of bards who had recited or recreated his poetry.’<sup>(29)</sup> Unlike Dryden, he believed in the presence of ‘a pure original,’ and wanted to restore it from ‘the corrupt remnants of an ancient tradition.’<sup>(30)</sup>

Macpherson’s Celtic world was one of noble warriors, not a quaint fairyland of giants and magicians, so the witches and monsters which feature in the popular Highland ballads had to be condemned as interpolations and stripped away.<sup>(31)</sup>

Macpherson dreamed of the 3rd century Caledonia as an Arcadia, and Ossian poems as a great national epic. In order to reconstruct the fragments according to this high design, the stories of the Viking invasions, which occurred obviously two centuries later, were inserted into the framework, for they were suitable for his vision of Fingal as a national hero. In translating Gaelic manuscripts into English, on the other hand, numerous embellishments were given by Macpherson:

If the existing poems were too corrupt to show off the genius of the Highlands to the outside world, Macpherson would use only the parts he considered fit and 'restore' the rest, according to his own ideas on ancient literature. (32)

The aim of Dryden's free translation was to recreate a resemblance endowed with the 'spirit' of the author, whereas the purpose of Macpherson's translation is to create an artifact much closer to the pure original. The latter involves a moment of deconstruction, free choice of material, and embellishment. Ten years afterwards, Macpherson published his translation of the *Iliad* (1773). He used in it a style similar to that which he developed for the Gaelic translations with the utmost care not to strip him of his ancient weeds. He took an opposite stance to Pope, who appealed to the general taste which prevailed in his contemporary Europe.<sup>(33)</sup> Nevertheless, his meticulous effort was not valued by Tytler at all. Macpherson tried to adopt an inverted construction of the Greek as far as possible, but it is 'incompatible with the genius of the English language.' (Tytler, 105) Although Macpherson followed Dryden in his attempt to adopt the 'spirit' of an original author, he rejected to use the contemporary discourse, 'such English as he would himself have spoken if he had been born in England, and in this present age.' For the sake of 'his ancient weeds,' Macpherson dared conform and adapt the English construction to that of ancient foreign language. From the viewpoint of Tytler's principles, therefore, his translation transgressed law III, '[t]hat the Translation should have all the ease of original composition.'

In the period when the art of translation had become of greater importance, Wordsworth's attitude toward translation of Bürger showed an interesting deviation from the prevailing tendency. As was pointed out above, his ideas on language would not be compatible with the notion of free translation. Instead, he had two choices: either to make a faithful literary translation or to make the most of the original work as a simple source of materials of his own work after decomposing it to constituent elements. The example of the first case is seen in his unfinished trial in "Translation of

Part of the First Book of the *Aeneid*.” It was written in 1816, but was published in *The Philologia Museum*.(1832) Conscious of Dryden, Wordsworth stated his ideas on translation in its “Note”:

Having been displeased in modern translations with the additions of incongruous matter, I began to translate with a resolve to keep clear of that fault, by adding nothing; but I became convinced that a spirited translation can scarcely be accomplished in the English language without admitting a principle of compensation. (34)

Needless to say, translation has long been accepted as an essential means to cultivate a good writer. Wordsworth was not the exception. In his youth, he had actually made his translations of Chaucer’s “Prioress’s Tale” and part of “Troilus and Cresida.” In 1801, he wrote a pseudo-Chaucerian poem, “The Cuckoo and the Nightingale.” In these translations, Wordsworth’s admiration of the original is clearly seen, and consequently they are branded as bad translations. (35) So long as he is faithful to the original and takes a reverential attitude to the original author, the imagination of Wordsworth the translator is kept under restraint. It can be liberated, however, in the opposite direction.

The most famous example of the latter is found in “The Thorn,” in which Bürger’s story of “The Parson’s Daughter” is pulled down completely, though its main theme of the cruelty of moral and sexual harassment is retained. Since William Taylor’s translation of Bürger’s ballad “Leonora, A Ballad from Bürger” first appeared in the March issue of *The Monthly Magazine* in 1796, several versions of translation concurred as if they had participated in a contest for literary fame. Besides Taylor, the Poet Laureate, Henry James Pye, J. T. Stanley (whose version contains a strikingly marvellous illustration by William Blake), W. R. Spencer (whose version was illustrated with Lady Diana Beauclerc) and even Walter Scott had participated in the contest. Scott’s version of “William and Helen” was published with “The Wild Chase” anonymously in 1796 at Edinburgh. John Aiken, the Editor of *The Monthly Magazine*,

made a comment in "Half-yearly Retrospect of the State of Domestic Literature," in January issue 1797:

The Public has been much amused and gratified by a contest for literary fame among the several translators of Leonora, a wild and extravagant, but uncommonly interesting German ballad. (36)

Bürger's three famous ballads, "Lenora," "The Lass of Fair Wone," and "The Wild Chase," made a great influence on Wordsworth, and they are respectively reflected in "The Idiot Boy," "The Thorn," and "Hart-Leap Well," respectively. (37) Especially in "The Thorn," Wordsworth's peculiar way of accepting Bürger is distinct.

Bürger's ballads were not genuinely German in origin. They contain various layers of translation and cultural transmission in themselves. Before Thomas Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (3 vols., London, 1765) was introduced to Germany, no German words corresponding to 'ballads' existed. Bürger (1748-1794) came to know Percy through Herder's dissertation on the songs of rude nations in 1772. Although he had been familiar with Shakespeare and Spanish literature, it was Herder who drew Bürger's attention to the ballads of England as well as to Percy's collection. He made a free translation of several ballads from Percy, such as "The Friar of Orders Gray" (Blunder Grauroch), "The Child of Elle" (Die Enthührung), and "Sweet William's Ghost" (Lenora), in which the scene of adventure was uniformly transferred to Germany. Without his experience of free translation, his finest ballads would never have been produced.

His extraordinary powers of language are founded on a rejection of the conventional phraseology of regular poetry, in favour of popular forms of expression, caught by the listening artist from the voice of agitated nature. Imitative harmony he pursues almost to excess: the onomatopoeia is his prevailing figure; the interjection, his favourite part of speech: arrangement, rhythm, sound, rhyme, are always with him, an echo to the sense. The hurrying vigour of his



impetuous diction is unrivalled; yet it is so natural, even in its sublimity, that his poetry is singularly fitted to become national popular song. (38)

As William Taylor's introduction above clearly indicates, Bürger's poems were characterised by a purely Germanic quality of phraseology. They have a tendency to intensify the qualities of spoken language to express rapid and impetuous movements of the soul, and of the tenderer feelings of the heart. Wordsworth seemed not to pay special attention to these qualities in Bürger. This is rather curious, for the very qualities of Bürger, 'a rejection of the conventional phraseology of regular poetry' or 'popular forms of expression, caught by the listening artist from the voice of agitated nature' resemble Wordsworth's manifesto in "Preface" to *Lyrical Ballads*, that is, to imitate and select 'the real language of men.' Instead, what he achieved in "The Thorn" was to manipulate the tragic story of a jilted girl in Bürger's 'The Parson's Daughter' in rather an arbitrary way. A story about a lovely Parson's daughter who was seduced by a landlord, discarded by him after pregnancy, and was ultimately driven to the crime of infanticide, was projected into the imaginatively interpreted life story of Martha Ray and her repeated ejaculation of 'Oh misery! oh misery! / Oh woe is me! oh misery!' This intentional blurring of the outline of the story is made possible by a technique of making most of superstition. The story was made to be filtered through a narrator who was prone to superstition. Though talkative, this retired Captain of a small trading vessel could not discern what is real from what is imaginary. In fact, Wordsworth made an experiment to imitate in reverse the spirited manner of relating, which he admired most in Bürger. The traces are so faint and vague that only a sympathetic reader can combine the two stories together. The sensational facts in Bürger where horror and pity are intensified, — 'the murdered infant (Forth from her hair a silver pin / With hasty hand she drew, / And prest against its tender heart, / And sweet babe she slew), the mother's bloody nails (With bloody nails, beside the pond, / Its shallow grave she tore), the mouldering flesh on the gibbet (Hard by the bower her gibbet stands: / Her skull is still to show), and the dreary pond (That is the

spot where grows no grass; / Where falls no rain now dew: / Whence steals along the pond of toads / A hovering fire so blue)’—were transferred through Wordsworth’s individualized way of poetico-cultural transference to an everyday setting in which a thorn, a pond, and a woman in a scarlet coat are focused on:

Now would you see this aged thorn,  
This pond and beauteous hill of moss,  
You must take care and chuse your time  
The mountain when to cross.  
For oft there sits, between the heap  
That’s like an infant’s grave in size,  
And that same pond of which I spoke,  
A woman in a scarlet cloak,  
And to herself she cries,  
‘Oh misery! oh misery!  
Oh woe is me! oh misery! ...

(“The Thorn,” 55-66)

In October 1798, Wordsworth bought in Hamburg a two-volume set of Bürger’s *Gedichte* (Güttinge, 1796, ed. Karl Reihard). After having read Bürger in German, he wrote his impressions of Bürger in his letter to Coleridge. Coleridge had become the admirer of Bürger, after he had read his poems in German, as his letter to his wife dated November 1798 showed: ‘Bürger of all the German Poets pleases me the most, as yet. The *Lenore* is greatly superior to any of the Translations.’<sup>(39)</sup>

To the contrary, Wordsworth was ‘disappointed, particularly in “Lenora”.’<sup>(40)</sup> He declared that the English translation exceeded the original at some parts. The difference of their judgment might be partly due to their fluency in German; nevertheless, it shows clearly Wordsworth’s taste at that crucial moment. In his ideas on language, ‘taste’ regulates the quality of translation. He continues, ‘I agree with you that it is the most perfect and Shakespearean of his poems, &c., &c. Bürger is the poet of the animal spirits.’<sup>(41)</sup> According to Wordsworth, ‘Taste ... is a word which has been forced to extend its services far beyond the point to which philosophy would

have confined them.’ (42) It can produce ‘a presumed refinement of judging.’ (ibid.) Although it is passively embedded in the mind of the Reader, it can exert ‘a co-operating power’ in him. (43) Accordingly, unless two subjective and antithetical powers, that is, ‘intellectual acts and operations,’ work on both sides of the translator and the reader simultaneously, language as ‘a counter spirit’ will speak out meaningfully. In his eyes, Macpherson appeared as ‘a motley assemblage from all quarters.’ (44) What Wordsworth was most concerned about was the emergence of this kind of inflated language which is harmful as well as irrelevant to the original meaning. To avoid this danger, Wordsworth relied on a complete dismantlement of the original.

There is another strange example of Wordsworth’s treatment of Bürger’s poems. Under the direct literary translation of Bürger’s title, “The Reverie of Poor Susan,” (*Das Arme Süßchen’s Traum*), Wordsworth wrote a lovely poem and published it in *Lyrical Ballads*. (1800) Unlike the setting of the original love poem, that is, a complaint of a heart-broken girl, it is a story of a vivid sensation of a poor country girl felt when she had heard the song of a thrush in the middle of the City of London. Instead of the image of false lover, and of the broken ring of their love, Poor Susan sees ‘[a] mountain ascending, a vision of trees.’ (“The Reveries of Poor Susan” l.6) The thrush’s song which has ‘a note of enchantment’ (l.5) brought back her native country scenes:

Green pastures she views in the midst of the dale,  
Down which she often has tripped with her pail;  
And a single small cottage, a nest like a dove’s,  
The one only dwelling on earth that she loves.

(ll.9–12)

The myrtle sprigs picked in order to make a garland of Bürger’s poor deserted girl are seen no more in this English countryside. Only the momentary rapture of dream is to be replaced by the disappointment in reality, but it enables to connect the images of these two poor Susans, jilted girls. Where the literary translation was impossible, Wordsworth proceeded to the very region of a creation. Through the image of this

humble country girl who can 'hold communion with the invisible world' (1805 *Prelude*, XIII 105), he showed us, perhaps, the working process of the secondary imagination in his own definition:

This is the very spirit in which they deal  
With all the objects of the universe:  
They from their native selves can send abroad  
Like transformation, for themselves create  
A like existence, and whene'er it is  
Created for them, catch it by an instinct.

(1805 *Prelude*, XIII 91-6)

Unlike Coleridge's definition of poetic imagination, which connects the 'primary' imagination (our outward perception) and the philosophic imagination (our inner intuition) so that it is synthetic in the highest sense, (Spinozo-Kantian, Kanto-Fichtian, Fichto-Schellingian Revival of Plato-Plotino-Proclian Idealism), Wordsworth's poetic imagination is basically dependent on the mimesis theory. It tries to explore the symbolic co-equation of words and objects, which is to be completed by creating '[a] like existence' of the original:

Above all,  
One function of such mind had nature there  
Exhibited by putting forth, and that  
With circumstance most awful and sublime:  
That dominion which she oftentimes  
Exerts upon the outward face of things,  
So moulds them, and endures, abstracts, combines,  
Or by abrupt and unhabitual influence  
Does make one object so impress itself  
Upon all others, and pervade them so,  
That even the grossest minds must see and hear  
And cannot choose but feel.

(1805 *Prelude*, XIII 73-84)

In her own dominion, she, the secondary imagination, exerts her power on ‘the outward face of things,’ on the objects; then, after passing through the various processes of moulding, enduring, abstracting, and combining, ‘[c]haracters of the great apocalypse’ spring forth, as if they were ‘blossoms upon one tree.’ When ‘[a] like Existence’ is made to connect to this one tree, in other words, when translation is traced back to the same root, it can be guarded against deteriorating into a vicious spirit, ‘[a] counter spirit,’ as “The Reverie of Poor Susan” suggests.

A motivation for creating ‘[a] like existence’ is, therefore, essentially different from an effort to restore the original. After Malcom Laing’s version of *The Poems of Ossian* (1804–05) appeared, the Committee of Highland Society of Scotland was appointed to inquire the Nature and Authenticity of the *Poems of Ossian*. The official *Report of the Committee* ruthlessly branded Macpherson’s work as an entirely unauthenticated, pretended translation. Since then, Macpherson’s distortion of the genuine Gaelic voice has annoyed generations of Celtic scholars. Wordsworth’s contempt for Ossian in 1815 “Essay” must have dated at this date. It is rather difficult to understand his attitude to censure Macpherson. When his eccentric views on language and free translation taken into account, it is unlikely that he came on the side of the censor. Unlike Walter Scott, who made a remarkable review on these two books in the July issue of *Edinburgh Review* for 1805, Wordsworth refused to evaluate this elaborate work *Ossian*. His sudden change of attitude toward the Scottish culture suggests the nature of his poetico-cultural transference, though. After criticising the narrow rigorousness of Laing’s methodology, and making a plea for the complete translation of the manuscripts of ballads the committee collected, Walter Scott as the Scottish concludes his long review as follows:

But, while we are compelled to renounce the pleasing idea, ‘that Fingal lived, and that Ossian sung’, our national vanity may be equally flattered by the fact that a remote, and almost a barbarous corner of Scotland, produced, in the 18th

century, a bard, capable not only of making an enthusiastic impression on every mind susceptible of poetical beauty, but of giving a new tone to poetry throughout Europe. (45)

Presumably, Wordsworth could not and would not share Scott's enthusiastic patriotism. As his letter to Ann Seward (21 March, 1805) written just before this review appeared tells us clearly, Scott was sympathetic toward Macpherson. He even applied the latter's method to mix authentic original materials with pure fiction in his manipulation of Goblin Page in *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805). He understood Macpherson's intention to set up a new school of poetry. For Scott, creation beyond the borders of free translation is not only meant to inculcate the reading public but also is inevitable in exploring the new dimension for lyric poetry. (See the detailed discussion in Chapter 11) He was faithful to the Romanticist's notion.

[A]mong the different species of poetical composition, the lyric is that which allows of the greatest liberty in translation; as a freedom both of thought and expression is agreeable in its character. (Tytler 123)

Plagiarism is too loose a term to employ in criticising this kind of imaginative activity, because both the concept and work of translation were so deeply rooted in the intellectual climate of Romantic period. It also includes 'a variety of cases of coincidence and resemblance, so striking as to shew,' (46) in terms of Walter Scott, the proponent of the Romantic predication of art as communication which is inseparable from a certain prejudice. It tries to keep sentiment and passion of the original text intact. Wordsworth is as conversant with the practice of translation as Scott, but he was more innovative. Though the involution of poetico-cultural transference was not indifferent to the philosophical shift of archetype from Platon to Plotinus, it allowed this eccentric poet to build up his own theory that had given language the central role in 'our understanding of the ways of knowing, communication, and the potentialities of

expression.’ (Hans Aarsleff, *From Locke to Saussure*, 17) Historically speaking, the British gentry have usurped the Scottish culture after the Jacobite Rebellion in the 18th century and have oppressed it as something alien and savage. It is understandable that, although a born gentleman, Wordsworth the sympathizer of the People and the proponent of liberty and virtue cannot but empathize with the Scottish patriotism. Simultaneously, his inherent patriotism as the British ruling class renders the border of his poetico-cultural transference distinct.

#### NOTES:

(1) ‘A distinguishing feature of this piece, is a certain wildness of fancy, which displays itself not only in the delineation of the persons of the drama, but in the painting of those scenes in which the action is laid.’

(A. F. Tytler, Lord Woodhouselee, “Preface,” in Johan Christoph Friedrich von Schiller, *The Robbers*, trans. A. F. Tytler, Lord Woodhouselee ([London: G. G. J. & J. Robinsons, 1792, p. ix]).

(2) William Wordsworth, “Advertisement” to *Lyrical Ballads* (1798), William Wordsworth, ed. Stephen Gill (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1984, p. 591)

(3) Alexander Fraser Tytler, Lord Woodhouselee, *Essay on the Principles of Translation* (London: J. M. Dent, 1907, p.7); hereafter referred to as Tytler, followed by the appropriate page number.

(4) *Essays of John Dryden* ed. W. P. Ker, 2 vols. (Russell & Russell: New York, 1961, II, p. 156)

(5) *Essays of John Dryden* II, p.201.

(6) *Ibid.*, p. 222.

(7) *Ibid.*, p. 226.

(8) *Ibid.*, p. 228.

(9) *Ibid.*, p. 223.

(10) *Ibid.*, p. 228.

(11) Alexander Pope, “Introduction,” *The Illiad of Homer*, ed. Maynard Mack (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967, p.x)

(12) Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, ed. James Engell and W. Jackson Bate, 2 vols. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1983, I, p.18)

(13) Samuel Taylor Coleridge, “Preface,” in Johan Christoph Friedrich von Schiller, *The Piccolomini or the First Part of Wallenstein: A Drama*, trans. S. T. Coleridge (London, 1800, p. 3)

- (14) Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria* I, p.31.
- (15) “Editor’s Introduction,” in Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria* p.lxxvii.
- (16) Timothy Corrigan, Coleridge, *Language, and Criticism* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1982, pp. 25–26)
- (17) Joseph Priestley, *A Course of Lecture on the Theory of Language and Universal Grammar* (Warrington, 1762, p. 8)
- (18) Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria* II, p. 54.
- (19) Timothy Corrigan, *Coleridge, Language, and Criticism*, p. 19.
- It should be noted, as George Steiner suggests, that Coleridge, along with Plato, Vico, Humboldt, Saussure, and Jakobson, is one of the few writers ‘who have said anything new and comprehensive’ about language, surprisingly few critics have examined Coleridge’s remarks on language, except to note his fascination with neologisms and precise meanings.
- (20) ‘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’).’
- (Jonathan Wordsworth, “Notes,” in *William Wordsworth, The Prelude: The four Texts* (1798,1799, 1805,1850), ed. Jonathan Wordsworth (London: Penguin Books, 1995, p. 595)
- (21) John O. Hayden, “Preface,” in William Wordsworth, *Selected Prose*, ed. John O. Hayden (London: Penguin Books, 1983, p.597)
- (22) Timothy Corrigan, *Coleridge, Language, and Criticism*, pp. 25–6.
- (23) Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria* II, p.55.
- (24) *Ibid.*, p. 55.
- (25) *Ibid.*, p. 56.
- (26) *Ibid.*, p. 135.
- (27) William Wordsworth, “Advertisement,” p. 591.
- (28) Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Friend*, ed. Barbara E. Rooke, 2 vols. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1969, I, pp. 53–4)
- (29) Fiona Stafford, *The Sublime Savage* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University press, 1988, p. 83)
- (30) Fiona Stafford, *The Sublime Savage*, p. 30.
- (31) *Ibid.*, p. 83.
- (32) *Ibid.*, p. 85.
- (33) ‘The fetters, which the prevailing taste of modern Europe, has imposed on poetry, may well be admitted, as an excuse, for a man of the best genius, for not succeeding in the characteristical simplicity of Homer...The simplicity, the gravity, the characteristic diction, and perhaps, a great part of the dignity of Homer, are left untouched. They



have rendered the father of poetry, in a great measure, their own. And, in stripping him of his ancient weeds, they have made him too much of a modern beau.’

(Alexander Pope, “Preface,” *The Illiad* pp.xv-xvi)

(34) William Wordsworth, *Poetical Works*, ed. Thomas Hutchinson, revised by Ernest de Selincourt (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1936, p. 487)

(35) Wordsworth is ‘content too often to repeat Chaucer’s syntax, knowing it would be understood by antiquarian readers but not sufficiently acknowledging the reading habits of others. They are bad translations because they are too reverential.’

(Michael Baron, *Language and Relationship in Wordsworth’s Writing*, London and New York: Longman, 1995, p. 135)

(36) Michael Baron, *Language and Relationship in Wordsworth’s Writing*, p. 46.

(37) ‘Bürger’s three ballads provided the starting point for “The Idiot Boy,” “The Thorn,” and “Hart-Leap Well” respectively. More important, they served not merely as sources, but as catalysts.’

(Mary Jacobus, *Tradition and Experiment in Wordsworth’s Lyrical Ballads* (1798) (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976, pp. 219-220)

(38) *The Monthly Magazine* (March, 1796), p. 117.

(39) William Wordsworth, “note,” *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth, The Early Years 1787-1805*, Second Edition, revised by Chester L. Shaver, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967, p. 233)

(40) William Wordsworth, “note,” p. 233.

(41) *Ibid.*, pp. 234-5.

(42) William Wordsworth, “Essay, Supplementary to the Preface,” *Selected Prose*, ed. John O. Hayden (London: Penguin Books, 1983, p. 409)

(43) *Ibid.*, p. 409.

(44) *Ibid.*, p. 405.

(45) *Edinburgh Review* (July 1805) p. 462.

(46) *Ibid.*, p. 457.

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## Chapter 6

### Unacknowledged Acceptance of Authority of Schlegel by S.T.Coleridge: or the blurred line of demarcation between copying and imitation

The main stream of the intellectual climate of England in the 1790's largely was characterized by the translated works from German texts. Needless to repeat here, at the cross-over zone of two different cultures, especially at that of the literary works, translation plays an important role. Although no exact word in one language corresponding to the word in translation is available, the problem of free translation always brings out several serious points to argue about, as was argued in the previous chapter. It is mainly because the problems inherent in its excess or deviation in transmission, such as plagiarism or forgery (1), are too complex and delicate matter to deal with at that time when the copy right was not established yet. Moreover, the translation was more or less influenced by social conditions. The intertextual issues surrounding the translation become all the more subtle and elaborate, when they are intricately concerned with the literary originality, that is, to what extent the creativity or the originality of the translator can be claimed in this field. Historically speaking, Coleridge has long been regarded as a dubious person who had much to do with this originality issue. For one thing, Coleridge seemed, unlike Wordsworth, not to have taken necessary caution against limiting the liberty of translation. The complexity of the plagiarism problem of Coleridge, however, lies not on the level of literal translation. The issue is rooted somewhere deep in his identity and integrity as a literary critic. In order to highlight Wordsworth's special response to the cultural involution of his age, Coleridge's case needs to be studied briefly, due to personal affinity and reciprocal influences of these two great poets. In his own "Preface" to Schiller's *The Piccolomini*

or the *First Part of Wallerstein: A Drama* translated by himself, Coleridge confesses that he knows well enough what is left as the liberty of the translator:

In the translation I endeavoured to render my Author *literally* wherever I was not prevented by absolute differences of idiom; but I am conscious, that in two or three short passages I have been guilty of dilating the original; and, from anxiety to give the full meaning, have weakened the force. ("Preface" 3-4)

In order to discuss Coleridge's way of accepting the ideas of the others, however, a premise needs to be set that the outline of his metaphysics, the dynamic nature of the total and undivided philosophy, owes much to German thinkers, especially Kant and Schelling. (2) In 1815, when *Biographia Literaria* was being written, Coleridge's knowledge of Schelling probably far exceeded the understanding of other German thinkers, excepting Kant. He seemed attracted to and involved intellectually with all the works of Schelling. He was so deeply immersed in the ideas of his contemporary German thinkers and authors that sometimes the distinct line of translation as a 'copy' and the one as an 'imitation' (3) became blurred in his mind.

Coleridge had himself imbued so freely with, and innocently accepted the idea of unacknowledged translation as imitation. The results thus acquired have a possibility of hermeneutic interpretation as creation. His idea of translation as imitation could go back to his differentiation of the primary and the secondary imagination. According to Coleridge, there is no originality in the literal translation, so far as it just repeats and *copies* the original text. From his point of view, it is a comprehensive art that can combine sensuous experiences and matter with the forms and intuitions of the self-conscious mind by the aid of poetic imagination employed. Since the secondary imagination can 'dissolve, diffuses, and dissipates' (*Biographia Literaria* Chapt.13 304) what has been perceived by the senses, at translation the secondary poetic imagination at least should provide the link between the "primary imagination" working on our outward perceptions, and the organic, philosophic imagination, emerging from

our inner intuition. What Coleridge had done actually and intuitively in his translation, therefore, is to aim at a true 'imitation,' to produce a true *imitation*. It is a sad scandal for him that he came to be censured for plagiarism (4) of A.W. Schlegel, especially in "Lectures on Shakespeare." (1811) (5) Years later, when he made a relevant comment on German drama, the originals of which are English, he used his brilliant discretion. He insisted that German criticism on Shakespeare's irregularity and wilderness is nothing but a mere echo of French one. (*Biographia Literaria* Chapt.23, 211) It would be a great disgrace for him if he were to be kept branded forever as an unacknowledged borrower of Schlegel's ideas, especially on the distinction between mechanical and organic form, and between sculpturesque Greek drama and picturesque Shakespearean drama. To decide whether Coleridge's case should be called a blatant borrowing, a 'copy' in his own term, or not demands our scrutiny of the special cultural circumstances under which it occurred.

( 1 )

Two premises assumed for making a closer inspection are: that Coleridge was under strong influence of the Schlegels when he delivered a series of lectures from 1808-1819, and that his borrowings became conspicuous after Lecture 9 of the 1811-12 series, which was delivered on 16 December. Coleridge gave more than 100 lectures in 12 courses, on such topics as taste, education, superstition and the dark ages in Europe. But his lectures kept recurring to Shakespeare's plays as well as to Milton's *Paradise Lost*. From Friedrich Schlegel's *Geschichte der alten und neuen Litteratur* (*History of Literature* given at Vienna 1815), he seemed to have culled much of his historical material for the early lectures of the 1818 series, but the borrowings became more conspicuous after J. G. Lockhart's translation had appeared. *Lectures on the History of Literature, Ancient and Modern. From the German of Friedrich Schlegel* (Vols 1&2) had been published by Blackwell in Edinburgh in 1818.

In fact, Coleridge used the same material in the lectures of 1819. Actually, Friedrich Schlegel's book was one of many works Coleridge used for the preparation of his lectures. Although it was an important source for information and offered him some ideas and interpretations of literary history, according to R.A.Foakes, "it did not significantly contribute to the formation of his critical method." ("Editor's Introduction," lix) To the contrary, Coleridge's indebtedness to Augustus William von Schlegel (1767–1845) is no less substantial than problematical. Augustus Schlegel had long been a coadjutor in the conduct of almost all the works of his brother Friedrich. Augustus W. Schlegel's lectures on drama and literature, with his *Ueber dramatische Kunst and Literatur* (*Lectures on Drama and Literature*) were delivered at Vienna in 1808. The first two volumes (vol.i and Part I of vol.ii) were published in 1809; the third volume (Part II of vol.ii) was published late in December 1810. In this third volume, A.W. Schlegel discussed Shakespeare principally, which strangely coincided with or showed a vague resemblance to Coleridge's lecture on "Romeo and Juliet" which had been delivered as early as in the 1808 series.

Accordingly, A.W.Schlegel's great influence on Coleridge has been long discussed in the context of plagiarism. The point whether Coleridge borrowed crucial ideas from Schlegel (signifying Augustus hence forward) or not has been neglected, though. It seems to be considered not so important compared to the task of pinning down the time when he began to borrow them. The scope of borrowing is crucial in assessing Coleridge's originality. Before John Black's translation (*Courses of Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature*, London) appeared in 1815, even in the lectures of 1808–9 course, Coleridge had made most of such crucial ideas as organic unity in Shakespeare, the image of drama as a waking dream, the distinction between the classic drama of Sophocles and the romantic drama of Shakespeare, the function of chorus in Greek drama as inevitable elements from the point of unity of interest, and so on. These ideas converge themselves into a core of Coleridge's organic, metaphysical, philosophy of life (6) which lies at the core of Coleridge as a romantic critic. It can be

said without exaggeration that of all the Shakespearean criticism written before the twentieth century only Dr. Johnson's and A.W.Schlegel's are comparable in significance and influence with that of Coleridge.

From Lecture 9 of 1811 onward, Coleridge relied heavily on Schlegel's lectures on the account of Greek drama, which took up more than half of the 1812 course, and also borrowed much from those on classical and romantic art in the course he gave in 1812 and 1813. Coleridge's lectures in these courses contain remarkable passages in Schlegel and, sometimes, more or less direct translations. There is a good example to show the nature of Coleridge's borrowings and how they are handled in Lecture 9. This lecture was transcribed from shorthand by John Dyer Collier or John Payne Collier. Coleridge said:

I have thus been led to consider, that the ancient drama (meaning the works of AEschylus, Euripides, and Sophocles, for the rhetorical productions of the same class by the Romans are scarcely to be treated as original theatrical poems) might be contrasted with the Shakespearean drama. —I call it the Shakespearean drama to distinguish it, because I know of no other writer who has realised the same idea, although I am told by some, that the Spanish poets, Lopez de Vega and Calderon, have been equally successful.

(Coleridge, *Coleridge's Shakespearean Criticism*, 159)

Whereas Schlegel had stated the same idea of comparing Shakespeare with the Greek dramatists and of assimilating him to Spanish dramatists, he had omitted the names of Euripides and Lopez de Vega.

[I]t is easy, when we compare together AEschylus and Sophocles, to form some idea of the preceding period...(Schlegel, ii 92)

If the assertion were founded, all that distinguishes the works of the greatest English and Spanish dramatist, a Shakespeare and a Calderon, ought to rank them beneath the ancients; (ibid., 94)

Or again, as to the comparison of ancient drama with sculpture and romantic drama with painting, Coleridge did not hide his resemblance to Schlegel:

The Shakespearean drama and the Greek drama may be compared to statuary and painting. In statuary, as in the Greek drama, the characters must be few, because the very essence of statuary is a high degree of abstraction, which prevents a great many figures being combined in the same effect...Compare this small group with a picture by Raphael or Titian, in which an immense number of figures may be induced...by a less degree of labour, and a less degree of abstraction, an effect is produced equally harmonious to the mind, more true to nature with its varied colours, and, in all respects but one, superior to statuary.  
(Coleridge, *Shakespearian Criticism*, 159-160)

Respecting the poetical species with which we are here occupied, we compared the antique tragedy to a group in sculpture: the figures correspond to the characters, their grouping to the action, and to those consideration in both productions of art is exclusively directed as the only subject exhibited. But the romantic drama must be viewed as a large picture, where not merely figure and motion are exhibited in richer groups, but where even what surrounds the person is also portrayed.  
(Schlegel, 99-100)

As the above comparison indicates, what makes the contemporary arguments on Coleridge's indebtedness to Schlegel complicated and difficult to understand is largely due to the fact that the apparently similar echoes or practices of the latter's phrases was carried out in a Coleridgean way and, moreover, this intertextuality had existed before Lecture 9 of 1811 was actually delivered. (The significance of this date will be referred to later.)

( 2 )

Wordsworth's "Essay Supplementary to the Preface" (1815) contains the following remark, which infuriated Coleridge.

The Germans only, of foreign nations, are approaching towards a knowledge and feeling of what he is. In some respects they have acquired a superiority over the fellow-countrymen of the Poet: for among us it is a current, I might say, and established opinion, that Shakespeare is justly praised when he is pronounced to be 'a wild irregular genius, in whom great faults are compensated by great beauties'. How long may it be before this misconception passes away, and it becomes universally acknowledged that the judgment of Shakespeare in the selection of his materials, and in the manner in which he has made them, heterogeneous as they often are, constitute a unity of their own, and contribute all the great end, is not less admirable than his imaginations, his invention, and his intuitive knowledge of human Nature.

(Wordsworth, *The Prose Works*, 69)

Naturally, Coleridge got deeply hurt by the above quoted, because it insinuates that a German critic first taught his countrymen how to think correctly about Shakespeare. According to Fruman,

With respect to Shakespearean criticism, the "Essay Supplementary" demonstrates quite clearly that Wordsworth deliberately refused to accord Coleridge any honors as an original thinker in the field, but rather assigns such achievements to the Germans. (Fruman, *The Damaged Archangel*, 151)

To deny Coleridge's originality in evaluating Shakespeare as late as 1815 will disgrace him blaming for intellectual dishonesty. Fruman insists that not only Wordsworth but also Hazlitt and other members of their circle saw the great obligations of Coleridge to the German writer Schlegel and, accordingly, that Coleridge's unacknowledged debt to Schelegel should have been admitted.

In "Notes on the Tragedies of Shakespeare," which substantiated the basic materials for 1808-9 lectures, however, Coleridge made a remarkable argument about Shakespeare. After referring to the subject of the three unities applied to drama—i.e., time, place, and action—Coleridge points out the peculiarity of Shakespeare as a dramatist, who wrote for the stage of the universal mind.



We succeeded in demonstrating that the two former, (i.e. the unities of time, and place) instead of being rules, were mere inconveniences attached to theological peculiarities of the Athenian drama; that the last alone deserved the name of a principle, and that in this Shakespeare stood preeminent. Yet instead of unity of action I should greatly prefer the more appropriate tho' scholastic and uncouth words—homogeneity, proportionateness, and totality of interests.

(“Notes on the Tragedies of Shakespeare”, Raysor, 4)

Nevertheless, Coleridge's originality remains still questionable. Quoting the following passage, Thomas Middleton Raysor, the editor of *Coleridge's Shakespearean Criticism*, says, ‘Coleridge is here borrowing from Schlegel’:

De la Motte, a French author, who wrote against the unities in general, would substitute for the unity of action the term ‘unity of interest.’

(*Werke*, vi. 19, as is quoted by Raysor 4)

It may be, Raysor continues, an ‘evidence that Coleridge knew the first two volumes of Schlegel's lectures, which were published in 1809, before he became acquainted with the third (the ‘second part of the second volume’) which discussed Shakespeare,’ (Raysor, “note,” II p.82), but he adds with hesitation another possibility that ‘Coleridge knew of Lamotte directly or had heard of his theories from some other source than Schelegel.’ In his “Discours a l'occasion des Machabees” (*Les paradoxes litteraires de Lamotte*, Paris, 1850, pp.449–57), a 17th century French critic, Antoine Houdart de Lamotte (1672–1713) had already attacked the concept of the three unities and proposes to substitute them with the unity of action. (Raysor, “note,” 4–5)

Raysor suggests another borrowing from Schlegel in Coleridge's peculiar defense of Romeo for his love of Rosaline before seeing Juliet, (*Werke*, vii 77–78) saying,

The necessity of loving creating an object for itself, etc; and yet a difference there is, tho' to be known only by the perception. The difference in this respect between men and women—it would have displeased us that Juliet had been in love or fancies herself so. Romeo running away from his Rosaline to woods and nature,

in which she indeed alone existed, as the name for yearning — contrast this with his rushing to Juliet. (Raysor, 6-7)

The early borrowings, especially those started before the 1811 series, however, are traceable to several sources, so that it is hard to pin it down exactly which one is Schlegel's. Raysor, who consistently takes a sympathetic attitude toward Coleridge, declares that 'Schlegel powerfully influenced Coleridge, but not in Coleridge's chief contribution to Shakespearean criticism.' R.A. Foakes, the editor of *Lectures 1808-1819: On Literature* sides with him, is also favourable to Coleridge, saying 'the absence of any sign of Schlegel's influence before December 1811 is as striking as his marked effect from that date and for some years afterwards.' ("Editor's Introduction," p.lxiii) Or again, 'No convincing evidence that Coleridge knew Schlegel's lectures before December 1811 has been found.' (ibid., "Introduction" to *1811-12 lectures on Shakespeare & Milton*).

Concerning Coleridge's defence of Romeo for his love of Rosaline, Raysor suggests an alternative possibility:

Schlegel's criticism does not appear in the Vienna lectures on dramatic art, but in an essay on *Romeo und Julia*, which was published in Schiller's *Horen* (1797) and republished in *Characteristiken und Kritiken* (1801). Coleridge may have seen this essay when he was in Germany in 1798-99, but we do not know that he did so. (ibid.)

His point is that the influence of another essay by Schiller, "[o]n Naive and Sentimental", is more outstanding in this passage. Coleridge borrowed the idea of "naïve" and "sentimental" from Schiller in a long passage comparing Homer and Ariosto. Raysor refers to Herder's influence here, saying 'the general distinction between the naive and the sentimental, which Schlegel called the classic and the romantic, was familiar to Coleridge before he read Schlegel's lectures, especially since it was in some measure confirmed by Herder's essay on Shakespeare.' (Raysor,

“introduction”, p.xxvii) Raysor’s sympathetic stance to Coleridge brings out the notion of ‘coincidence’; ‘[i]n default of external evidence, it seems better to pronounce this case a striking coincidence rather than a proof of Schlegel’s influence.’ (Raysor, “note”, 7) Then he insists that the influence of German critics other than Schlegel should be taken into account of. Raysor’s convincing suggestion of plurality of sources needs to be seriously esteemed before condemning Coleridge’s plagiarism merely from our contemporary measure. It concerns the Romantic mode of cultural transference, especially the one exists between different cultures.

( 3 )

Coleridge himself explained his embarrassing situation in a letter ‘To Unknown Correspondent’ dated circa 15–21 December 1811 (*Letters*, pp.354–361). He asserts the importance of ‘striking coincidence.’ The letter was meant to defend the position of Walter Scott, who had been accused of the ‘general resemblance of his *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* to *Christabel*.’ In this letter Coleridge insists the point that A.W. Schlegel’s lectures, *Ueber dramatische Kunst und Litteratur* had been presented to him by a visiting German before he gave Lecture 9 in the 1811–1812 series.

Now how far Coincidence in this sense and under the supposed Condition is possible, I can myself supply an instance, which happened at my Lecturers in Flower de Luce Court only last week, and the accuracy of which does not rely on *my* evidence only, but can be proved by the separate testimony of some hundred Individuals — that is, by many as have attended & retained any distinct recollection of my Lecture at the Royal Institution or at Fetter Lane. After the close of my Lecture on *Romeo and Juliet*, a German Gentleman, a Mr Bernard Krusve, introduced himself to me, and after some courteous Compliments said, Were it not almost impossible, I must have believed that you had either heard or read my Countryman Schlegel’s Lectures on this play, given at Vienna: the principles, thought, and the very illustrations are so nearly the same — But the Lectures were but just published as I left Germany, scarcely more than a week since — & the only two Copies of the work in England I have reason to think, that

I myself have brought over. One I retain: the other is at Mr. Boosy's — I replied that I had not even heard of these lectures, nor had indeed seen any work of Schlegel's except a volume of Translations from Spanish Poetry, which the Baron von Humboldt had lent me when I was at Rome — one piece of which, a Translation of a Play of Calderon I had compared with the original, & formed in consequence a high Opinion of Schelegel's Taste & Genius — A Friend standing by me added — This cannot be a question of Dates, Sir ! for if the gentleman, whose name you have mentioned, first gave his Lectures at Vienna in 1810. I can myself you have mentioned, first gave his Lectures at Vienna in 1810. Bear witness, that I heard Mr. Coleridge deliver all *substance* of tonight's Lecture at the Royal Institution some years before. — The next morning Mr. Krusve called on me & made me a present of the Work.

(*Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, I 359–360)

Coleridge's deliberate manipulation of inaccurate dates puzzles the reader again. It seems that he intentionally obfuscates the fact of borrowing the idea. His intention to make the objective evidence ambiguous also hinders our acceptance of Coleridge's words at their face value. 'This cannot be a question of Dates, Sir ! for if the gentleman, whose name you have mentioned, first gave his lectures at Vienna in 1810.' As was mentioned above, A.W. Schlegel delivered his lectures at Vienna in 1808, the first publication of his lectures was in 1809 and 1810. According to Griggs, the editor of Coleridge's *Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, 'Coleridge apparently wrote 1809 and then altered the date to 1810' (Griggs, "note", 359) and repeatedly asserted 'that Schlegel's lectures were given (in one letter three) years after he had delivered his own lectures at the Royal Institution in 1808.' Coleridge seems to insinuate here that the borrowings from Schlegel as we observe in his lecture on "Romeo and Juliet" of 1808 are a matter of coincidence but tries to emphasize that the ideas are his original. He testifies that he first read the third volume of Schlegel's *Vorlesungen* in December 1811. This contradictory intention, however, hung over Coleridge ever since. The date of Coleridge's first acquaintance with Schlegel's lectures becomes all the more important. In the later lectures of the 1811–12 series, however, Coleridge shows

himself relying on Schlegel openly, and in the course of 1812–13 and 1813, he even brought a copy of the German text with him into the lecture room.

Coleridge's primary concern was to subvert the common view of the eighteenth-century literary criticism. It regards Shakespeare as a wanton writer, who lacked any sense of artistry and who wrote merely from instinct. In his refutation, Coleridge's emphasis is that Shakespeare is a conscious artist, distinguished by his power of judgment. According to Foakes, in his lectures of 1808 and 1811, 'Coleridge set out to show how Shakespeare's judgment functioned both in language and structure to create unified works of art that have to be understood by their own laws, not in terms of rules derived from the past.' Schlegel also emphasized this point in his lectures.

In the same letter to 'the Unknown Correspondent,' who might have been Lord Byron, Coleridge tries to explain what he believes to be the cause of this coincidence:

For Schlegel & myself had both studied deeply & perseveringly the philosophy of Kant, the distinguishing feature of which [is] to treat every subject in reference to the operation of the mental Faculties in themselves, from what is empirical — i.e. the modifying or disturbing Forces of Time, Place, and Circumstances. Suppose myself & Schlegel (my argument not my vanity leads to these seeming Self-flatteries) nearly equal in natural powers, of similar pursuits & acquirements, and it is only necessary for both to have mastered the spirit of Kant's Critique of the Judgment to render it morally certain, that writing on the same Subject we should draw the same conclusions by the same trains [of reasoning] from the same principles, write to one purpose & with spirit. (ibid., 360)

The passage quoted above sounds rather presumptuous even if its intention is to attribute one's intellectual resemblance to the other. From his study of Kant and Schelling, nevertheless, Coleridge learned a subtlety of critical analysis which has become one of his chief characteristics. Kant's critiques especially constituted a system of psychology as well as metaphysics in Coleridge. Before censuring Coleridge

for plagiarism, Henry Crab Robinson's telling remark in his diary on Feb. 1812 is to be taken account of.

Read evening at home Schlegel's lectures on Shakespeare. Coleridge, I think, did not disdain to borrow observations from Schlegel, tho' the coincidences between the two lectures are for the greater part coincidences merely and not the one caused by the other. (*Shakespearian Criticism*, ii, 221. Griggs, p.359)

Coleridge's method of criticism is not always aimed to minimize the range of coincidence as accidental. Far from that, it turns in the wrong direction. Far from that, he tries to emphasise the essential resemblance between the two, right at the beginning.

I have a volume of Poems now before me, completely made up of gross plagiarisms from Akenside, Thomson, Bowles, Southey, & the Lyrical Ballads — it is curious to observe how many artifices the poor Author has used to disguise the theft, transpositions, dilutions, substitutions of Synonyms, &c&c — and yet not the least resemblance to any one of the Poets whom he has pillaged. — He who can catch the Spirit of an original, has it already. It will not [be] by Dates, that Posterity will judge of the originality of a Poem; but by the original spirit itself. This is to be found neither in a Tale however interesting, which is but the Canvas, no nor yet in the Fancy or the Imagery — which are but Forms & Colors — it is a subtle Spirit, all in each part, reconciling & unifying all —. Passion and Imagination are it's *most* appropriate names; but even these say little — for it must not merely Passion but poetic Passion, poetic Imagination.

(*Letters*,361)

The overt intention of this letter is to wipe the censure of plagiarism or that of deliberate imitation clear away from Walter Scott as regards *The Lay of Last Minstrel*. Coleridge succinctly admits the impossibility of plagiarism claiming the case of Scott. For one thing he is in possession of this 'subtle spirit,' 'poetic Passion,' and 'poetic Imagination.' For Coleridge these feelings, emotions, and passions are to work in association so as to unify and vitalize the passionate imagination. He insists that only

the possessors of 'the spirit of an original,' can sum up these variants of poetic imagination, can produce any resemblance whatsoever. At the same time he implicitly asserts his own pride that both Schlegel and himself are twin possessors of this originality. As his remark indicates, the general resemblance of Scott's work appertains only to the poetic form: 'the supposed close likeness of the metre, the *movements*, the way of relating an event' to *Christabel*. It is a matter of mixing established styles and practices. About 20 years later, however, in his 'Preface' to the 1830 edition of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, Scott himself overtly admits his indebtedness to *Christabel*, saying as mostly the adoption of 'the singularly irregular structure of the stanza.' Thus the controversy is settled. To the contrary Coleridge would not admit his indebtedness. Accordingly, an enormous number of academic ventures have been carried out to underline his assertion. In connection with Coleridge's "resemblance" to other writers and thinkers, it is important to note how often he converted the text to a new form. At each revision, he carried it out of his sheer poetic passion. He might have wanted to cry out that 'the spirit of Original' is rooted deep in his own mind at least.

What kind of incentive did Schlegel's lectures on drama provide to Coleridge? Schlegel's lectures were a more well-organised and systematic understanding of Shakespeare's plays in terms of organic unity rather than that of mechanical regularity. Since December 1811, they provided a convenient framework for Coleridge's courses in 1812 and 1813. As pointed out above, before that date Coleridge had already reached a similar conclusion independently, not under the direct influence of Schlegel but by several authors other than himself. There is a good example to show multiple influences exerted on Coleridge's thinking. In a section titled [Dramatic Illusion] of his *Shakespearean Criticism*, Coleridge made a remark on the nature of drama. Judging from the watermarks of the fragments collected in this entry, which show marks of 1804 and 1805, they can be inferred as those belonging to the lectures of 1808. Coleridge says:

These and all other stage presentations are to produce a sort of temporary half-faith, which is the spectator encourages in himself and supports by a voluntary contribution on his power to see the thing as it really is.

(*Coleridge's Shakespearean Criticism*, 200)

Raysor comments on this passage: 'This is perhaps the most succinct definition of Coleridge's theory of dramatic illusion.' Going back to Schlegel, the reader encounters the following passage:

The theatrical as well as every other poetical illusion, is a waking dream, to which we voluntarily surrender ourselves.

(*Werke*, vi, 24 as is quoted by Rasor 201)

Apparently, Schlegel's notion of 'a waking dream' is likely to be an obvious source of Coleridge's theory. Coleridge's definition of stage illusion as 'a sort of temporary half-faith' went far beyond in its own development, though. He tries to associate it with not only dreaming but also a condition of 'half-waking, half-sleeping'. For Coleridge dramatic illusion is like a dream, part passive but also quite active. Both dreams and stage illusion absorb the viewer into their feeling and form, eliciting an interest in each part which is equal to the interest in the whole. In this way, the spectators can make 'voluntary contributions' in making the drama. As to this passage, Raysor numerates other possible sources of obligation, such as Kames, Herder, and Schiller (Raysor, 201).

Concerning Dramatic Illusion, there is another essential definition of Coleridge's theory. Now what picture are to little children, stage-illusion is to men, provided they retain any part of the child's sensibility, except that in the latter instance this suspension of the act of comparison. (ibid.)



Here the source is proved to be not in Schlegel's but in Kant's. 'This phrase,' says Rasor, 'which is essential to Coleridge's theory of dramatic illusion, is taken from Kant's definition of the sublime. *Critique of Aesthetic Judgment*, section 25.'

Furthermore, in the section titled "The Definition of Taste and the Origin of Drama," Coleridge refers to a ceremony of sacrifice. As this fragment coincides clearly with H.C. Robinson's report of the lecture of February 5, 1808, it can be identified, as was written in 1811.

From the hymns that accompanied an established sacrifice to one of these Hero-Gods Tragedy had its name and origin. It first appeared as the Hymn of the Goat (...) the victim offered to Bacchus as God of the Vine. In his earthly character [Bacchus was] the conqueror and civilizer of India, and allegorically the Symbol — in the narrower and popular notion — of festivity, but worshipped in the mysteries as representative of the organic energies of the Universe that work by passion and joy without apparent distinct consciousness rather as the cause consciousness rather as the cause or condition of skill and contrivance, than the result. (ibid., 184-5)

Coleridge repeated the same idea in the lectures of 1813-14, while naturally Schlegel made a similar remark. (*Werke*, v.92 as is quoted by Rasor 263) Nevertheless, Rasor declares that 'the coincidence is of little importance with such a commonplace.' ('note', II, 263) Indeed, even Hugh Blair, the greatest of the Edinburgh Literati, had referred to the origin of tragedy in connection with Bacchus and the goat as a sacrifice offered to that god in 1783.

Tragedy, like other arts, was, in its beginning, rude and imperfect. Among the Greeks, from whom our dramatic entertainments are derived, the origin of tragedy was no other than the song which was wont to be sung at the festival of Bacchus. A goat was the sacrifice offered to that god; after the sacrifice, the priests, with the company that joined them, sung hymns in sacrifice, the priests, with the company that joined them, sung hymns in honour of Bacchus. (Blair, *Lectures: Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*, 619)

In addition, quoting from A.C. Dunstan (*Modern Language Review*, xviii, 195), Rasor points out the role of C.G. Heyne, a professor of Greek art, poetry, and mythology at Gottingen, under whom both Coleridge and Schlegel studied.

It is quite likely that Coleridge's way of thinking was radically affected by what he heard and read during his visit to Germany in 1798–99. His intensive study of such writers as Kant, Schiller, Herder, and Lessing, helped him quite a lot in the formation of his own aesthetic principles. In fact Coleridge owed much to the Hartleyan association doctrine, but Kant also accepted it as a psychological fact. Coleridge became familiar with the spirit of the age in Germany in the 1790s, where people began to question the nature of imitation and its validity in terms of Aristotle's Mimesis. One of the common assumptions of the age was to demolish the lingering adherence to the notion of the rules and three unities in drama, which had also been derived from Aristotle. Their new assumption was that unity of interest would signify a more fluid and idealistically dream-like verisimilitude to reality than classical unities might have imparted. Just like Coleridge, Schlegel had read Kant, Schiller, and, moreover, he had studied under Professor C.G. Heyne. In addition, he had read the major English commentators on Shakespeare of the eighteenth century. In such an intellectual climate which fermented with a vigorous transmission of the radical ideas, the concept of relation becomes rather dubious in determining how much of Schlegel's notion could be claimed only as his original. Accordingly, if Coleridge's case should be called an imitation, it must have been produced by the medium of intellectual intuition, and it accompanies the change of his notion on productive and philosophical imagination.

Needless to say Coleridge exerted a great influence on Wordsworth, and "Preface" to *Lyrical Ballads* were the fruit of their stimulating friendship. Coleridge's ideas are discernible in the ingenious argument amalgamating the mimesis theory and Hartley's Association theory. So far as his definition of Imagination in 1815 is concerned, however, after accepting Schelling's idea of imagination, Coleridge implemented the term 'imagination' as that unique power which can be sharing in and

building the opposites. In this case, the idea of the other person and that of his are incorporated into a harmonious whole. In “Lectures on Shakespeare”, where he was accused of Schlegel’s plagiarism, he deserves to be immune from the malfeasance, if only the fact is taken into account of that he simply treaded behind the steps of Leibniz. The idea of an organic unity in Shakespeare had been historically pre-established before the Romantic period. What Coleridge carried out was simply to substantiate the concept of harmony, which constitutes an integral aspect of his own idea.

As regards the scandal issue, R.A. Foakes’s discreet comment is most appropriate; ‘[N]o convincing evidence that Coleridge knew Schlegel’s lectures before December 1811 has been found.’ (“Introduction” 175) Conversely, it is a settled agreement among Coleridgians (7), that although much of what Coleridge proposed had something in common with Schlegel’s, the so-called pilfered ideas from Schlegel are generally accepted ones in the cultural milieu of the first decade of the 19th century. They coincidentally overlapped with conclusions that Coleridge had already reached independently in his own literary discourse. The way in accepting and rejecting the ideas particularly fashionable of the age, Wordsworth kept track of his symbiotic friend.

## NOTES

(1)The forgery problem, which appertains to the conscious effort to restore the evanescent past, is to be discussed in detail in Chapter 7, focusing on the case of James Macpherson. It took place in a specific cultural climate of the eighteenth-century, in which historiography dominated as an embryo of scientific method of history but which still could not tell “real fact” in a poem as fiction and “historical fact.”

(2)Coleridge endorses his debt to Schelling in *Biographia Literaria* (published in July 1817) as follows: “With exception of one or two fundamental ideas, which cannot be withheld from FICHTE, to SCHELLING we owe the completion and the most important victories, of this revolution in philosophy.” (*Biographia Literaria*, Vol.I, 163) A free and unacknowledged borrowing from Schelling is obviously seen in Thesis X, in Chapter 12 of *Biographia Literaria*, which is nothing but a close translation of

Schelling's *System des transcendentalen Idealismus*. Coleridge's use of Schelling comes in chapters 8,9,12 and 13.

(3) The definitions of a 'copy' and an 'imitation' were given in Coleridge's discussion on language. As editors of *Biographia Literaria* of Princeton University Version, James Engell and W. Jackson Bate succinctly explained ("Editors' Introduction" cv-vi), a 'copy' is a reproduction of ordinary speech, whereas 'imitation' is "an acknowledged sense of difference" in materials and the entire nature of the medium. A true 'imitation', therefore, can proceed to creation. Figuratively the same distinction can be applied to his way of translation and interpretation.

(4) Since he began to study Schelling intensively in 1808, even the world view that Coleridge evolved in the period 1815-18 had been under the strong influences of German thinkers and authors. The echoes of not only Schelling but also Kant, Fichte, and Jacob Behmen are clearly noticeable to the eyes of the reviewers of *Biographia Literaria*, which was finally published in 1817 ("Editor's Introduction" *Biographia Literaria*, Vol.1, lxxv). But it is rather misleading to condemn Coleridge's achievements under the category of plagiarism. The scandal issue is mainly concerned with the question of whether Coleridge had read Schlegel's work before December 1811. According R.A. Foakes, Raysor points out an internal evidence relying on Collier's reports of conversations with Coleridge in October 1811.

...in which Coleridge is represented as making various points about Shakespeare and Beaumont Fletcher that echo Schlegel's views, and these passages have since been used as evidence that Coleridge had read Schlegel before December 1811. ("Introduction", *Lectures 1808-1819*, 174)

(6) Using this term, Coleridge intended to refute the Newtonian world picture. His idea of organic; and genetic metaphysical system owes so much to that of Schelling, especially *Naturphilosophia*, and no less to Boehme's dualistic vitalism (see M.H.Abrams, "Coleridge's 'A Light in Sound'", *Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, 78).

(7) 'To claim, then, as many critics have, that Coleridge's psychological criticism and character studies differ little from similar eighteenth-century studies or his own later criticism is an historically inaccurate overstatement produced by unwillingness to look closely at Coleridge's critical language and to discover all that is peculiarly Coleridge's and specifically dated.'

(Timothy Corrigan *Coleridge, Language, and Criticism*, 85-6)

## Chapter 7

The Idea of 'the real language of men' in the 1800 'Preface' to *Lyrical Ballads*;  
or Enfield's Idea of Language derived from Condillac\*

[w]hy I have chosen subjects from common life, and endeavoured to bring my language near to the real language of men...

(William Wordsworth, 1800 "Preface" to *Lyrical Ballads*)

Wordsworth's 1800 "Preface" was written at the breakthrough of modern ideas on language, when a scientific terminology for language was being formed. First, John Locke (1632-1704) laid down the basis of the extreme subjectivism of Romantic aesthetics, declaring language as an arbitrary sign of the mind: 'words stand for nothing, but the ideas in the mind of him that uses them.' (*An Essay concerning Human Understanding*, Book III, Chap. II) After him, among three concurring orientations surrounding work of art, i.e., Universe, artist, and audience, the artist acquires a deeper significance in this period. Both Aristotle's mimesis and Plato's mirror metaphor became vulnerable for the attacks from the camp of Romantic criticism, while increasing attention was being given to the mental constitution of the poet. At the turning point of such a poetico-cultural transference in the Romantic tradition, Longinus' expressive theory became much congenial to the romantic pattern of artistic expression. His discussion on the sublime was appropriate enough to explain the mental and emotional capacities of the author as a major source of poetic effect. John Dennis (1657-1734) expanded upon the concepts derived from Longinus as theory of the passions in *The Advancement and Reformation of Poetry* (1701), and the Scottish writers of the mid-eighteenth century, such as Hugh Blair, William Duff, Lord Monbudo, had a common interest in the reconstitution of the genesis and prehistoric development of human arts and institutions.

The intellectuals of the eighteenth century explored the origins of all aspects of man's institutions and works. Etienne Bonnot de Condillac(1715–1800) was dominant figure in this new current of reexamination. The interest in the origin of language in the eighteenth century began in 1746 with the publication of Condillac's *Essai sur l'origine de connoissances humaines*, which is indebted much to Locke's *Essay*. As was discussed in Chapter 1, Hugh Blair and other Scottish enlightenment writers maintained that poetry had been instinctive, and that its emotional origin was coeval with the birth of language. Condillac stood against their natural language doctrine. It is partly because his metaphor of organic growth enabled him to comprise the entire being of history. In connection with William Wordsworth, however, the influence of William Enfield (1740–97) should not be none the less overlooked. This chapter focuses on Enfield's importance in the camp of so-called republican language theorists with due regard to his influence on Wordsworth.

In fact, Blair's theories about primitive language influenced Wordsworth, and Romanticism more generally could be asserted unequivocally, (1) on the assumption that Blair's *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* (2) established a canon of expressionism in the context of the antithesis of art and nature. (See Chapter 1) Blair deserves to be called as an inaugurator of Romantic expressionism, because he combined Longinian sublimity with the Lucretian idea of language as a spontaneous expression of feeling. Thus, he put a stress upon the importance of impassioned language with the materialistic view on language, while not impairing the practical purpose of poetry to give pleasure. Moreover, he consolidated the contradictory points of Lucretius and Aristotle in defining the idea of poetry. When the general debt to Blair is contextualized, a more specific significance of Enfield's celebrated *Monthly Magazine* article is established.

Wordsworth had access to Enfield's article while he was at Alfoxden, and could well have read it while working on *Lyrical Ballads*. According to Losh's diary entry of 20 March 1797, in the list of the books he sent to Wordsworth on that date was found the phrase of 'Monthly Magazines from February to December 1796 inclusive.' (3) Enfield's important article "Is Verse Essential to Poetry" appeared in the July 1796 issue. (4) This article mediates Blair's literary canons and Wordsworth's poetic theory.

To understand the importance of Enfield, the main points of Blair's theories need to be clarified first. The development of Romantic aesthetics — with its central concept 'that poetry is the expression of feeling, or of the human spirit, or of an impassioned state of mind and imagination' (5) — can be summarized as a movement from an Aristotelian theory of mimesis toward a Longuinean and Lucretian theory of language as a spontaneous expression of feeling. In Blair, however, this movement is not always satisfactorily achieved:

In Blair's *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*, there is a distinct cleavage between those sections that are primitivistic and expressive and those that are conventionally rhetorical and pragmatic in their emphases. The collapse of the neoclassic structure of criticism occurred only when the concept of the urgency and overflow of feeling, from being only a part, and a subordinate part, of poetic theory, became the central principle of the whole. (Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp*, 84)

Unlike Blair's awkward suture of primitivism and sophisticated neoclassic rhetoric, Enfield, a dissenter, relied much on the dynamism of innate powers. Even in his literary criticism published under the pseudonym of the Enquirer, Enfield's unique stance is conspicuous enough. He endeavoured to search and incorporate dynamism into the literary canon. At the beginning of his article in the July issue, Enfield definitely claims his position to be that of a dissenter's no less in the literary than the religious world:

[It] may not be thought presumptuous to enquire, whether the spirit of monopoly, which has proved so injurious in ecclesiastical and civil society, has not also found its way into the republic of letters. (*MM* 453)

Nevertheless, his stance is close to that of Wordsworth, because the “1800 Preface” to *Lyrical Ballads* (6) as a whole can be estimated as Wordsworth’s grand attempt to examine a canon of literary criticism of his age, questioning what is essential to poetry. “Preface” is, at the same time, an elaborate defence of Wordsworth’s position as a poet, and of the poems he had written by 1800. Several contradictions or incoherencies are revealed in the argument of the “Preface.” But they simply suggest an inner struggle of the poet probing his way out of the regulations of primitive poetry in the ballad form in which intensified emotions were abundantly found. He attempted to establish the balance of primitive vigour and sophisticated insight, of public enthusiasm and individual cognizance.

Wordsworth made a self-inquiry: if ‘the language of a large portion of every good poem’ does not differ from ‘that of a good prose,’ where can we set the line of demarcation between poetry and prose? If poetry is the passionate and naturally rhythmical and figurative expression of feeling, the outcries of primitive men would assimilate to poetry, i.e.,, the first elaborated form of language. The Scottish primitivists insist naturally that poetry as the emotional origin of language would precede prose. But Wordsworth’s poetic theory was not so simple. He was indeed sensitive to the prevalent ideas about the nature and value of primitive poetry, but he had recourse to the common nature of men, and the shared opinions and feelings of mankind. Accordingly, the inquiry into the identity of poetry or the superiority of poetry led him to make a sincere self-examination of his own mind as a poet. This reflective mood later urged him to adopt a mnemonic theory of poetry. It was his poetic mind, i.e., imagination, that lay at the bottom of all his insights and observations.

The significance of Wordsworth’s famous statement which aimed at demolishing the barrier between prose and poetry could be explained with reference to Blair’s



primitivism. Two years later, in his revised "Preface" (1802) to *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth tried to equate the feelings of undisguised and uncorrupted nature with those which could only be found among the people living a 'low and rustic life':

[In] that condition, our elementary feelings co-exist in a state of greater simplicity, and, consequently, may be more accurately contemplated and more forcibly communicated...because in that condition, the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature.

("Preface" to *Lyrical Ballads*, 125)

Those idealized prototypes of the poet are, in a sense, remolded ones in the image of the early bard that Blair brought forth. They are emotionally tied in with primitive men who were prompted and inspired by the objects around them and sang out with vigorous 'elementary feelings.' Once tuned to fit in this sentimental eulogy of primitivism and passion, Wordsworth's so-called revolutionary statement sounds like a mere repetition of Blair's assertion:

Poetry, however, in its ancient original condition, was perhaps more vigorous than it is in its modern state. It included, then, the whole burst of the human mind; the whole exertion of its imaginative faculties. It spoke then the language of passion, and no other; for to passion it owed its birth. Prompted and inspired by objects which to him seemed great, by events which interested his country or his friends, the early bard arose and sung. He sung indeed in wild and disorderly strains; but they were the native effusion of his heart; they were the ardent conceptions of admiration or resentment, of sorrow or friendship, which he poured forth.

(Blair 518)

Though the echo is distinct, presumably it is not through Blair but through Enfield that Wordsworth did inherit most of his eulogy to fabricate his own theory of primitive poetry.

As an intellectual bred up in the atmosphere of the Enlightenment, Enfield on the whole was a humane universalist, well aware of the danger of distinguishing poetry from prose only on stylistic or linguistic grounds. It was because, according to Locke and

Condillac, language is the only medium to connect the subjective, private world of the individual with the public one.

Enfield's contribution to the *Monthly Review*, on the other hand, gave him a profound awareness of the novelty expressed in the form of his contemporary poetry, and, more surprisingly, in his contemporary novel as well. As a literary critic, he showed a keen sense of discrimination which was shrewd enough to predict the coming of the Romanticism. For instance, before he became a regular contributor to the *Monthly Magazine*, he had written a remarkable review on Joanna Baillie in the *Monthly Review*. In fact, he was the only critic that had noticed the significance of her first collection of poems, *Poems 1790*. In the review that appeared in the *Monthly Review* of November 1791, he analysed Baillie's poetry as follows: It was meant for 'those readers whose taste is not too refined, or too fastidious, to be pleased with true and lively pictures of nature, sketched with a careless hand.' He thus predicted the expansion of the literary world to the general public in the Romantic age. The new readers mostly consisted of women at home. Even if they were not intellectually sophisticated and their sensibility exceeded their power of reasoning, they were the genuine members of this new common market of literature. Enfield did not fail to perceive the superficiality of 'easy though peculiar language' of Baillie, but he noticed the significance of the feelings of the 'undisguised and uncorrupted nature' her poems captured. Needless to say, the latter is one of the aesthetic principles Wordsworth tried to embody in his poems in *Lyrical Ballads*. It is articulated in 'what is usually called poetic diction.' (*PLB* 15)

Enfield had been well aware of the ever-widening distance between serious literature, that kind of literature Wordsworth and Coleridge intended to create, and popular one, fostered by the so-called magazine literature of the 1790s. It was inevitable, so long as the Romantic ideology established itself on the premises of the political, quantitative equality of the people. Almost militant faith in the possibility of self-reformation in the 1790's brought forth the exploration of the parallels between

domestic and political values, private and public morality, while the mainstream of literature was derived from another camp of young radicals. As a shrewd literary critic, Enfield seemed to be aware of a profound crisis of culture, i.e., cultural alienation and social isolation, the paradox of Romantic ideology which aimed at the social melioration and reconciliation. He foresaw the coming of several important issues involved with it.

“Is Verse Essential to Poetry?” is one of articles in a series that Enfield published in the *Monthly Magazine*. In this essay, he tries to mask the ‘distinct cleavage’ between primitivism and expressionism which Blair had left unresolved. Enfield begins by asking ‘[W]hether the exclusive appropriation of the term poetry to verse, has any solid foundation.’ In his argument, Enfield firmly stands on the side of expressionism as a remote descendant of Lucretius; nevertheless, he employs a linguistic approach in speculation. The issue he was especially concerned with was the one on the discrimination of poetry and prose. In the time of Pope, the age of Neo-classicism, the line was clearly settled, because neo-classicists applied the rules of poetic diction without paying any serious attention to the demands of expressionism.

In his linguistic approach to this subtle issue, Enfield’s affectionate, epistemological idea of language becomes proximate to that of a contemporary Frenchman, Etienne Bonnot de Condillac (1715–1780). Condillac also held a distinct humanitarian perception of language, asserting that a theory of language is to be explained from a dynamic and egalitarian perspective, although his ideas on the whole had been deeply influenced by Locke. Refusing the deductive view of language, as is evidently proposed by Chomsky, the premise of which is the divine presence of Logos, Condillac’s language model is close to the dialectic one proposed by Volosinov, who emphasizes the presence of ‘the unified sphere of organized social intercourse’ (Volosinov 46) even in verbal exchange.

Condillac perceived the importance of ‘the organized social milieu.’ (Volosinov 47) He claims that sociability, reason, and the harmony of gesture expression create a rudimentary epistemological state, and that the creativity of language-making depends

on this reciprocal transaction. In a historical perspective, however, Enfield was certainly under the influence of Blair:

In the rude state of nature, before the art of verification was known, men felt strong passions and expressed them strongly. Their language would be bold and figurative; it would be vehement and abrupt: sometimes, under the impulse of the gentle and the tender, or the gay and joyous passions, it would flow in a kind of wind and unfettered melody; for under such impressions, melody is natural to man. These first expressions of passion and sentiment would be poetry. (*MM* 454)

Enfield's argument thus holds the same premise of language as Blair introduced, that is, a primitive systematization of the integrated whole. The distance between the natural phenomenon of sound and the primitive utterance seemed to be very short both for Blair and for Enfield. In this sense, Enfield can be said to be a faithful disciple of Blair. As he points out, the mediocre verification sometimes deteriorates into the drab monotony of magazine poetry, the impoverished heir of Neo-classicism. In order to save the situation, Enfield encourages the poet to mingle his poetry with the vigour of primitive artistic impulses expressed in the form of music and dance. Enfield summarizes the literary canon of criticism, quoting from Trapp's *Lectures on Poetry*:

Poetry is the art of imitating or illustrating, in metrical numbers, every being in nature, and every object of the imagination, for the delight and improvement of mankind. (*MM* 453)

This is an elaborate restatement of Aristotle's imitation theory, mimesis. From Enfield's viewpoint, however, this ancient imitation theory is unsatisfactory. He attacks the idea of copying which lies at the bottom of imitation from the linguistic point of view. In fact, he begins his essay by attacking the abusive use of the word "imitation":

The term imitation is improperly used to express the description of objects by arbitrary signs, which exhibit no copy of nature. (*MM* 458)

He sets forth the premise of Locke's idea of language as arbitrary sign to explain the notion of "imitation," and succeeds to transform the idea of mimesis itself. If the objects are to be copied by employing the uncertain media, language as arbitrary signs, this arbitrary nature itself cannot always guarantee the product of precise copying. Since his definition of "imitation" comprehends 'all verbal delineation of nature,' (*MM* 458) for Enfield, these arbitrary signs do not necessarily assure the formation of exact copies of the objects, so long as they possess their potential, limitless variables related with thinking mechanism.

Enfield's linguistic approach thus enabled him to transcend Blair's limitations. His attempt resulted in the unsuccessful suture, due to his loose mixture of mimesis and primitivism. The additional area that Enfield explored is no less influential to Wordsworth and Coleridge than Blair's theory of poetry as an impassioned language. After the denial of word and object correspondence, admitting that language as arbitrary signs exhibits no copy of nature, he continues: 'if the definition be admitted, it must evidently comprehend all verbal delineation of nature, whether in verse or prose.' (*MM* 458) Accordingly, in the context of 'imitation' based on arbitrary signs, a prose-comedy or a novel could be evaluated as equal to a tragedy or an epic poem. The perception of arbitrariness of semantic structure lurks behind Enfield's denial of literary genre.

It should be noted here that Enfield's idea of sign-thought relationship is not his original idea. Locke had already observed in his *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690) that 'Words ...come to be made use of by Men as the Signs of their Ideas.' (7) According to Locke's functional view of language, all words have direct relationships, not to objective things but to ideas only, whether they are common and sensible or have more abstruse signification. Locke's model of semantic structure is a more simplified one, in which the triangle relationship of symbol - thought - referent

(object) predominates all. It ignores another triangle relationship of sign – meaning – referent (object). Whether the double standard of meaning is approved or not, language does possess a conventional nature. Consequently, his perception that ‘the Ideas [Marks] stand for, are their proper and immediate Signification’ (Locke 405) is undeniably true. Locke thus had already prepared the way for semiotics:

Man should find out some external sensible Signs, whereby those invisible / ideas, which his thoughts are made up of, might be known to others. (Locke 405)

Enfield’s rejection of simple copying function of language ultimately leads him to the repudiation of the Blairian idea of natural, emotive language as the only means of poetry. If language could in any manner be restricted to a natural and emotive level, and if it should deny the presence and function of arbitrary signs which correspond not to the objects as referent but to the ideas, our capacity of gaining knowledge and our thinking mechanism would at once collapse to nothing. Enfield was well aware of the limit of this primary principle of the semantics in contrast to the semiotic function of language. Consequently, Enfield’s position became slightly different from Locke’s. Enfield proceeds from the mode of conventional language analysis to that of aesthetic perception, of defining poetry as alternatives or as complements of the objects, i.e., the things. Even if the objective things were to be depicted, they could be no copy of nature, because, Enfield insists, language itself is the very means to depict them. His linguistic idea thus flatly denies the rules of Adamic language based on a static view of the world as consisting of nomenclature, on the direct correspondence between sign (word) and object (referent). It is unfortunate for him that, though he was endowed with a keen awareness of the dynamic function of language, he could not admit the subtle, implicit link between the things, i.e., referent, and the words of modification to express them, i.e., sign. But as a whole, his idea is not so different from that of modern linguistics which originated especially from Condillac and partly from Saussure. Enfield’s epistemological definition of language—an intellectual tool capable of

comprehending 'all verbal delineation of nature'—anticipates the contemporary notion of languages as an act of speech. In this context, language is thought not only as the medium of communication but also as signs which can tell and record shared experiences of a community. So long as it is used within this verbal community, particularly, that consisting of the writer and the reader, language can be artfully adapted so as to incite emotions in the reader, and, simultaneously, it can represent itself with such distinctness and force. It can imprint a vivid impression upon the reader's fancy.

If examined in this context of language, Wordsworth's idea sounds congruous to that of Enfield:

They [i.e., the very language of men] are, indeed, a figure of speech occasionally prompted by passion, and I have made use of them as such; but I have endeavoured utterly to reject them as a mechanical device of style, or as a family language which Writers in metre seem to lay claim to by prescription. I have wished to keep my Reader in the company of flesh and blood, persuaded that by so doing I shall interest him. (*PLB* 131)

Behind them is discernible a long line of dynamic idea that language as a direct medium between the subjective, private world of the individual and the public, external world of Nature can establish 'the company of flesh and blood.' It can be traced out not only in Enfield but also in Blair and Condillac. As Owen and Smyser point out, Wordsworth employed the idea of 'personification' in Blairean terms as a means of distinguishing poetry from prose. (8) On personification, Blair said:

One of the greatest pleasure we receive from poetry, is, to find ourselves always in the midst of our fellows; and to see every thing thinking, feeling, and acting, as we ourselves do. This is perhaps the principal charm of this sort of figured style, that it introduces us into society with all nature, and interests us, even in inanimate objects.

(Blair 207)

The technique of personification is useful enough to establish an emotional connection between nature and ourselves through the workings of sensibility. Nevertheless, Blair continues his appraisal of an impassioned style:

[w]hen inanimate objects are introduced, not only as feeling and acting, but as speaking to us, or hearing when we address ourselves to them: it is the style of strong passion only; and, therefore, never to be attempted, unless when the mind is considerably heated and agitated.

(Blair 207)

To the contrary, Wordsworth flatly states that personification is ‘an ordinary device to elevate the style’ and warns that it blocks the free and creative communion between the poet and the reader. He expects the reciprocal co-operation on the reader’s side prevailing in the language community. At this stage, he was still conscious of Blair, though his idealistic hope inclined much toward Condillac’s global view of language.

Condillac had already accepted the idea that all knowledge is given through a functional use of signs and words. Since the publication of *Essai sur l’origine des connaissances humaines* in 1746, he had occupied a commanding position in the intellectual life of Europe. His idea of language is based on the notion that ‘reason and reflection are primary, given in the nature of man, prior to language; language is man’s chief artificial creation.’<sup>(9)</sup> The natural and innate liaison found in a primary, ideal language could have made the internal without the kind of loss that ends in ‘falseness and affectation,’ though. As Wordsworth claims, without resort to ‘a mechanical device of style,’ that is, personification or allegory, or a convention of ‘a family language,’ the poet can internalise the meaning ‘in the company of flesh and blood’ and share its joy with the reader. It is the very idea Condillac tried to propagate, because he believed that the mind was not passive either in perception or in speech. His dynamic model of language attracted the heart of young British radicals, such as Enfield and Wordsworth.



Relying much on the authority of the Bible, Condillac posited three things: sociability, reason, and harmony of gestural expression of man which create a rudimentary epistemological state. Man is by nature a social creature, endowed with reason, and all human beings are, by nature, uniformly endowed with the same gestural expression of mental states, such as pain, joy, fright, and surprise. But Condillac also put an emphasis on the assertion that reason is the fundamental capacity in the nature of man. There should be sought, therefore, some means of reconciliation between reason and emotion. In Condillac, the unifying aspect of compromise is set equal to some effective means which do not necessarily exclude the concept of 'imitation.' Both Enfield and Wordsworth in the "Preface" to the *Lyrical Ballads* set this effective means equal to poetic language whatever form it may take.

In other words, Condillac assumed a creativity in the process of language-making. According to him, language does possess the function of shared, mutual communication, because it can be an arbitrary sign of the mind, the internal thoughts. It can achieve and handle an active communication among men. In this active transaction, the signs can become both a memory bank and a retrieval system, fulfilling the needs of private thinking and reaching the ends of communication. Since the firm linkage between the signifier and the signified can be replaced by an expression of reason and reflection, language becomes controllable in spite of the ever-widening expansion of the repertory of signs and of ratiocinative possibilities. (10) Although reason and reflection constitute the primary nature of man, prior to language, language itself has been man's chief artificial creation. Thus, on the basis of association of ideas, language can become the chief repository open to the poet:

From all the operations we have described results one that, so to speak, crowns the understanding: it is reason...[which] is nothing but the knowledge of the manner in which we are obliged to rule the operations of the mind.

(Condillac 1, 33a 3)

[L]anguage is the most palpable example of the connections we form voluntarily...  
(Condillac 1, 29a)

Condillac's language-centred philosophy states succinctly that language is not derived from the transcendental idea. It is the artificial connections subject to our voluntary control. (*FLS* 155) (11) If so, language enables us to remove and subvert the solid assumptions of the imitation doctrine. In other words, the initial unitary signs are not permanently stable. In the ordinary transaction, the linearity of speech exhibits the unexpected power to decompose itself. Once getting into action, theoretically speaking, signs could perpetually recast themselves into discrete and arbitrary signs of human language. Although the imitation theory intentionally ignores this dynamic activity of the mind in discourse, Enfield accepted the idea of language dependent on this dynamism, and referred to it even in his literary criticism.

Condillac's theory, which deliberately discriminates the voluntary and the involuntary connection of ideas, was introduced in England in the 18th century, and was enthusiastically supported by Joseph Priestley and his colleagues at his famous dissenters' school, Warrington Academy. As Aarsleff points out, Condillac's idea of language as a means of social communication was easily acceptable to the dissenters who firmly believed in the progress of the society for the better. (Aarsleff 207) The progress of knowledge depends on the development of man's capacity for reflection, while that capacity itself is aided by man's greatest artificial accomplishments, speech and language. Making most of voluntarily created arbitrary signs, language provides a palpable structure to reality, makes past knowledge retrievable, and allows the combination of ideas on a new, deliberate pattern. In essence, the language and the progress of mind reflect all the functions of society.

Priestley strived to apply Condillac's idea of language tacitly to the political context as a transferred sign of community. In *A Course of Lectures on the Theory of Language, and Universal Grammar* (1762), (12) he pointed out that

[i]n a country where all that spoke the language had one head, all writers, ambitious to draw the attention of the leading men in the state, would studiously throw aside the particular forms of speaking they might happen to have been brought up in, and conform to that of their superiors. (*CLT* 137)

On the firm ground of his observation, he points out that ‘the purposes of a language’ are ‘for the mutual communication of such beings as we are.’ (*CLT* 6) Priestley the political philosopher paid a considerable attention to the fact that language could not hold its integrity and purity unless it is used in ‘independent cities or states’ which had ‘no very free communication with one another.’ (*CLT* 135) According to him, the political ideology of a community has a tendency to imitate the language of the established power which is remarkably seen in the written language. (13) Its implication is that the written language shows distinctive signs of political sophistication and uniformity, while dialects provide the communal, private means of communication.

Although Priestley left Warrington Academy in 1767, Enfield kept working there as one of its tutors until its close in 1783. Accordingly, it would be natural to understand that Enfield’s interest had been centred on the written language and that a partiality for Condillac’s ideas had been detected in his argument. They appeared in Wordsworth’s “1800 Preface,” supporting his notion of the poet as a representative of common men. Herein is heard an echo of Enfield’s theory. Wordsworth gave a definition of the poet as one of the crowd, as

[a] man speaking to men: a man...endowed with more lively sensibility, more enthusiasm and tenderness, who has a greater knowledge of human nature, and a more comprehensive soul, than are supposed to be common among mankind.  
 (“Preface,” 138–9)

Wordsworth’s political stance of egalitarianism was not his own invention. Historically, it originated in Quintilian. (*OS* 176) Nevertheless, it could be interpreted as his credo as a sympathiser of the Gironde. Following the radical idea of Priestley,

which passed through Enfield, what Wordsworth wanted to attain in *Lyrical Ballads*, I would argue, was to demolish the privileged language of the established class.

( 2 )

Hugh Blair features, as a fundamental source, Enfield's argument on poetics. Enfield cites Blair's *Lectures* as the source of his impassioned theory of poetry:

This appears to have been the idea entertained of Poetry by Plato, and to have furnished the chief ground of his exclusion of poets from his republic. Cicero formed the same idea of poetry and said that while all other accomplishments must be acquired by instruction and precept, the poet derives sufficient resources from himself, from the native vigor of his mind, and a certain divine impulse. This notion is adopted among the moderns by Dr. Blair. (*MM* 454)

After having thus undermined the mimesis theory of Aristotle, the mentor Enfield returns to Plato. He evaluates Plato on account of the frenzied divine madness which he also assumed as the source of poetic inspiration. This concise as well as appropriate summary of Blair's theory of poetic passion, while fitting it into the context of Plato's divine frenzy, would have been persuasive enough to stimulate the young poets of the turbulent age. Even if Enfield's article had been the only substantial source for both Wordsworth's and Coleridge's knowledge about Blair, it served well enough to incite Wordsworth's awareness as a poet. However, their different modes of accepting Enfield lead to a considerable diversion in the end.

On several points, Enfield holds more concrete views concerning the poetic passion than Blair. In places, Enfield's discussion plays a sort of prelude to the 1800 "Preface" of *Lyrical Ballads*. Wordsworth's borrowings from Enfield occur, however, mostly in the region where he stepped beyond the limits of Blair's aesthetics. For one thing, Enfield evaluates the importance of 'memory' and 'the power of association' in the creative process, which predicts the coming of Wordsworth's mnemonic theory. By

the combined help of these two, the poet can give birth to imaginary beings, transfer the powers of one being to another, populate any part of the universe with new forms, call up spectres from the infernal deep, bring down divinities from the celestial regions, and even bestow personal existence upon abstract ideas; these wonders, fancy can perform:

[T]he man who possesses, in an uncommon degree, this inventive faculty, has, undoubtedly, the best title to the appellation of poet, according to the original meaning of the term; for he is, in truth, a creator. (*MM* 455)

Enfield thus modified the end-oriented definition of poetry as something to instruct or to please, and consolidated it into that of imagination. This new canon diminishes the qualitative difference of poetry and prose into a matter of degree. His conclusion sounds like a sort of revision of Blair's distinction of verse and prose, but he still keeps the traditional, pleasure-giving principle, 'to amuse,' as the poet's duty. It was Johnson who insisted as follows:

The true poet enables you to feel what you remember to have left before, and to feel it with a great increase of sensibility: you recognize a familiar image, but meet it again amplified and expanded, embellished with beauty, and enlarged with majesty. (*MM* 454)

Johnson in the 18th century enlarged the traditional territory of poetry itself, saying that there should be a time lag 'to meet it again' between sensation and expression. By reading poetry, the reader can enhance the remote memory of beauty, or the sensations he must have felt in the past. This pleasure could not have been evoked without the mediation of the poet who also seeks the origin of his poetry in memory.

As can be inferred from his criticism on Johnson shown in the quoted stanza in "Preface," Wordsworth insists in the importance of an impassioned state even in the

unconscious. He argues how 'emotion recollected in tranquility' (*PLB* 146) is imperative in the creation of poetry. The poet is no more a mirror that simply reflects the object in view: he should be in the impassioned state, whereas a similar intensity is required on the reader's side too. Enfield criticizes Johnson, however, on the ground that his definition of poetry can be easily applicable to the works of fancy and sentiment in prose as well.

This notion of imaginative identity with others, especially with poets, became common in the late 18th century. (*OS*177) By making the most of his own sensibility as a useful medium, the reader can feel the intensity of emotion expressed in words. This reciprocal relationship is accomplished, when a shared image is produced between the poet and the reader. Although Wordsworth insists that the poet's sensibility is different from an ordinary man 'only in degree,' this associative Hartleian image of the poet summoning emotion from memory is somewhat alien to the poet as was imagined by Blair.

Blair's definition of poetry as an impassioned language finds its more distinctive echo in Wordsworth's "Note to The Thorn"(published in 1800). Wordsworth admits, though circumstantially, that "The Thorn" represents an experiment of applying Blair's definition of poetry into practice. (14) Concerning the intention of making the narrator of "The Thorn" as he is, Wordsworth says:

It was my intention in this poem to shew the manner in which such men cleave to the same ideas; and to follow the turns of passion, always different, yet not palpably different, by which their conversation is swayed...while I adhered to the style in which such persons describe, to take that words, which in their minds are impregnated with passion, should likewise convey passion to Readers who are not accustomed to sympathize with men feeling in that manner or using such language.  
(15)

Apart from Condillac's idea of 'language is the chief repository of the associations open to the poet,' Coleridge's beautiful reflection on dream would not have come out

in 1796. His passage had preceded the compilation of *Lyrical Ballads* by one year and a half. On 17 December 1796, Coleridge sent a very long and candid letter to his radical friend and poet, John Thelwall, in which he discussed the necessity of creative reading and the inherent obscurity involved in it:

When you do find out the meaning of my poetry, can you (in general, I mean) after the language so as to make it more perspicuous—the thought remaining the same? —By ‘dreamy semblance’ I did mean semblance of some unknown Past, like to a dream—and not, ‘a semblance presented in a dream’.—I mean to express, that oft-times, for a second or two, it flashed upon my mind, that the then company, conversation, & everything, had occurred before, with all the precise circumstances; so as to make Reality appear a Semblance, and the Present like a dream in Sleep. Now this thought is obscure; because few people have experienced the same feeling. Yet several have—and they were proportionally delighted with the lines as expressing some strange sensations, which they themselves had never ventured to communicate, much less had ever seen developed in poetry. (16)

It would be a logical corollary drawn from the premise that language is the medium as well as the chief and common repository of association between the poet and the reader. When objects are grasped as they stand by the mind engaged in a creative, though private action, their nature can be communicated only in such a society in which the words used are understandable to all its members. In order that these words should be communicated adequately, they are to be ‘submitted to a constant process of “rectification” in the social intercourse of speech.’ (Aarsleff 219) In such society alone, language plays a central role in various ways of perception, of cognition, and of communication. It prepares the potentialities of expression as well. The cognitive activity of the mind is not passive, whether it is displayed in perception or in speech. As was beautifully described by Coleridge in his letter to Thelwall, words often begin to lose their reality in this extreme subjectivism, and consequently they are likely to have ‘a semblance presented in a dream’ in its process of ‘rectification.’ Coleridge was well

aware of this pitiable imperfection or the inherent limits of language as a medium. He also probably learned this idea from Enfield's article.

If language concretized in an impassioned state should exhibit such instability as a medium, where can be found a solid point of reference? In place of the notion of 'semblance,' Wordsworth brought out the idea of poet as a translator:

...[A]s it is impossible for the Poet to produce upon all occasions language as exquisitely fitted for the passion as that which the real passion itself suggests, it is proper that he should consider himself as in the situation of a translator, who deems himself justified when he substitutes excellences of another kind for those which are unattainable by him; and endeavors occasionally to surpass his original, in order to make some amends for the general inferiority to which he feels that he must submit. (*PLB* 139)

By putting some distance between the impassioned feelings on the scene and the emotion later recollected in his mind, Wordsworth claims that the poet should play the role of the translator of the original feelings.

The second point of Enfield's rejection of Blair can be found in his discussion on poetry and prose. Enfield substituted Blair's distinction with an antithesis between rational and emotive language. His point is that 'metaphorical' and 'figurative' prose may reasonably be called poetry. (*OS* 173) About a decade later, in "the 1811-12 Lectures on Shakespeare and Milton," Coleridge gave a definition of poetry as follows:

Poetry is not the proper antithesis to prose, but to science. Poetry is opposed to science, and prose to metre. The proper and immediate object of science is the acquirement, or communication, of truth; the proper and immediate object of poetry is the communication of immediate pleasure. (17)

This famous definition is repeated at the end of the fourth Lecture of this series, and later developed fully in chapter fourteen of *Biographia Literaria*. Referring to Wordsworth's similar distinction in the 1800 "Preface," R. A. Foakes suggests this passage 'may echo Enquirer' (William Enfield) in the *Monthly Magazine* 11(1796)



453-6. (18) Here again there is a conspicuous difference in Wordsworth and Coleridge in their way of accepting Enfield. Coleridge's note to the word 'poetry' contains the famous sentence, 'Poetry sheds no tears "such as Angels weep," but natural and human tears, ' while in the 1802 "Preface" Wordsworth asserts:

I here use the word 'Poetry' (though against my own judgment) as opposed to the word Prose, and synonymous with metrical composition. But much confusion has been introduced into criticism by this contradistinction of Poetry and Science, instead of the more philosophical one of Poetry and Prose. The only strict antithesis to Prose is Metre. (OA 602)

Presumably, the passage was written under the strong influence of Coleridge, although it preceded Coleridge's *Lectures* by at least a decade. Yet, unlike Coleridge's tendency toward conceptualization, Wordsworth the poet declares that Poetry and Science are not antithetical but play essentially complementary roles:

Poetry is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge; it is impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all Science...Poetry is the first and last of all knowledge—it is as immortal as the heart of man. If the labours of Men of Science should ever create any material revolution, direct or indirect, in our condition, and in the impressions which we habitually receive, the Poet will sleep then no more than at present, but he will be ready to follow the steps of the Man of Science, not only in those general indirect effects, but he will be at his side, carrying sensation into the midst of the objects of the Science itself. (PLB 606)

In spite of the slight differences in their implications, Enfield, Wordsworth and Coleridge agreed to change the line of demarcation between poetry and prose. According to Aarsleff, this idea of demolishing the barrier between prose and poetry can be traced back to Condillac. When a text is set and viewed in stylistic or linguistic discourse, the distinction between prose and poetry quickly disappears, because the functional medium for both sides is nothing but language. More than anything else the medium of poetry is language. As Aarsleff argues, in *De l'art d'écrire* (1775), especially

in the final chapter “Observations on poetic style and incidentally on what determines the quality that belongs to each genre of style,” Condillac stated that ‘the essential differences cannot be fixed in terms of prose and poetry’ (C 461) because ‘both of them deal with the same subjects.’ (C 461) (FLS 376–8) ‘The difference lies between the style of the philosopher and the style of the Lyric poet.’ (C 451)<sup>(19)</sup> It is worth noting that Wordsworth unfolded a similar provocative idea:

[n]ot only the language of a large portion of every good poem, even of the most elevated character, must necessarily, except with reference to the metre, in no respect differ from that of good prose, but likewise that some of the most interesting parts of the best poems will be found to be strictly the language of prose, when prose is well written. (*PLB* 133)

In the 1802 “Preface,” moreover, he added with a confidence that ‘there neither is, nor can be, any essential difference between the language of prose and metrical composition.’ (*PLB* 135) He dared to assert that Prose can have Metre, because ‘lines and passages of metre so naturally occur in writing prose.’ (*PLB* 135) Like eighteenth-century aesthetic primitivists, Wordsworth adopted here the notion of antithesis between art and nature; he also condemned everything that took on the tinge of the artificial. This is an epoch-making statement, which announces the birth of free verse. The nineteenth century poets, such as Baudelaire and Whitman, endeavoured to authenticate their own style of poetry:

These comments mark the beginnings of what can be called, in Pound’s phrase, ‘the prose tradition in verse’, which, in his example, means trying to say, ‘Send me the kind of Rembrandt I like’, in terms of ‘Send me four pounds of ten-penny nails.’<sup>(20)</sup>

Rehder’s interpretation of the above quoted is that ‘[f]ree verse originates in the desire for greater precision in the representation of feeling and its irregularity suggests a lack of order in the world, a perception of our minds and lives as chaotic.’ (*WBMP*

206) Wordsworth was too sharp to ignore this chaotic condition of modernity. Rendering this chaos internalized, he endeavours to demolish the barrier between prose and poetry. To the contrary, Coleridge in *Biographia Literaria* flatly denies the promiscuity of poetry and prose. (21)

Admittedly, both Wordsworth and Coleridge were familiar with Blair's ideas on poetry, but they were under a more direct influence of Enfield's article in the *Monthly Magazine*. Their ways of accepting Enfield were different, which almost foretells their separation in the near future. Although Wordsworth's debts to the eighteenth-century writers are obvious, Enfield should be counted as the immediate and important predecessor for his idea of language. We can hardly exclude Enfield's contribution in the line of transmission of Longinian ideas of expressionism from Blair to Wordsworth. Lastly, it should be added that a number of translations of Hugh Blair's works were made in France in 1797, when the fame of Condillac reached its peak.

## NOTES

(1) It is difficult to believe that Wordsworth and Coleridge would have failed to read Blair's works at first hand. Both of them must have read the extracts in Knox's *Elegant Extracts ... in Prose*. Knox's book was then a commonly used textbook at schools, not only at Hawkshead Grammar School, which Wordsworth attended, but also at Coleridge's old school, Christ's Hospital. Moreover, Coleridge borrowed the second Volume of Blair's 1783 edition of *Lectures* from Bristol Library; see Duncan Wu, *Wordsworth's Reading 1770-1799* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) p. 181 (hereafter WR in the text). Wu points out that pencil markings were made from pages 51 to 111 of that copy:

There is something on nearly every pages of Blair's *Lectures* that would have interested Wordsworth and Coleridge, and which ties with various statements they made subsequently. This was the most important single borrowing during the period, and was one of a succession of books...that helped established the thinking behind the *Lyrical Ballads*. (WR 181)

(2) Hugh Blair, *Lectures: Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* (London: Charles Daly, 1839).

(3) "The *Monthly Magazine*" occupied an exceptional place among magazines of the period. Highly intellectual, it was aimed at Dissenters and Radicals. Coleridge was a regular contributor to the *Monthly Magazine* by this time. The magazine contained

articles on literary criticism, politics, economics, divinity, and even science. Enfield was one of the main contributors, who used the pseudonym "The Enquirer." John Aikin, the editor of the Monthly Magazine identified Enfield as "The Enquirer" in the November 1797 issue; see WR 54.

(4) All references to *The Monthly Magazine* (November 1797) are MM in the text.

(5) M.H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Traditions*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953) pp. 70–71; hereafter ML in the text.

(6) All references are to William Wordsworth, *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, ed. W. J. B. Owen and Jane Worthington Smyser, Vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974); hereafter *PLB* in the text.

(7) John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Peter H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987) p. 405; hereafter L in the text.

(8) W.J.B. Owen and Jane Worthington Smyser, "Commentary," in *PLB*, pp. 172–3; hereafter *OS* in the text.

(9) Hans Aarsleff, "Wordsworth, Language and Romanticism," *Essays in Criticism* 30 (1980) p. 223; hereafter A in the text.

(10) 'Tous nos besoins tiennent les uns aux autres, et l'on en pourrait considérer les perceptions comme une suite d'idées fondamentales, auxquelles on rapporterait tout ce qui fait partie de nos connaissances. Au-dessus de chacune s'élèverait d'autres suites d'idées qui formeraient des espèces de chaînes, dont la force serait entièrement dans l'analogie de signes, dans l'ordre des perceptions et dans la liaison que les circonstances qui réunissent quelquefois les idées les plus disparates auraient formée.' [Etienne de Condillac, *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. Georges de Roy, 3 vols. (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1947–51) vol. I, p. 49; hereafter designated as *CO* in the text.

(11) Hans Aarsleff, *From Locke to Saussure* (London: Athlone, 1982) p. 207; hereafter *FLS* in the text.

(12) Joseph Priestley, *A Course of Lecture on the Theory of Language and Universal Grammar* (Warrington, 1762); hereafter *CLT* in the text.

(13) He noticed that the 'use of letters [tended] to fix the modes of it [i.e., language]' (p. 135); that in a politically unified nation like the Roman empire (unlike the warring Greek states) there is a natural tendency to imitate the language of established power and that 'by this means' Dialects, though used in conversation, would hardly ever be introduced into writing and the written language would be capable of being reduced very nearly to a perfect uniformity. [Michael Baron, *Language and Relationship in Wordsworth's Writing* (London and New York: Longman, 1955) 14–15]

(14) His definition of poetry is given in the famous Lecture XXXVIII of Blair's Lectures was that 'it is the language of passion, or of enlivened imagination, formed most commonly, into regular numbers.' (Blair 312)

(15) William Wordsworth, *The Oxford Authors: William Wordsworth*, ed. Stephen Gill (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984); hereafter *OA* in the text.

- (16) Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Earl Leslie Griggs, 6 vols. (Oxford and New York, 1956–71) vol. I, p. 277.
- (17) Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Complete Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, Vol.5, R. A. Foaks, ed. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1987) p. 19.
- (18) R. A. Foaks, “Notes,” *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, Vol. 5, p. 219, 4.
- (19) ‘Il faut considérer si, entretient les mêmes sujets, la poésie et la prose se font chacune une fin particulière, ou si toutes deux elles ont la même.’ [Etienne de Condillac, *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. V, p. 461]
- (20) Robert Rehder, *Wordsworth and the Beginnings of Modern Poetry* (London, Croom Helm: 1981) p. 206; hereafter *WBMP* in the text.
- (21) Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, James Engell and W. Jackson Bate, eds. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1956) Chapter 22, 143.

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## Chapter 8

### Refusal of the Metamorphosis Theme in “Nutting”\*

(1)

Our argument starts with the premise that, among the Romantic, it was Coleridge who exquisitely pursued the theme of internal metamorphosis of the self.<sup>(1)</sup> It was because he thought it suitable for displaying his double-edged playing of the desire to refute a Unitarian theory. Especially when he was deeply engaged in proving the presence of evil within Unitarian unity, its premise seems to be irrelevant. To substantiate the presence of evil in “Christabel,” a sort of magical process is shown in the fearful image of Geraldine transfiguring herself to a serpent.

A snake’s small eye blinks dull and shy;  
And the lady’s eyes they shrunk in her head,  
Each shrunk up to a serpent’s eye,  
And with somewhat of malice, and more of dread,  
At Christabel she looked askance —  
One moment —and the sight was fled! (ll. 583–8)

Geraldine’s covert metamorphosis is relevant to her inner self, which had been suggested in Part I as ‘[a ]sight to dream of, not to tell!’ (l. 253) Her metamorphosis actually takes place in Part II in the section quoted. Coleridge asserted that her metamorphosis is set in the context of the study of evil consciousness.<sup>(2)</sup> The theme of the study of evil is what Coleridge had pursued since the composition of “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner.” The study of evil consciousness was his own peculiar obsession, even when it was set in the context of universal benevolence, *One Life*. In “Christabel,” the rivalry of evil and virtue is visibly represented in the figures of Christabel and Geraldine. When these two women confront themselves with each other,

the heroine Christabel is caught 'in dizzy trance,' (l. 589) though she typifies a simple and specialized conception of virtue. The description of the crucial moment tells us how she perceives the metamorphosis of Geraldine in that state of trance.

So deeply had she drunken in  
That look, those shrunken serpent eyes,  
That all her features were resigned  
To this sole image in her mind: (ll. 601-4)

As W. Jackson Bate suggests, Coleridge tried, in these lines, to depict the metamorphosis of Geraldine, so that 'the thought of the natural perversity, the uneasy and unpredictable contrasts within the human heart.' (Bate 59) The moral conflicts remain unsolved.

Coleridge provides us with another example of 'the uneasy and unpredictable contrasts within the human heart' in "Kubla Khan." It is presented in the form of structural metamorphosis and occurs in successive changes, from 'a person on business from Porlock' to the protagonist Kubla Khan himself, and then to an entranced poet with '[h]is flashing eyes, his floating hair.' ("Kubla Khan" l.50) The eloquent image in the epilogue discloses the dynamic transfiguration of the self from the mundane world to the transcendental level in the dream. It can be construed that Coleridge's main concern in dealing with the metamorphosis theme is derived from his desperate effort to search a vast chaotic area in the human heart, an area of 'critical uncertainty,' (McGann 100) where not only the divine but also the evil presence reside conflicting each other, reaching in a precarious, interchangeable state, though momentarily.

The dialectic probing of evil implied in this structural uncertainty underscores what Coleridge stated in a well-known passage in *The Statesman's Manual*. Here, Coleridge's notion of translucence is shown as an ideal state which could substantiate

a symbolic reality. Through the aid of elaborate rhetoric, this concept of translucence is made to conform to the idea of One Life without any intervention of the signifier.

[A] symbol ... is characterized by a translucence of the special in individual, or of the general in the special, or of the universal in the general; above all by the translucence of the eternal through and in the temporal. It always partakes of the reality which it renders intelligible; and while it enunciates the whole, abides itself as a living part in the unity of which it is the representative.

(W.G.T. Shedd ed., *Complete Works*, I, 438)

Nevertheless, in "Christabel," the metamorphosis of Geraldine does play the role of signifier which stands for the willful negation of the good and divine. Consequently, she is forced to play the multiple role of the evil consciousness through metamorphosis process. If the eternal could take up its abode only in a translucent state, and if the symbol of the divine was to share a part of the eternal as much as that of reality in that special translucence, the evil which assumes an ever-changing, varied form would not embody itself as a part of reality nor that of the divine. It can barely exist, however, as a signifier within a structure of contradictory references. Coleridge's Romantic attempt to efface the signifier of the symbol, One Life, is thus undermined by the metamorphosis theme which reveals and encloses these layers of contradiction. The question of whether evil can share a room with the concept of translucence remained unsolved at this stage. The privileged signifier, when it is tied with reality, cannot connote unconscious evil. Wordsworth could wisely avoid this muddle of translucence against the uncertainty of evil by clever tactics, occasionally using or not using the metamorphosis theme, and by using Greek Myth sparingly. His ambivalent attitude toward Greek Myth signifies the nature of his poetico-cultural transference.

Although the second generation of Romantics do not hesitate in making use of Greek mythology, Percy Bysshe Shelley takes a particular interest in the myth of Adonis, the fertility myth, while John Keats does in that of Endymion. The Endymion



myth deals with the worship of Diana and the race for the succession of the kingdom.<sup>(3)</sup> It is curious to see that Wordsworth, their predominant senior rival, did not shown any interest in this aspect of the metamorphosis theme, resurrection after death, in his early age, at least until 1802. After writing the great poems, “Ode (Intimations of Immortality)” and “The Leech-Gatherer” in 1802, the year of joy and jollity, and after having encountered the death of his brother John in 1805, great changes occurred in his view of life and death.

If the myth of Adonis was to exemplify an unconscious desire for resurrection, it should be told in a particular context after a clear line of demarcation between the realm of life and that of death has been drawn. An absence of this resurrection myth in Wordsworth, therefore, would purport a different, particular view on that border area between life and death, between animate and inanimate things. If that is the case, what ideas could be found to substantiate Wordsworth’s apparently unique stance against life and death? This argument is centered on this simple question, through the analysis of “Nutting.”

## ( 2 )

Among the Romantic poets, Wordsworth and Byron take a particularly keen interest in the genre of autobiography. When they tried to analyze their inner self, projected on the protagonist, they did not necessarily make the most of the theme of metamorphosis, although a desire for resurrection through death is implicitly referred to in their works. Accordingly, any naïve attempt to explicate the significance of either *The Prelude* or *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage, A Romance* in the context of the metamorphosis theme might not attain satisfactory results. For one thing, it is because their protagonists are essentially not concerned so much with resurrection after death as with the reinterpretation of the past in the present. Their ideal, particularly in the case of Wordsworth, did not remain a mere fantasy. It needed to be completely fulfilled

in this mundane world at the very moment. Owing to his constant vigilance on the identity of himself reciprocating with the present moment, Wordsworth was highly concerned with the realization of universal benevolence, at least in the 1790s. He professed his belief in One Life as a redemptive power, a life force, the living God.

Sensation, soul, and form,  
All melted into him; they swallowed up  
His animal being. In them did he live;  
And by them did he live—they were his life.  
In such access of mind, in such high hour  
Of visitation from the living God,  
He did not feel the God, he felt his works.  
("Pedlar," ll.103-9)

To the poet Wordsworth in the Goslar period (4), an inspired poet with a firm belief in universal benevolence, the poetic mind as 'Sensation, soul' might have meant something vital, autonomous and unitary. This poetic mind is distinctive, ego-centric one. It should and could attain the love of Man, only by means of the love of Nature. (5) Still, instead of making a compromise of the meaning of love with the internal conflict and yearning for woman, Wordsworth sought love in 'Nature's living images' (1805 *Prelude*, VI l.313) as well as in 'Characters of the great apocalypse,/ The types and symbols of eternity,' (1805 *Prelude* VI ll.569-570) in an elated sensation of limitlessness tied with a bond to divine vision. In other words, the love of Man urged Wordsworth to seek a certain point in that obscure, uncertain border area where the mundane world keeps its perilous balance with the inner self, at times both merging with each other. This soul expects no split between the subject himself and the external world.

The exclusion of domestic love as well as of the theme of metamorphosis from *The Prelude* is deeply dependent on the nature of imagination embedded deep in his monism. In an analysis of "Nutting," however, we are bound to find a different aspect of Wordsworthian imagination, for it is here that we witness this perilous balance

collapsing, revealing a different mode of crisis, the rape of Nature. The poem has its origin in the Dorothy's letter to Coleridge written during their stay at Goslar in 1798, in which she described the skating scene and the boat stealing episode of *The Prelude* as well. It can be regarded as a queer and eccentric poem of the early Wordsworth, relying much on the notion of metamorphosis, though implicitly. "Nutting" utilizes one of the poet's boyhood memories of collecting the hazelnuts in the wood. The boy poet is clothed in old used garments, 'cast-off weeds,' and is conscious of disguising himself; he disguises himself as an outsider to ordinary life.

I left out cottage-threshold, sallying forth  
With a huge wallet o'er my shoulders slung,  
A nutting-crook in hand; and turned my steps  
Toward some far-distant wood, a Figure quaint,  
Tricked out in proud disguise of cast-off weeds  
Which for that service had been husbanded  
By exhortation of my frugal Dame—  
Motley accoutrement, of power to smile  
At thorns, and brakes, and brambles,—and, in truth  
More ragged than need was!

("Nutting," ll. 1-14)

A double view point develops the narration. It is psychologically manipulated by the narrator, endowed with compound eyes, one the innocent eyes of a child and the other the wise, sober eyes of the adult. This rickety double framework of the narrative dramatizes the process of self-reflection, helps to disintegrate the time sequence, and transfigures the prosaic scene of "Nutting" into a rape of Nature.

On a psychological level, the disguised narrator is split into a double personality, one of an innocent boy and of a lustful hunter. Secluded in the bower, 'one dear nook/Unvisited,' the adult's viewpoint changes into a hunter's lust in the context of the bower of Romance, in which Flora and Old Pan are playing the game of pursuit. (6)

A virgin scene —A little while I stood,

As joy delights in; and with wise restraint  
Voluptuous, fearless of a rival, eyed  
The banquet, or beneath the trees I sate  
Among the flowers,... (ll.19-23)

But our expectations of the traditional pastoral are betrayed and frustrated. The narrative finally leads the reader to the '[d]eformed and sullied bower' devastated by adolescent violence.

Then up I rose,  
And dragged to earth both branch and bough, with crash  
And merciless ravage; (ll.41-3)

Later in 1807, after having completed the great autobiographical poem, 1805 *Prelude*, Great Pan appeared again in a sonnet on a similarly particularized spot by the side of Grasmere Lake in the tranquil evening. Pan whispers to the narrator a sort of message to humankind.

But list! a voice is near;  
Great Pan himself low-whispering through the reeds,  
"Be thankful, thou; for, if unholy deeds  
Ravage the world, tranquillity is here!"  
(Sonnet "Clouds, lingering yet," ll. 1-4)

Assuming the voice of Nature, Great Pan reveals himself among the reeds of Grasmere with the traditional connotations of the myth. Pan's voice is echoed in the poet's own voice, and gives a warning that even the tranquility of death belongs to Nature as its integral part. The concept of One Life is thus eroded by the intrusion of death upon this idyllic scene. The names of Jove, Venus, and Mars in this sonnet divest themselves of their mythical connotations. They function as references to the concrete, physical presence of the planets in the evening sky.

Clouds, lingering yet, extend in solid bars  
Through the grey West; and lo! these waters, steeled  
By breezeless air to smoothed polish, yield  
A vivid repetition of the stars;  
Jove, Venus, and the ruddy crest of Mars  
Amid his fellows beauteously revealed  
At happy distance from earth's groaning field, (l. 1-7)

This kind of confusion of the mythical with the natural, physical order is not found yet in "Nutting." Here, the invisible presence of Pan or of Flora is implicitly referred to as if the framework of myth were more a hindrance than a help in developing the narration. Nevertheless, when unreal flowers which can transcend the time are found in the bower of hazel, the bower itself begins to transfigure into something that exists on the level of unreality.

—Perhaps it was a bower beneath whose leaves  
The violets of five seasons re-appear  
And fade, unseen by any human eye (ll.28-30)

The bower itself thus metamorphoses into a virgin Flora. She murmurs to him, the subject in the scene, in 'fairy water-breaks.'

I heard the murmur and the murmuring sound. (l.36)

Curiously, in response to this unintelligible sound of exhortation, the boy in the scene changes his role from Pan to Satyr. In spite of this blissful communion with Nature, the boy cannot restrain his own animal tendencies. He violates her, the bower, a virgin Flora, by a simple act of nutting, and consequently

... the shady nook  
Of hazels, and the green and mossy bower,  
Deformed and sullied, patiently gave up

Their quiet being: (ll. 13-46)

Having committed the despicable act of 'merciless ravage,' however, the boy hero becomes suspended psychologically, split within in uncertainty, wavering between the mood of exultation and that of contrition.

Even then, when from the bower I turned away,  
Exulting, rich beyond the wealth of kings  
I felt a sense of pain when I beheld  
The silent trees and the intruding sky — (ll. 48-51)

"Nutting" does not come to an end here. Violence produces kindness, linking the narrator to that presumptuous act of handling disorder in nature. The narrator gives a warning or a sensible advice to the reader, saying "move along these shades/In gentleness of heart; with gentle hand/Touch —for there is a Spirit in the woods." It is this 'Spirit' that embodies itself in the scenic model, 'intruding sky.' It works as a moral force, exhorting the narrator to recognize just how unreasonable his destructive act was. After a nine-year interval, a similar admonition from the marginal presence is heard repeated by Great Pan, by 'a Spirit in the woods': or 'tranquility is here!' In Nature, even after merciless, unholy deeds are committed by humankind, there still prevails tranquility.

As MS JJ reading points out (7), the moral of "Nutting" corresponds to a declaration of the narrator's duty as a poet in 1798. The poet must seek a happy means of coexistence with inanimate things in his pantheistic vision of One Life. In the same year, Wordsworth declared the similar resolution in "Home at Grasmere." What he sings out is 'Hope for this earth and hope beyond the grave' (l.965). To be brief, it is about 'the individual mind that keeps its own/Inviolable retirement, and consists/With being limitless, the one great Life.' (ll.969-71) His optimistic vision is deepened in "Tintern Abbey." Since most natural things are inanimate, the poet can 'see into the life of things,' ("Tintern Abbey" l.50) if only he could find those means and rules of

coexistence, of universal sympathy for the living world. His exhortation to the reader, that we should not damage or soil 'things,' would sound much more persuasive, if the narrator showed us a way to pass along them 'With[out] unreprieved indifference.' (MS JJ) This optimistic vision in 1798, however, did not last long in the fearful involute of poetico-cultural transference.

( 3 )

As having been analysed above, 'Wordsworth's aversion for an elaborate use of mythology as a rhetorical device' (Paul de Man 129)(8) brings several forms of negation in the texture of "Nutting." It is not only the boy hero but also Nature herself which covertly metamorphoses in "Nutting." This might mean an inevitable apparatus of poetico-cultural transference for Wordsworth the poet. To depict the covert, negative form of metamorphosis is an inevitable expression for the poet who tried to transcend the tradition of Romance through a process of the humanization of Nature. Geoffrey H. Hartman understands this poem as a record of how Wordsworth renounces the Miltonic and Spenserian Romance mode of complete humanization, and how he cultivates the sympathetic imagination toward Nature. (9) The rejection of the metamorphosis myth, therefore, means the only possible method to connect essentially heterogeneous worlds, the mythical and the mundane. Wordsworth seems to believe this irreconcilable feat is possible only through the cultivation of a sympathetic imagination.

The subject of "Nutting" is not only the story of how life in nature is exposed, or of a process of its secret manifestation, but also is focused on how the child's willful consciousness matures into the sympathetic imagination. Nature's activity or pedagogy is related primarily to this end. It teaches the boy that the bower has suffered his violence in patience and gentleness. In this passive attitude, the Nature enables the poet's eye to perceive the suffering nature, which is inevitable in the growth of his imaginative mind.

(Geoffrey H. Hartman 75)

Since in Wordsworth 'the growth of his imaginative mind' is inseparable from the poetico-cultural transference, the discussion should recur to the meaning of One Life. A sympathetic imagination can be fostered, only when the mind of man perceives the presence of the divine, 'the living God' ("Pedlar" 108), in such a way as is suggested in "Tintern Abbey." It is '[a] motion and a spirit, that impels/All thinking things, objects of all thought,/And rolls through all things.' (ll.101-3) So long as Wordsworth accepts this animated presence as 'One Life,' things in Nature may have metamorphosed themselves covertly on the level of a mythical world. But it is on the condition that he should remain in a passive mode 'with an eye made quiet by the power/Of harmony, and the deep power of joy.' ("Tintern Abbey" ll.48-9) In that mode alone, the poet (subject) can barely understand the message from this spiritual presence in the world surrounding him (object) in this passive mode of joy and harmony. He is endowed by Nature with a kind of double vision to see the bower of hazel as an object and simultaneously as an entrance gate to a world lying beyond the visible, even to the world of perversion. The vision is thus given as a privilege to the poet.

Unlike Coleridge, who employed the metamorphosis theme as a means to plumb the depth of the human heart, nor like Keats, who attempted to meditate in the benumbed state of suspended animation, nor like Shelley, who was deeply concerned with the possibility of resurrection after death, Wordsworth is mainly concerned with the working of sympathetic imagination. He makes the most of the technique of metamorphosis into an invisible mode of representation so as to reveal the animated power in Nature. Later, it leads him to the revivification of the Greek myth, as is found in the sonnet of 1807.

As a first step toward vivification, Wordsworth tried to efface the line of demarcation between the living and inanimate things in Nature as well as that between life and death. Instead of making this line clear-cut, he symbolizes this border area as something alive, something of this world. A good example of this effacement is shown in



the image of the Leech Gatherer (1802). He is depicted by the similes of a huge stone and a sea-beast.

As a huge stone is sometimes seen to be  
Couched on the bald top of an eminence;  
Wonder to all who do the same espy,  
By what means it could hither come, and whence;  
So that it seems a thing endured with sense:  
Like a sea-beast crawled forth, that on a shelf  
Of rock or sand reposes, then to sun itself:

Such seemed this Man, not all alive nor dead,  
("Resolution and Independence," ll.57-64)

Enclosed within this border area, the coalescence of the inanimate 'shelf of rock' and slightly animated 'sea-beast' is precariously achieved, so that the tranquility and peace the Leech Gatherer embodies is to be substantially materialized by these similes. But this tranquility, which the old man stands for, is near to a tranquility of death than the vigor of life. This particular tranquility is inherent in Nature as the voice of Great Pan in 1807 clearly states. It is this tranquility that the wisdom of a child is barely permitted to perceive because he is 'father of the man.' ("The Rainbow" l.7) The nameless country girl in "We Are Seven" naturally thinks the dead are living members of her household.

'How many are you then,' said I,  
'If they two are in heaven?'  
The little maiden did reply,  
'O master, we are seven!'

'But they are dead, those two are dead—  
Their spirits are in heaven!'  
'T was throwing words away, for still  
The little maid would have her will,  
And said, 'Nay, we are seven!'  
("We Are Seven," ll.61-9)

Another example to represent the possibility of incommensurable co-existence of the dead and the living in *The Prelude* is a shepherd who appears in this border area of mist '[i]n size a giant.' As in the case of the Leech Gatherer, the shepherd is also robbed of a part of human nature so as to gain the sublime beauty of inanimate things.

Or him have I descried in distant sky,  
A solitary object and sublime,  
Above all height like an aerial cross  
Stationed alone upon a spiry rock  
Of the Chartreuse, for worship.

(1805 *Prelude* VIII ll.271-5)

Wordsworth is attracted more to 'the point where the two objects unite and coalesce in just comparison' (10) than to the white radiance emanated from the outside life where resurrection is supposed to take place. He is much concerned with sustaining the meaning of Nature, which can be stated as the symbolic form of biological development and growth. It is implied in the images of perpetual development and growth, in the concrete form of the vision, and in the dynamism of 'something evermore about to be.' (1805 *Prelude* VI 542) In such a vision, death could be translated into one distinct phase of the splendours of life. In such a vegetal world, whether one belongs to the class of the animated plant that can move, i.e., the animal—the leech gatherer—, or that of the inanimated plant that cannot move, i.e., the mineral—an aerial cross—does not count so much. Although it may sound contradictory, the negative metamorphosis, or the free transaction of animated and inanimated objects, takes place in this particular region with the help of sympathetic imagination. Wordsworth's peculiar poetico-cultural transference is carried out on the condition that such a precarious kind of coalescence is possible. Naturally it does not resort to metamorphosis.

For Coleridge, as was pointed out above, metamorphosis opened a problematic way of probing the presence of evil in the context of One Life. It was made equivalent

to the signifier of the unknown presence, the evil. In other words, One Life may be approximated to the ability to perceive the presence of a benevolent God in the framework of the Unitarian world view. Since he failed to reconcile these two fundamental premises of the benevolent Almighty and reason, it is not difficult to imagine why Coleridge had to reject the notion of One Life finally and could not but return to the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity.

Meanwhile, for Wordsworth, who had been familiar with Ovid since his boyhood, (11) the notion of metamorphosis persisted throughout the 1790s as a part of his covert ambition to transcend Ovid. Ovid's influence exhibits itself in a negative form, as the textual collation of DC MS 15 and 16 (*Lyrical Ballads and Other Poems, 1797-1800* pp.302-7) to the reading text of "Nutting" demonstrates it clearly. First Ariosto's version of culture of contradiction is introduced as in 'Astolpho's horn.' The archetype of Lucy, '[m]y beloved Maid,' resides in the bower as the symbol of the heart of love and happiness. But somehow both of them were driven away from the devastating wood pictured in "Nutting." For one thing, this negative way of representation is inevitable in order to prevent the intrusion of evil in the form of language ill-used. Unlike Coleridge, Wordsworth's search for a reasonable connection between metamorphosis and evil consciousness led him to the idea that evil is inherent in language, i.e., rhetoric, particularly when it is misused. Later in 1810, Wordsworth articulated that the essence of evil is in the clothing not in the substance. The clothing can be powerful enough to cover up and extinguish the natural creative energy.

If words be not (recurring to a metaphor before used) an incarnation of the thought, but only a clothing for it, then surely will they prove an ill gift; such a one as those possessed vestments, read of in the stories of superstitious times, which had power to consume and to alienate from his right mind the victim who put them. (12)

By means of the clothing metaphor, Wordsworth explicitly states that the evil does not lie in the body but in its clothing. His notion of "an incarnation of the thought"

converges with Coleridge's ideal of "translucence." Both of them deny the binary system of language based on the difference of the signifier and the signified, which offers an alternative possibility that language can attain its objective at the critical moment when it becomes entirely transparent to the user, as a means to express his thoughts and feelings. Both Coleridge and Wordsworth refused to express their vision in fragmentation, at least in the 1790s, while they could believe in the presence of One Life. Their language seemed to have attained a form of active recuperation, redemption. Without recourse to the metamorphosis, this comprehensive notion of language might have precariously stitched up the schism between subject and object, though. Their expectancy is implicitly expressed in "Christabel" and in "Nutting."

Apparently, in the context of Romantic ideology, the poet (subject) and the vision of the world around him (object) are reunited only on the side of subject, in his thoughts or feelings. In an extreme case, the poet's subjective phantasy of consistency is allowed to touch on pantheistic oneness, One Life. Nevertheless, the precarious momentary achievement is more vulnerable to an unconscious Evil, and is likely to be attacked and undermined by it. Wordsworth's awareness of this invisible schism is inextricably connected to his uncanny sense of the disintegration of rhetorical technique evinced in mythology, especially that of Ovid. The simile of the stone and sea beast or the metaphor of clothes and the body can be adjusted to the binary function of the signifier and the signified. But it refuses the rhetorical alteration, i.e., metamorphosis. Ultimately, his awareness itself becomes vulnerable to refutation. It is likely to be repudiated as something that has a direct access to evil, though.

The contradictory clothing metaphor explains why the boy hero in "Nutting" could not help performing a vicious act. It was because he was clothed in outlandish clothing at the start. The 'disguise of Beggar's weeds' (l.7) of the boy hero contains the signifier for something to veil the split, the disruption in the woods, that is, the 'merciless ravage.' (l.42) As if in accordance with this clothing metaphor, negative

chain of metamorphosis urges the reader to cope with the working of the sympathetic imagination which is prevalent everywhere in the woods.

The theme of anti-metamorphosis serves as a force which can be provisionally set in opposition to the power of the Imagination of the Poet. Imagination in Wordsworth is the power that can always push death back by extending the limits of life as far as possible. It usually helps the limitless ego of the poet to 'escape from the tyranny of the eye and the counter-spirit of language ill used.' (13) Wordsworth did not always depend on the rhetoric of metamorphosis. It is partly because he knew an alternative way, the performance of sympathetic imagination. His desire to transcend mortality, moreover, is exemplified by the wisdom of the child in his poetry such as a stubborn country girl in "We Are Seven." It is quite unusual.

In the cultural context of the Romantic belief in resuscitation and in the ideological context of that high-pitched belief in the renovating power of Imagination, death itself might well have been regarded as a deathless thing. Otherwise, Romantic poetry would not have been able to fill the mental schism cut deep by the wreck of the French Revolution. The glory of humankind, the notion derived from the Enlightenment, did not realize the emancipation of the human heart. It remained a grand narrative. Instead, after the reign of terror, the assumption that every individual should have been born with an inviolable right to life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness was disclosed itself as a mere social fantasy, proliferating myths or small narratives.

In Wordsworth, a young poet in the years from 1790 to 1802, at the latest, the conceptual framework of universal benevolence itself could have happily coincided with his own stubborn temperament to refuse the notion of death. (14) It would not have allowed him to have a glimpse of subjective metamorphosis, nor any possibility of resurrection after death. Instead, he grants permission to the reader to imagine the perfect boundlessness of life in a beautiful sunset scene. As he depicts the dramatic representation of life as endless, death is reduced to a state of waiting, where one has nothing to fear.

...and while my eye  
Was fixed upon the glowing sky  
The echo of the voice enwrought  
A human sweetness with the thought  
Of travelling through the world that lay  
Before me in my endless way.  
(“Stepping Westward,” ll.21-6)

This poem was written during his tour of Scotland in 1803. At this stage, Wordsworth was more sympathetic toward the pagan desire for continued identity on earth after death than the Christian concern for eternal life in heaven.

Wordsworth's susceptibility to the Scottish cultural tradition inherited from the Celtic past enabled him to accept the spirit of Ossian and, as is to be discussed in the following chapter, urged him to write “Glen-Almain”, which is full of deep emotive recollection. He knows well enough how to give access to that Spirit in the wood, implying itself as the marginal presence, and even how to domesticate it. In the long run, however, he was not capable of decoding nor asserting the hidden or unconscious meaning of the Ossianic narrative, which admits as a matter of fact the powers of the marginal presence and which reflects a fundamental dimension of collective thinking and collective fantasies about the history and reality of Scotland. What the narrator of “Nutting” heard in ‘the murmur and the murmuring sound’ of ‘fairy water-breaks’ of hazel woods, of the obsolescent Greek myth, accordingly, symbolizes the increasing sound of plural voices emitted from the marginalized presence in his contemporary culture. Although he committed the rape of mythical female divinity in the nature, even after the disruption, the nature itself still retains its status of meta-narrative as assuredly as is expressed in the image of ‘[t]he silent trees and the intruding sky’ in the end. Wordsworth's poetico-cultural transference is not consummate as regards the regeneration myth.

## NOTES

(1) Jerome J. McGann, *The Romantic Ideology*, 1983, p.73 p.100. 'One important feature of Romantic ideology, as we have already seen, is the belief that the poetical works can transcend historical divisions by virtue of their links with Imagination, through which we see into the permanent life of things.' (p.100)

(2) As W. Jackson Bate pointed out, Coleridge had been thinking about the compatibility of Evil and the One Life while composing "The Rime of Ancient Mariner."

...if we postulate a universe pervaded by "one Life," then — as in monistic and pantheistic religions generally — we seem confined to one of two choices in our attempt to understand evil, neither one of which satisfies both the mind and the heart. That is, we must either admit evil as an inevitable part of the fabric and thus qualify our conception of a benevolent God, or else we are encouraged to explain it away as something other than "evil" (i.e. as something not so bad after all. (W. Jackson Bate, *Coleridge*, Harvard University Press, 1987, p. 59)

(3) J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, (Abridged Edition), The Macmillan, 1976, p.56 & p.206.

(4) After the publication of the *Lyrical Ballads*, from October 6, 1798 to April 21, 1799, Wordsworth stayed at Goslar in Germany with his sister Dorothy.

(5) This attitude is just the opposite to that of D.H. Lawrence, who also tried to pursue the growth of poetic mind in the framework of an autobiography in *Sons and Lovers*. D.H. Lawrence put his emphasis on his love for a real woman with a sexuality in this world, starting from that for his mother.

(6) As was suggested by Hartman, Wordsworth could not entirely separate himself from the realm of Romance.

Wordsworth has clearly passed *through* the realm of "Flora and Old Pan" on the way to become a poet of the human heart. His psychology is prompted by images from Romance. (Geoffrey H. Hartman, *Wordsworth's Poetry 1787-1814* Yale University Press, 1977, 74.)

(7) I would not strike a flower  
As many a man will strike his horse; at least  
If from the wantonness in which we play  
With things we love, or from a freak of thought  
Or from involuntary act of hand  
Or foot unruly with excels of life  
It e'er should chance that I urgently used  
A tuft of            or snapped the stem  
Of foxglove bending over his native rill  
I should be loth to pass along my road  
With unreprieved indifference I would stop  
Self questioned, asking wherefor that was done  
For seeing little worthy of sublime  
In what we blazon with names

Of power & action I was early taught to love.

(Transcription based on that of Parrish, *The Prelude 1798-99*, Cornell University Press, 1977, p.77)

(8) In his brilliant analysis of 'Clouds, lingering yet...', Paul de Man argues about Wordsworth's stance against myth, saying

This simplicity of mythological allusion is important, especially in comparison with what we shall have to say later about Yeats, and also because it serves Wordsworth's overriding desire for simple concreteness, his genuine aversion for an elaborate use of mythology as a rhetorical device. (Paul de Man, *The Rhetoric of Romanticism*, Columbia University Press, 1984, 129)

(9) Geoffrey H. Hartman, p.75.

(10) In Preface to his *First Collected Edition of Poems*, Wordsworth analyzes the significance of this simile as follows.

In these images, the conferring, the abstracting, and the modifying powers of the Imagination, immediately and mediately acting, are all brought into conjunction. The stone is endowed with something of the power of life to approximate it to the sea-beast; and the sea-beast stripped of some of its vital qualities to assimilate it to the stone which intermediate image is thus treated for the purpose of bringing the original image, that of the stone, to a nearer resemblance to the figure and condition of the aged Man; who is divested of so much of the indication of life and motion as to bring him to the point where the two objects unite and coalesce in just comparison (*Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, Vol.II, ed. by Rev. Alexander B. Grosart, AMS Press Inc., 1967, 138).

(11) 'Before I read Virgil I was so strongly attached to Ovid, whose *Metamorphoses* I read at school, that I was quite in a passion whenever I found him, in books of criticism, placed below Virgil.' (*The Fenwick Notes of William Wordsworth*, Jared Curtis ed., Bristol Classic Press, 1993, 42)

(12) William Wordsworth, "Upon Epitaphs," *Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, Vol. II, Alexander B. Grosart ed., AMS Press, INC., New York, 1967, p. 65.

(13) 'Imagination is the power that has *at all times* enabled him to ward off the universe of death, escape at once the tyranny of the eye and the counter-spirit of language ill used.' (Jonathan Wordsworth, *The Borders of Vision*, Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1984, 327)

(14) 'Nothing was more difficult for me in childhood than to admit the notion of death as a state applicable to my own being...it was not so much from [ ] of animal vivacity that *my* difficulty came [124] as from a sense of the indomitableness of the spirit within me. I used to brood over the stories of Enoch & Elijah, and almost to persuade myself that, whatever might become of others, I should be translated in something of the same way to heaven.' (*The Fenwick Notes of William Wordsworth*, 61)

\* This chapter was originally given to the Wordsworth Summer Conference at Dove Cottage in 1993.



## Chapter 9

### Is the Sentimental Sublime Compatible with a Didactic Voice?\*

— Hugh Blair, James Macpherson and William Wordsworth

Within the traditional conventions of mythology concerned, Wordsworth could achieve a radical feat of negativity, reducing the numinous presence to a mere rupture in nature. However, as shown in Chapter 2, Wordsworth was deeply engaged in the thoughts of the Enlightenment philosophers of the 18th century, of those who speculated upon the origins and history of culture. Actually, he inherited and reworked the political language of a Real Whig tradition, such as that of William Enfield as well as those in the Scottish school. He took a particularly keen interest in Hugh Blair as a representative figure of the Scottish enlightenment, and also in the *Poems of Ossian*. In a sense, Wordsworth took a dubious position as regards the Scottish cultures, because he was unwilling to leave the matter of their dissolution intact, nor to recuperate them within a discourse of knowledge.

Although few people read him today, Hugh Blair (1718–1800), who had occupied the seat of Professor of Rhetoric and Belles Lettre at the University of Edinburgh from 1760 till his death in 1800, possessed an influential, authoritative voice among the Edinburgh literati. A Professorship of Rhetoric was instituted in 1760 by the town-council of Edinburgh. Blair was elected and took office in 1762. As a formality, His majesty distinguished the University of Edinburgh by erecting and endowing a Professorship of Rhetoric and Belles Lettres, and appointed Dr. Blair professor. From his social background— he was born in a distinguished family of clerical profession — it is easy to see how his fame as a literary critic dominated in the latter half of the 18th century, and it was still high in the early 19th century. He not only formed the literary climate of the age, but also played an important role in guiding the reading public of the

polished eighteenth century to the wholehearted acceptance of the poems of Ossian. The impact of his courageous feat ultimately led to the formation of *Lyrical Ballads*. His importance can be shown only by referring to the simple fact that Blair's *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*, which was first published in 1783, 20 years after he had given them at the University of Edinburgh, immediately went through more than 20 editions in England, America, France, and Italy. Dr. Hugh Blair—he was given the degree of Doctor of Divinity from the University of St. Andrews in 1757—was, at this time, no less, or perhaps more culturally distinguished than Dr. Samuel Johnson was. Although the mid-18th century is usually called the Johnsonian period, the Blairian formality actually dominated the republic of letters at the end of the century, till it faded away during the Regency. It was partly because, in the 1820s, casual conversational tone was popularly accepted, such as was found in Lamb's *Essays of Elia* or in Hazlitt's *Table Talk*. It was, in a sense, a sort of conscious reaction to this Blairian formality.

We are free and easy these days, and talk to the public as a friend. Read *Elia*, or [Washington Irving's] *Sketch Book*, or Hazlitt's *Table Talk*, or any popular book of the new school, and you will find that we have turned over the Johnsonian periods and the Blairian formality... (from *The Letters of Mary Russell Milford*, as is quoted from *The Cambridge Companion to British Romanticism*, Stuart Curran, ed., Cambridge University Press, 1993, 145)

By the very moment of composing *Lyrical Ballads*, both Wordsworth and Coleridge had been familiar with Blair, probably, through Knox's *Elegant Extracts: or, useful and entertaining passages in prose, selected for the improvement of scholars* (?1784: there are at least eleven editions counted for this book). Based on the evidence of the records of Coleridge's borrowings from the Bristol library in 1798, however, our surmise is that both of them must have read Blair in February 1798 (1). In fact, several critics have already pointed out the influence of Blair on Wordsworth and Coleridge as positive and crucial (2). Blair emphasises the importance of poetic passion,

saying Poetry is ‘the language of passion, and no other; for to passion, it owed its birth.’ (*Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*, ii, 314) Its direct echo is evidently heard in Wordsworth’s “Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*,” especially in such a sentence as ‘the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature.’ (*The Oxford Authors*, 597)

(1)

Chronologically speaking, Wordsworth’s “Preface” to *Lyrical Ballads* (1800) stands in the middle point of his ambivalent attitudes toward Macpherson. Even if the *Lyrical Ballads* owed so much to Blair’s theory of poetry as an expression of passion and shares his enthusiasm about primitive poetry, it could be an indication, at the same time, of Wordsworth’s limited and conditional acceptance of Blair’s canon.

Blair’s definition of Poetry can be summarized as ‘[t]hat it is the language of passion, or of enlivened imagination, formed, most commonly, into regular numbers.’ (*Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*, ii p.312) It should be noted, however, that Blair’s theory — that the language of passion should and could be ideally associated with the primitive past — was underscored by the practice of James Macpherson in his translation of the poems of the ancient bard Ossian. The tremendous success of *The Poems of Ossian* was indeed a social and cultural event of the Blairian age. Accordingly, to accept Blair’s literary judgment means to share his enthusiastic alliance with Macpherson.

In his *A Critical Dissertation on the Poems of Ossian, the Son of Fingal The Second Edition, To Which is added, An Appendix* (1765) (3), Blair had not shown any suspicion of the value of Macpherson’s achievement. It appears rather extraordinary to the eyes of the contemporary readers, for whom the critical judgment of Macpherson’s forgery had become a matter of fact since 1800, or, at least, after the appearance of Malcom Laing’s *The Poems of Ossian, &c containing the Poetical Works of James Macpherson*, (1805) and *Report of the Committee of the Highland Society of Scotland, appointed to*

*inquire into the Nature and Authenticity of the Poems of Ossian* (1805). Was Blair completely duped by James Macpherson (1736–96) concerning the authenticity of Ossian and his treatment of the original Gaelic materials? Or, was it due to his obligation to their intimate relationship?

The close personal relationship between Blair and Macpherson had already started, while Blair was working on his famous *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*. In June 1760, Macpherson's *Fragments of Ancient Poetry* appeared in Edinburgh, and attracted the attention of the sophisticated reading public, especially the so-called Edinburgh literati. He meant it to be an introduction to the epic poem he had in mind, that is, *Fingal* and *Temora*, but for Blair these *Fragments* seemed to embody his preconceptions of the epic, his theories on the origin of poetry in a mind under the strong passion.

Macpherson's notion that the ballads and stories still current in the Highlands were the corrupted versions of Ossian's original poetry accorded well with Blair's preconceptions about the epic. With Homer as the principal model for early poets, it seemed reasonable to suppose that epic poetry was a genre that came naturally to the primitive bard. (Fiona Stafford *The Sublime Savage*, 97)

Actually, Blair encouraged Macpherson to make a tour through the Highlands in order to collect poetry from oral recitals. Moreover, it was by Blair's exhortation and his substantial assistance that Macpherson made up his mind, though reluctantly, to publish his translation of the Ossianic poetry. Blair was consistent in his defence of its excellence. Without Blair's appropriate theorization and interpretation, it would have been rather difficult for the eighteenth-century reader, who had been accustomed to the strict, rule-governed order of neo-classical taste, to receive the rugged beauty of this primitive poetry, the poems of Ossian, wholeheartedly. Blair's *A Critical Dissertation on the Poems of Ossian, the Son of Fingal* was a courageous attempt to bridge the gulf between the striking novelty of the Ossianic poems and the accepted standards of literary excellence of the mid-eighteenth century.

Blair begins his argument by emphasising Ossian's original emotive and sublime quality. His argument has a socio-historical dimension.

Irregular and unpolished we may expect the production of uncultivated ages to be; but abounding, at the same time, with that enthusiasm, that vehemence and fire, which are the soul of poetry. For many circumstances of those times which we call barbarous, are favourable to the poetical spirit. (Gaskill (ed.) *A Critical Dissertation*, 345)

By 1797, the so-called Macpherson's English translation had begun to be judged as his own composition, and the Highland readers were highly disappointed to find *Ossian* as a pseudo-epic. *Ossian* was condemned on the ground that Macpherson's intention was to fabricate and glorify the history of his native country, and for that purpose he was criticised for picking up, intentionally, only those materials from the oral tradition which were convenient for him to compose a grand epic. For the sake of that scheme, Fingal, the conqueror of the Romans, and Ossian, the rival of Homer, were employed in the narrative rather arbitrarily. The whole framework was elaborately made up to conform to the Aristotelian rules of epic. Blair must have been too naive to perceive Macpherson's vile inventions. To the contrary, he had detected in *Ossian* an ideal of primitive poetry.

According to Blair, the primitive poems sung by the ancient Celtic bard, Ossian, do possess this 'enthusiasm' which is 'the soul' of poetry. This is because only primitive men can display the 'uncovered simplicity of nature' (ibid., 345) which can sustain the strong feelings. 'Their passions have nothing to restrain them: their imagination has nothing to check it.' (ibid.) On the other hand, the progress of society made poetry deteriorate from natural spontaneity to artful regularity. As Steve Rizza points out (4), this emphasis on the passion is 'an effective rhetorical means of confronting and countering the probable literary prejudices of Ossian's readers,' because, within his anthropomorphic model of history, Blair regards the historical progress of the world analogous to that of human being.

The progress of the world in this respect resembles the progress of age in man. The powers of imagination are most vigorous and predominant in youth; those of the understanding ripen more slowly, and often attain not the maturity, till the imagination begin to flag. Hence, poetry, is frequently most glowing and animated in the first stage of society. (Blair 346)

Since epic poetry was a genre that came naturally to the primitive soul, the earliest periods of society must have provided the ideal conditions for the composition of epic poems. If Homer were the principal model for early poets, it would be natural to think that the ancient poetry of Scotland—Ancient Scotland was similar in many points to Ancient Greece in Blair's eyes —ought to have been epic. To support this point in his defense of Macpherson, Blair underscored the machinery of mythology in *Ossian*.

It is a great advantage of Ossian's mythology, that it is not local and temporary, like that of most other ancient poets; which of course is apt to seem ridiculous, after the superstitions have passed away on which it was founded. Ossian's mythology is, to speak so, the mythology of human nature; for it is founded on what has been the popular belief, in all ages and countries, and under all forms of religion, concerning the appearances of departed spirits. (368)

Because of its universality, Ossian's mythology is comparable to that of Homer. Its unity meets the requisites to Blair's preconceptions of the epic. Indeed, in Blair's eyes, 'examined even according to Aristotle's rules, it [Fingal] will be found to have all the essential requisites of a true and regular epic,' (358) because the unity of the epic action is so strictly preserved in Fingal. Blair proceeds to run a parallel in some instances between the Greek and the Celtic bard, Homer and Ossian.

Behind this compulsive linking of particularity and universality, lurks Blair's national pride of being a Scottish, but what makes Blair's argument unique is that, besides the unity of the epic, he brought out his own notion of the sublime as an inclusive concept of Ossian. 'Homer is most sublime in actions and battles; Ossian, in description and sentiment.' (358) Accordingly, both of them, Ossian and Homer, are 'eminently sublime.' (358) Referring to the point that all circumstances of Ossian's

composition were favourable to the sublime, Blair declares that the sublime is ‘the offspring of nature, not of art’ and is ‘an awful and serious emotion.’ (395) ‘Given that Ossian was supposed to have lived in an uncultivated country, and that a mark of his genius was the faithful representation of nature,’ he concludes, ‘naturally his poetry could have achieved sublimity. Hence the concise and simple style of Ossian, gives great advantage to his sublime conceptions; and assist them in seizing the imagination with full power.’ (395)

In comparing Ossian and Homer, moreover, Blair suggests that the former excels the latter in ‘the pathetic.’ He set out toward a divergent definition of the sublime. Ossian exerts the power of the pathetic much more often, and ‘has the character of tenderness far more deeply imprinted on his works.’ (358) In other words, Blair humanizes the notion of the sublime here with a slightly different connotation from that of Burke. It is not surprising that he accepts Burke’s definition of the sublime as a whole, as his Lecture III in *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* (1783) makes explicit. Nevertheless, Blair evaluates the importance of moral or sentimental quality in the sublime higher than the numinous and the uncanny in terms of Burke, which culminate in the sense of fear and obscurity in the natural Sublime.

There still remains to be mentioned one class of Sublime objects; what may be called the moral, or sentimental Sublime; arising from certain exertions of the human mind; from certain affections, and actions, of our fellow-creatures. These will be found to be all, or chiefly, of that class, which comes under the name of magnanimity or Heroism; and they produce an effect extremely similar to what is produced by the view of grand objects in nature; filling the mind with admiration, and elevating it above itself. (*Lectures*, I 52)

In addition to ‘magnanimity,’ the two distinct qualities Blair found in Ossian’s poetry are tenderness and sublime.

It breathes nothing of the gay and cheerful kind; an air of solemnity and seriousness is diffused over the whole. Ossian is perhaps the only poet who never relaxes, or lets himself down into the light and amusing strain;

(*A Critical Dissertation* 36)

Nevertheless, it is remarkable that tenderness and sublime are the qualities essentially incompatible with the Burkian sublime, as he later succinctly stated. He naturally criticizes Burke as follows:

But though this is properly illustrated by the Author (many of whose sentiments on that head I have adopted), yet he seems to stretch his theory too far, when he represents the Sublime as consisting wholly in modes of danger, or of pain. For the proper sensation of Sublimity appears to be very distinguishable from the sensation of either of those; and, on several occasions, to be entirely separated from them. (*Lectures*, 55)

The Burkian sublime comprehends fear and joy, but it does not afford room for tenderness. As stated above, Blair evaluates the importance of moral or sentimental quality in the sublime higher than the numinous and the uncanny Burke proposed, which culminate in the sense of fear and obscurity in the natural Sublime. Evidently Burkian sublime is akin to Wordsworth's notion.

According to Blair, Ossian is eminently distinguished in the sentimental quality. Ironically, it is this sentimentality that later provides the incentive for Wordsworth's weaning away from Blair.

Particularly in all sentiments of Fingal, there is a grandeur and loftiness proper to swell the mind with the highest ideas of human perfection. Wherever he appears, we behold the hero. (*A Critical Dissertation* 395)

He thus points out the excellence of valour in *Ossian*: 'a generous valour, void of cruelty, animated by honour, not by hatred.' (p.395) In fact, there is no description of plunder nor brutal slaughter in the poems of Ossian. Blair refers to Ossian's



melancholic disposition as another virtual guarantee of sublimity, so that he succeeded to emphasize the original qualities of Ossian in the framework of the epic and the sentimental sublime. It is not difficult to presume that behind his concept of primitive poetry the shadow of Homer dominates the scene.

If Blair had not been able to discern parallel phrases resembling Hebrew poetry in *Fingal* (1762) or in *Timora* (1763), his academic credentials themselves should have been doubted. But actually, in his *A Critical Dissertation*, Blair summarizes the stylistic characteristics of *Fingal* as follows:

[a] style always rapid and vehement; in narration concise even to abruptness, and leaving several circumstances to be supplied by the reader's imagination. The language has all that figurative cast, which, as I before shewed partly the sterility of language and the want of proper terms, have always introduced into the early speech of nations; (354)

Quoting a passage from "The War of Caros," Blair offers comment that the passage brings to mind 'that noble description in the book of Job.' (iv. 13-17)

Tremor came from his hill, at the voice of his mighty son...A cloud, like the steed of the stranger, supported his airy limbs. His robe is of the mist of Lano, that brings death to the people. His sword is a meteor half-extinguished. His face is without form, and dark. He sighed thrice over the hero: and thrice the winds of the night roared around. Many were his words to Oscar: but they only came by halves to our ears: they were dark as the tales of other times, before the light of the song arose. He slowly vanished, like a mist that melts on the sunny hill. (*The Poems of Ossian and Related Works*, 112-113)

Blair strives to get the evidence for the crucial resemblance of Macpherson's text to Hebrew poetry, saying, '[I]n several respects, it carries a remarkable resemblance to the style of the Old Testament.' (345) In spite of these intertextual borrowings, Blair perceived rare and fascinating qualities of primitive poetry in the text of Ossian as it stands. A crude and vehement style and an open abruptness of narration, which naturally requires the reader's imagination, are the qualities remarkably attractive in

the published text of *Ossian*. Although this resemblance underlines a part of the sentimental sublime of *Ossian*, as well, later it becomes a crucial point of controversy, when Macpherson's fabric is attacked.

Blair's partiality would not give in to any harsh and unrelenting judgment on Macpherson's suspicion of forgery. He has been absolutely sincere in his judgment.

To suppose that two or three hundred years ago, when we well know that the Highlands to have been in a state of gross ignorance and barbarity, there should have arisen in that country a poet, of such exquisite genius, and of such deep knowledge of mankind, and of history, as to divest himself of the ideas and manners of his own age, and to give as a just and natural picture of a state of society ancients by a thousand years; one who could support this counterfeited antiquity through such a large collection of poems, without the least inconsistency; and who possessed of all this genius and art, had at the same time the self-denial of concealing himself, and of ascribing his own works to an antiquated bard, without the imposture being detected; is a supposition that transcends all bounds of credulity. (355)

Furthermore, his sympathetic stance can be easily understood when it is set against his definition of the sublime. As Steve Rizza points out ("A Bulky and Foolish Treatise?" 143), the sublime elements Blair found in *Ossian* can be validated following the simple logic of syllogism that 'the poetry is natural and hence ancient origin,' that is, 'sublime.' Therefore, sublime poetry cannot be a forgery.

Even if the question whether Macpherson ought to be considered a translator or an original author could be put aside, to judge how much of Macpherson's translation was unfairly forged has long been untouched by serious critics. It remained as sensitive a matter as to require a deliberate consideration, because in his case the original text was transmitted not through the written form, the manuscript, but through the oral tradition in diverse forms. For one thing, there must have been a considerable number of variants of oral poetry, until any of the written manuscript was scribbled down.

Secondly, Macpherson's native loyalties to his nation should be taken into account. According to Stafford, Macpherson's collection of Gaelic poems was

motivated by his acute sense of crisis after the failure of Jacobite rebellion, 'his concern about the erosion of Highland culture in the face of the advancing Lowland civilisation.' (Stafford, 80)

[T]he idea of translating Gaelic verse into the language that threatened its destruction was something of a breach of trust. Highland poetry was handed down orally, forming a living link from generation to generation, so any written translation might turn it into inanimate, public property. (ibid.)

Besides, to transcribe orally-transmitted poetry means to deprive it of the beauty, music and vigour of performance and to turn it to its shadow. There is always a danger inherent in translation. To translate one text into another language might produce something that 'bears little resemblance to the original recital.' (ibid.)

Thirdly, there is the problem in estimating the degree of deterioration of the orally-transmitted poem. This is the touchy point that British Critics such as Johnson could not compromise with. The Highlanders think that Ossian's poems had been distorted by the succession of bards, but Macpherson seems to share in Blair's belief. His idealized vision of the ancient Celtic world is a duplication of Blair's vision of the primitive glory of the ancient Scottish. If so, a sort of epic should have existed in the Highlands in the imitated form of Homer's. 'Macpherson's Celtic world was one of noble warriors, not a quaint fairyland of giants and magicians, so the witches and monsters which feature in the popular Highland ballads had to be condemned as interpolations and stripped away.' (ibid. 83) (5)

Thus, while getting rid of certain ambiguous elements, Macpherson added many embellishments which would make the Ossianic story conform to the ideals of epic. As early as 19 September 1763, David Hume expressed his concern on this point in his letter to Hugh Blair.

[N]otwithstanding all the art, with which you have endeavoured to throw a varnish on that circumstance: and the preservation of such long, and such connected

poems by oral tradition alone, during a course of fourteen centuries, is so much out of ordinary course of human affairs, that it requires to make us believe it. (6)

In such a period when history was still regarded as a narration, and the definition of a fictitious history comprised Epic and Dramatic Poetry (Blair, *Lectures*, II p.394), there could have existed complicated connections between history and literature. It was unanimously agreed that the ancient bard, like Homer or Ossian, was society's first historian. Blair himself declares that in the ancient Celtic nations 'the Bards' were 'their poets and recorders of heroic actions.' (7)

In accordance with the general cultural and political tendency, intellectual current of the 18th century was oriented toward searching for the roots of institutions and societies, and its origins-and-progress format makes it much more difficult to draw a thin line between the forgeries and the literary practitioner.

The whole concept of historical fiction was in its infancy. Hence Macpherson and Chaterton transplanted their visions of the past into the past and made history from the inside. (Ian Haywood *The Making of History*, 11)

Forgery is one of the complex and unique forms of historical fiction. To transplant the glorious vision of the Pre-Christianized Highlands into the past so as to fabricate by fancy the more heroic, the more splendid history from the inside is the ideal that Blair and Macpherson shared as the Scottish in the face of their cultural crisis at the end of the 18th century. Macpherson's text is sympathetically understood as a pathetic attempt to mediate between the deteriorated and oppressed Gaelic culture and the dominant and imperialistic English culture in eighteenth-century Scotland. In the involute of poetico-cultural transference, Wordsworth was gradually shedding off his sympathy toward Gaelic culture.

Strangely enough, Wordsworth changed his attitude toward Macpherson's *Ossian*. This change from adoration to contempt was gradual, but was in company with the involute movement of poetico-cultural transference. By 1800, when he wrote the famous "Preface" to *Lyrical Ballads*, he might have formed, like other intellectuals of his age, an opinion that Macpherson's translation was a fake, but he did not go so far as to deny the existence of the legendary blind bard warrior Ossian. We can see the contemporary response in a letter to the editor of *The Monthly Magazine*, May 1797.

Sir

Having been long an enthusiastic admirer of the poems ascribed to the Scottish bard Ossian, and as there has been such a diversity of opinions respecting their originality, I cannot help feeling interested in the ascertainment of the truth....One of the principal facts to be investigated is, whether the compositions, said to be handed down traditionally, from a remote period, and still preserved among the Highlanders, in the Erse tongue, bear sufficient resemblance to the translations of Mr. MACPHERSON, to justify the belief in the authenticity of the latter? (p. 362)

As if responding to this letter, as early as 1797, the Highland Society of Edinburgh appointed a Committee to inquire into the nature and authenticity of the poems of Ossian. *The Report of the Committee* came out in the name of Mr. Henry Mackenzie the Chairman in 1805, as was mentioned above. In the meantime, Wordsworth went on a Scottish tour with his sister Dorothy in 1803. On 9 September 1803, the next day they enjoyed a marvellous view of the Falls of the Bran mirrored on the walls and ceiling of a small apartment in the pleasure ground of the Duke of Athol, they went up the glen of the Bran to Glenalmond. From these recollections Wordsworth wrote two poems on Ossian: "Glen-Almain" and "Effusion in the Pleasure-Ground." Chronologically speaking, the latter belongs to the later period: it was possibly composed 19 August 1814, probably, was not completed until between 1820 and 1827. The difference of tone in these two poems is telling of Wordsworth's change of attitude toward Ossian. In "Effusion", the voice in contempt of the artificiality sounds

high. Wordsworth could not find the spirit of Ossian in '[a] gay saloon, with waters dancing/Upon the sight wherever glancing.' (ll.13-4) He felt the urgent need 'to set free/The Bard from such indignity!' (ll.44-5) of 'quaint medley, that might seem/Devised out of a sick man's dream!' (ll.25-6)

Thus (where the intrusive Pile, ill-graced  
With baubles of theatric taste,  
O'erlooks the torrent breathing showers  
On motley hands of alien flowers  
In stiff confusion set or sown,  
Till Nature cannot find her own,  
Or keep a remnant of the sod  
Which Caledonian Heroes trod)  
I mused; and, thirsting for redress,  
Recoiled into the wilderness. (ll. 119-128)

The tone of criticism on affectations is analogous to that of the harsh disdain on Macpherson's work in his "*Preface*" to *Poems* (1815).

In "Glen-Almain" (composed May-June 1805), however, he reflects on how he had felt the presence of Ossian as the genius loci at the moment when he had stood at that narrow glen, Glenalmond on 9 September 1803. The poet assimilates Ossian's presence in stillness and tranquillity pervaded in this rough and melancholy landscape, and hears his singing voice in murmurs of a rivulet.

Dorothy's journal describes the desolate dreariness of the place as follows;

[T]he road led us down the glen, which had become exceedingly narrow, and so continued to the end: the hills on both sides heathy and rocky, very steep, but continuous; the rocks not single or overhanging, not scooped into caverns; or sounding with torrents: there no trees, no houses, no traces of cultivation, not one outstanding object... (*Journals of Dorothy Wordsworth*, 360-1)

Dorothy's description is objective and detailed to the point; she pictured how the heathy cragged rocks overhang the narrow glen, and how desolate the place was, with

no trace of human settlement. On the other hand, Wordsworth gives a spiritual and numinous colouring to the landscape.

In this still place, remote from men,  
Sleeps Ossian, in the narrow Glen,  
In this still place, where murmurs on  
But one meek Streamlet, only one:  
He sang of battles, and the breath  
Of stormy war, and violent death;  
And should methinks, when all was past,  
Have rightfully been laid at last  
Where rocks were rudely heaped, and rent  
As by spirit turbulent;  
Where sights were rough, and sounds were wild,  
And everything unreconciled;  
In some complaining, dim retreat,  
For fear and melancholy meet;  
But this is calm; there cannot be  
A more entire tranquillity. (ll. 1-16)

The ruggedness of the rocks implies the Sublime, the vehemence of wild spirit which characterises this solitary rural scene; ‘Where rocks were rudely heaped, and rent/  
As by spirit turbulent.’ As was pointed out above, the sublime is ‘an awful and serious emotion.’ (Blair, *A Critical Dissertation* 395) This turbulent, frenzied spirit lies at the soul of Ossian, as Blair pointed out, and it suits for the making of poetry. In praise of the barbarous spirit which governs primitive poetry, Blair made his passionate opening of *A Critical Dissertation*.

For many circumstances of those times which we call barbarous, are favourable to the poetical spirit. That state, in which human nature shoots wild and free, though unfit for other improvements, certainly encourages the high exertions of fancy and passion. In the infancy of societies, men live scattered and dispersed, in the midst of solitary rural scenes, where the beauties of nature are their chief entertainment.

(Hugh Blair *A Critical Dissertation* 2)

The passions of those primitive men were so vehement that nothing could restrain them, and there was nothing to check their imagination. Wordsworth discerned this furious spirit in the rough sights, in wild sounds of ‘murmurs’ ‘one meek Streamlet’ make, and in the shape of steep rocky cliff of Glen-Almain. Although everything visible is ‘calm,’ the poet says, ‘there cannot be/A more entire tranquillity.’ This silence is essentially different from the one the narrator experienced a few miles above Tintern Abbey. There, tranquility was connected to spiritual ‘restoration,’ that is the affirmation of ‘feelings too/Of unremembered pleasure.’ (ll. 31-2) There ‘in silence,’ the poet confesses that he could feel ‘[a] presence that disturbs me with the joy/ Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime/Of something far more deeply interfused.’ (ll. 95-6) But these lines allude to the character of genius belonging to Ossian, which is essentially alien to Christianity.

In the second stanza of “Glen-Almain,” Wordsworth perceives the presence of Ossian in connection with poetic inspiration, Fancy:

I blame them not  
Whose Fancy in this lonely Spot  
Was moved; and in this way expressed  
Their notion of its perfect rest. (ll. 19-21)

The spirit of Ossian is made to mingle with ‘[a] more entire tranquillity’ of the dead. The legendary bard is in a state of ‘perfect rest,’ that is ‘of the grave.’ Unlike the beautiful mood ‘in full of blessings’ the poet felt at Tintern Abbey, Ossianic feelings continue to reside there ‘unreconciled.’ But they are not compatible with those of the living poet, because they are ‘of austere/And happy feelings of the dead.’ (ll. 28-9)

The incompatibility of life and death, however, is existent in Wordsworth as some flexible line of demarcation that could be trespassed upon. He felt it ascertained in the numinous presence of Ossian. According to Blair,



The two great characteristics of Ossian's poetry are, tenderness and sublimity. It breathes nothing of the gay and cheerful kind; an air of solemnity and seriousness is diffused over the whole. Ossian is perhaps the only poet who never relaxes, or lets himself down into the light and amusing strain;

(*A Critical Dissertation* 36)

The poetical tenderness resulting from the solemn pathetic air of Ossian represents the very characteristic of the sentimental sublime Blair wanted to stress in his "Dissertation." In "Glen-Almain," Wordsworth points out that these opposites can be seen as present, though in an 'unreconciled' state. The description of the landscape serves as a metaphor of this cacophony, this small rupture between the natural objective sublime and the internal pathetic tenderness. Blair sums up Ossianic quality as follows: 'He (Ossian) moves perpetually in the high region of the grand and the pathetic.' (ibid., p.37)

Wordsworth attributes the mixture of noise and serenity he experienced at Glen-Almain to his own vision of life and death. He detected the legendary presence of Ossian in this incompatible mixture or concurrence of life and death.

A Convent, even a hermit's Cell  
Would break the silence of this Dell:  
It is not quiet, is not ease;  
But something deeper far than these:  
The separation that is here  
Is of the grave; and of austere  
And happy feelings of the dead:  
And, therefore, was it rightly said  
That Ossian, last of all his race!  
Lies buried in this lonely place. (ll. 23-32)

The narrator finds no sign to commemorate Ossian there; there is no Convent nor a hermit's Cell. Nevertheless, he feels it all the better. He even goes on to celebrate Ossian's absence rather than his continued presence.

About 20 years later, in a poem “Written in a Blank Leaf of Macpherson’s Ossian” (probably composed in 1824), Wordsworth condemns Macpherson’s work harshly as ‘counterfeit Remains.’ Just like the artificial device of the Athol House rendered the cascade ‘illusiv[e],’ it stands before him as an obstacle intercepting his direct touch with the Spirit of Ossian.

Away with counterfeit Remains!  
An abbey in its lone recess,  
A temple of the wilderness,  
Wrecks though they be, announces with feeling  
The majesty of honest dealing.  
Spirit of Ossian! if inbound  
In language thou may’st yet be found,  
If aught (intrusted to the pen  
Of floating on the tongues of men,  
Albeit shattered and impaired)  
Subsist thy dignity to guard,  
In concert with memorial claim  
Of old grey stone, and high-born name  
That cleaves to rock or pillared cave  
Where moans the blast, or beats the wave,  
Let Truth, stern arbitress of all,  
Interpret that Original,  
And for presumptuous wrongs atone; (ll.12–29)

Wordsworth’s religious cult of ‘that Original’ scarcely enables him to imagine ‘Spirit of Ossian’ among fragments, however shattered and impaired they may be.

Although Wordsworth might have read the extracts from Blair’s *Lectures on Rhetoric and Bell Lettres* in Konx’s *Elegant Extracts in Prose* at Hawkshead Grammar School (8), it is all the more dubious whether Wordsworth read Blair’s *A Critical Dissertation*. But he did read Macpherson’s translation in adolescence (9). In 1803, when he set out on a Scottish tour with Dorothy, he remarked that he had received a similar impression from the landscape as he found in the English *Ossian*. It was not so

far apart from the one Blair had formulated from his reading of the text. We cannot but feel puzzled to see the change of Wordsworth's attitude toward Macpherson in 1815.

Just after "Glen-Almain" was composed, Malcolm Laing proved that Macpherson's 'pretended translation is a motley assemblage from all quarters.' It was in 1804 that Malcolm Laing's *The History of Scotland* was published. Ten years afterward, in 1815, Wordsworth published *Essay, Supplementary to the Preface*. In this *Supplementary*, Wordsworth gave a vehement attack on Macpherson's falsehood and plagiarism. *Supplementary* is a challenging attempt to reevaluate English poetry from Shakespeare to his own age, but actually it was a defence of his own poetics in the face of failing popularity— against his conviction *The Poems* (1815) was a failure — and it was delivered in the form of a counter attack against Francis Jeffrey, the editor of the *Edinburgh Review*. Curiously enough, it still holds an echo of Blair; 'with the young of both sexes, poetry is, like love, a pass.' (*Selected Prose*, 387)

The conspicuous sign of change indicates Wordsworth's denial of the unreconciled irrelevancy, which he detected in Macpherson's description of the landscape, and which, as was pointed above, he had once admitted and admired in "Glen Almain." In this sense, Wordsworth's aversion toward Macpherson bears a sign of his poetico-cultural transference, which was completed by 1815. In "Essay, Supplementary," Wordsworth quotes a passage from *Temora*, Book VIII: 'The blue waves of Ullian roll in light. The green hills with aged oaks surround a narrow plain. The blue course of a stream is there. On its banks stood Cairbar of Atha. His spear supports the king; the red eyes of his fear are sad. Cormac rises on his soul with all his ghastly wounds.' Then, he bluntly ridicules this passage as '[p]recious memorandums from the pocket-book of the blind Ossian!' His tone of derision continues:

From what I saw with my own eyes, I knew that the imagery was spurious. In nature every thing is distinct, yet nothing defined into absolute independent singleness. In Macpherson's work, it is exactly the reverse; every thing (that is not stolen) is in this manner defined, insulated, dislocated, deadened—yet

nothing distinct. It will always be so when words are substituted for things. To say that the characters never could exist, that the manners are impossible, and that a dream has more substance than the whole state of society, as there depicted, is doing nothing more than pronouncing a censure which Macpherson defied;

(“Essay, Supplementary” 404–405)

If Macpherson’s laconic description gives an impression that everything is ‘insulated, disclosed, deadened,’ a similar comment could be applicable to Dorothy’s description of Glen-Almain in her journal. In spite of his intentional denigration, Wordsworth’s quotation from Macpherson’s text reveals why Macpherson appealed so strongly to his contemporaries. According to Mary Jacobus,

Incantatory, cumulative, emotional, this is a style calculated to make its readers ‘glow, and tremble, and weep.’ (Jacobus, *Tradition and Experiment in Wordsworth’s Lyrical Ballads*, 192)

Its strange rhythm and syntax are sprinkled with exotic names, Ullin, Cairbar of Atha, and Cormac. These elements are satisfactory in creating an atmosphere of the Celtic past, however illusory it may be. What is lacking in these two passages, in Macpherson’s and Dorothy’s, is, perhaps, Wordsworth’s genius to create a sense of inanimated wholeness, just as we have seen in “Glen-Almain” and in “Tintern Abbey.” The strong contrast of stillness in “Glen-Almain”—‘[I]n this still place,’ ‘this is calm’ and ‘there cannot be/A more entire tranquillity’—and turbulence—‘the breath/Of stormy war, and violent death,’ ‘a spirit turbulent’—is harmonious with the landscape, evoking a numinous presence, the spirit of Ossian. This unification is based on Fancy which induces the sympathetic imagination to operate. By the aid of Fancy, the poet summons the spirit of the Bard out of rough sights and wild sounds of the narrow glen where is lain ‘everything unreconciled.’

As for a ‘distinct’ description of the landscape Wordsworth observed in Macpherson’s text, Blair’s words should be taken into account here. He starts from a generalisation of poetic genius: ‘A part of original genius is always distinguished by his

talent for description.’ (*Lectures* II 378) To the contrary, a second rate writer’s conception of the object is ‘vague and loose.’ (ibid.) Then, he praises Ossian declaring ‘[t]hat Ossian possesses this descriptive power in a high degree.’ (ibid.) He points out an accumulated effect of description from a passage of “Carthon: A Poem.”

I have seen the walls of Balclutha, but they were desolate. The fire had resounded in the halls: and the voice of the people is heard no more. The stream of Clutha was removed from its place by the fall of the walls. The thistle shook there its lonely head: The moss whistled to the wind. The fox looked out from the windows; the rank grass of the wall waved his head. Desolate is the dwelling of Morina; silence is in the house of her fathers. (*The Poems of Ossian* 128)

It would be unfair to dismiss the poetic quality of *Ossian* simply by condemning the unevenness found in the landscape description. What Wordsworth accuses to be ‘falsehood’ (*Selected Prose*, 404) or ‘spurious’ imagery (ibid.), where he finds ‘everything (that is not stolen) is in this manner defined, insulated, dislocated, deadened,’ (404-5) could be better explained fixing the time when his poetico-cultural transference moved from the universal, which can enclose the alien, to the particularized. It coincided with his weaning away from Blair’s aesthetics. It should be noted that Blair praises the reverse quality in Ossian:

Ossian is always concise in his descriptions, which adds much to their beauty and force. For it is a great mistake to imagine, that a crowd of particulars, or a very full and extended style, is of advantage to description. (*A Critical Dissertation* 88)

In 1815, Wordsworth appeared to deny all the aesthetical judgments Blair had made in defending the quality of Macpherson. Referring to Malcolm Laing (*Supplementary* 405), Wordsworth disclosed his indignation against a bogus text, ‘a motley assemblage’ consisting of ‘this pretended translation.’ In fact, in the strictest sense of the word ‘plagiarism’ as Laing used it, the *Poems of Ossian* contain not only borrowings from the Old Testament and Homer but also from his contemporaries, Gray

and Percy. Macpherson owed much to Percy's *Five Pieces of Runic Poetry* (1763), though he would not acknowledge it. In this elaborate book, *Ossian*, more than a thousand resemblances, coincidences, and plagiarisms can be pointed out. Following Laing, did Wordsworth intend to ignore all the poetic qualities in Macpherson's *Ossian* which once he had appreciated? In the Regency, Wordsworth was losing his popularity, and Blair's influence was fading out. He had already lost a tolerance to the 'gaudiness and inane phraseology' (*Advertisement to Lyrical Ballads* (1798), *Selected Prose* 275) of the German culture in 1798, but by 1815 Wordsworth seemed to have established a moralistic point of view, detesting the fashionable taste which had prevailed in the literary world. He seemed to have lost the common sense of Walter Scott, who appreciated the achievements of Macpherson in his review on Malcom Laing's *The Poems of Ossian containing the Poetical Works of James Macpherson*, and *Report* by Henry Mackenzie's Committee.

But, while we are compelled to renounce the pleasing idea, 'that Fingal lived, and that Ossian sung', our national vanity may be equally flattered by the fact, that a remote, and almost a barbarous corner of Scotland, produced, in the 18th century, a bard, capable not only of making an authentic impression on every mind susceptible of poetical beauty, but of giving a new tone to the poetry throughout all Europe. (*Edinburgh Review*, July 1805)

Wordsworth's infuriated passions on 'this far-famed Book' (*Selected Prose* 404) of Macpherson could be attributed to the same root found in his defiance against current literary fashion. His attitude of defiance toward contemporary fashion became more conspicuous in the *1805 Prelude*. *Ossian* is related to the figure of the theatrical preacher in Book VII.

There have I seen a comely bachelor,  
Fresh from a toilette of two hours, ascend  
The pulpit, with seraphic glance look up,  
And, in a tone elaborately low

Beginning, lead his voice through many a maze  
 A minute course, and, winding up his mouth  
 From time to time into an orifice  
 Most delicate, a lurking eyelet, small  
 And only not invisible again  
 Open it out, diffusing thence a smile  
 Of rapt irradiation, exquisite.  
 Meanwhile the Evangelists, Isaiah, Job,  
 Moses, and he who penned the other day,  
*The Death of Abel*, Shakespeare, Doctor Young,  
 And Ossian (doubt not, 'tis the naked truth)  
 Summoned from streamy Morven... (ll.546–561)

The name Ossian has become an intellectual embellishment here, used to intensify the fashionableness of his sermon. This image of preacher as a shallow-minded fop was based on Cowper's portrait of the theatrical preacher in *Task*. (Book II 430–545) He quoted *Ossian*, simply because it was as popular as Gesner's *The Death of Abel* at that time. Nevertheless, it is ironical that within the context of Blair's influence on Wordsworth this sarcastic comment on fashionableness implies another aspect of Wordsworth's indebtedness toward Blair.

Salomon Gessner was a Swiss Poet, and his *Der Tod Abels*, the work referred to in the passage quoted above, was translated by Mary Collyer in 1761. This occurred one year after the publication of Macpherson's *Fragments of Ancient Poetry* (1760), and one year before that of *Fingal* (1762). In the next year, *Temora* was published. The popularity of Gessner's work coincided with that of Macpherson's. Moreover, in Lecture XXXIX of his *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*, Blair admitted him to be the most successful poet of Pastoral Poetry. According to Duncan Wu, while in their walking tour to Lynton in early November 1797, Coleridge and Wordsworth planned to write a prose tale in the manner of Gessner's *Der Tod Abels*, to be called *The Wanderings of Cain*. (*Wordsworth's Reading 1770–1799*, p. 62) (10). Later, their idea was realised in Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner." In other words, while

they were discussing the basic design of *Lyrical Ballads*, both of them were more attracted to the German Idylls than to the Scottish pseudo-epic.

In the 1805 *Prelude*, Wordsworth gives no less a sarcastic glance at Ossian than at Scott's or Byron's popularity due to their Romance. In the same year, Scott's *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* had made a tremendous success, followed by Byron's narrative romance "Lara" in 1814, while Wordsworth's *The White Doe of Rylstone* was recorded a miserable failure. This narrative romance was composed about 1807-1808, and was published in 1815 as a conscious challenge to the readers of Scott and Byron. Presumably, it might have proved a small success, had it been published in 1809 just after its composition, for the short vogue for narrative romance had almost ended around this period. In 1815, Scott turned to the making of the Waverly novels. Somewhere between 1805, when Wordsworth buried the spirit of Ossian in that 'lowly place,' and 1815, when he publicised unsympathetic abuse of Macpherson in "Essay, Supplementary to the Preface," his internal stance toward Blair as a theoretical proponent of 'the real language of men' might have shifted or reversed as well. He ends up suspending knowledge, waiving political and philosophical articulations of cultural dissolution. The insistence upon cultural figuration led him to the perception of the structures of kinship operating like language. According to Collings, 'Kinship is a language in which people, rather than words, are exchanged for each other, become figure for each other.' (*Wordsworthian Errancies 2*) The feeling of communal kinship is essentially incompatible with Wordsworth's credence in independence and freedom, which lies at the core of Wordsworth's unsympathetic attitude toward Scottish pride and loyalty. Kinship had intertwined in such a close bond between Blair and Macpherson, and had incited their sense of decay of Scottish culture at the end of the 18th century. A poetico-cultural transference in Wordsworth is not separable from his peculiar way of conversion into patriotism which praises the glory and universality of British culture obtrusively.



## NOTES

- (1) Duncan Wu gives the suggested date of reading on 9–26 Feb. 1798 (*Wordsworth's Reading 1770–1799*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, p.16)
- (2) M.H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1953, pp.95–6; Mary Jacobus, *Tradition and Experiment in Wordsworth's Lyrical Ballads*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1976, pp. 181–191; E.C. Knowlton, "Wordsworth and Hugh Blair," *Philosophical Quarterly*, VI 1927, pp. 277–81.
- (3) First published independently in 1763, Blair's *Dissertation with Appendix* was published with the first truly popular edition, *The Works of Ossian* (1765) with Macpherson's "Dissertation" as a translator and these two dissertations were printed with the poems in the new edition of 1783 onward. The quotation made in this paper is from *The Poems of Ossian and Related Works*, ed. Howard Gaskell, Edinburgh University Press, 1996.
- (4) Steve Rizza, "A Bulky and Foolish Treatise? Hugh Blair's 'Critical Dissertation' Reconsidered," *Ossian Revisited*, p.137.
- (5) It is interesting to know that later, April 1805, in his review of Walter Scott's *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* on the *Edinburgh Review*, Francis Jeffrey takes the same attitude toward the Goblin Page. He thought this ungraceful intruder impaired the gorgeous presentation of the chivalric past depicted in the manner of Homer.
- (6) As is quoted in *The Sublime Savage*, p.168.
- (7) 'That the ancient Scots were of Celtic original, is past all doubt. Their conformity with the Celtic nations in language, manners and religion, proves it to a full demonstration. The Celtae, a great and mighty people, altogether distinct from the Goths and Teutones, once extended their dominion over all the west of Europe; but seem to have had their most full and complete establishment in Gaul. wherever the Celtae or Gauls are mentioned by ancient writers, we seldom fail to hear of their Druids and their Bards; the institution of which two orders, was the capital distinction of their manners and policy. The Druids were their philosophers and priests; the Bards, their poets and recorders of heroic actions.' (Blair, *A Critical Dissertation*, pp.349–50)
- (8) 'suggested date of reading: by 1787... 'All hail, Macpherson! hail to thee, Sire of Ossian!' The narrator of *The Vale of Esthwaite* (1787) describes his meeting with a spectre-guide who leads him into a Virgilian underworld beneath Helvellyn:... 'Duncan Wu, *Wordsworth's Reading 1770–1799*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993, p.92.
- (9) See "Notes" 1805 VII 546–65", *William Wordsworth: The Prelude, The Four Texts (1798, 1799, 1805, 1850)*, Jonathan Wordsworth ed., London, Penguin Books, 1995, p.606.
- (10) 'Both of them must therefore have read Gessner by early Nov. 1797. This is consistent with Jonathan Wordsworth's suggestion that one of Gessner's *New Idylles*, *Amyntas*, has close affinities with the opening of *The Ruined Cottage*' (MH236n), and

by Parrish's comment that 'Wordsworth and Coleridge must have talked about [Gessner] at the start of their collaboration, for *The Ancient Mariner* echoes *Der erste Schiffer*' (Parrish 170).' As we have discussed in Chapter 3, Wordsworth in the 1790s was susceptible to the essentially alien cultures for him.

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## Chapter 10

### A Mode of Cultural Transmission

—Joanna Baillie and William Wordsworth

(1)

Among Romantic women writers who have caught recent feminist critical attention, Joanna Baillie is counted among the less radical, positioned between the two pillars of the Bluestocking circle and Mary Wollstonecraft's overwhelming radicalism. She is thought to have left as much disguised intellectual work as Felicia Hemans, or Mary Shelley. (1) But her achievement does not necessarily mean that she looked upon herself severed from the constitution of public and private relations to subject (the male citizen) and non-subject (mother of the citizen). On the contrary, if her work is to be discussed in contrast to that of Wordsworth, her muffled criticism of the condition of women in her contemporary culture would speak out more distinctly than that of a revisionist. As Elizabeth A. Fay points out, not only 'her understanding of how the passions work on the mind reflects the importance of imagination and imaginative constructs in the British response to revolutionary politics' (Elizabeth A. Fay, *A Feminist Introduction to Romanticism* 77), but also it influenced Wordsworth in establishing his powerful public voice. In the involution of cultural transference, Baillie was occupied with the issue of how women could relate to the public sphere, whereas her presence helped Wordsworth adapt himself to cultural feminization.

Although she embodied dramatically the fundamentals of the public and the private at the crossover area in cultural transference, Joanna Baillie started her career as the poet with *Poems 1790*, which was published anonymously. As its subtitle, 'Certain Views of Nature and of Rustic Manners,' suggests, the book deals with several subjects narrated in different voices. It is a study of human passions observed

and described from several viewpoints, these hardly being imagined as perceptions made by the same mind at a different times. They appear to be portraying mood without personality. Although the study of passions lies at the centre, the poems are loosely connected with an interest in morbidity. The first two poems of *Poems 1790* describe a rural life scene, set in the same village but observed in different time sequences, winter and summer. The next ballad, entitled “Night Scenes or other Times,” however, consists of three parts, which, as a whole, tell the gothic story of how the ghost of the murdered Edward visits those deeply involved and concerned with his death. First, he appears to his lover Margaret to be united in the ecstasy of death, then to his murderer Conrad to arrange for him a death of terror in remorseful sin, and finally the spirit of Margaret visits her father Arno, leading him to a peaceful death. It is a study of the intensity of passions, strong enough so as to result in death. A series of farewell addresses, “A Melancholy Lover’s Farewell to His Mistress,” “A Cheerful Tempered Lover’s Farewell to His Mistress,” “A Proud Lover’s Farewell to His Mistress,” and “A Poet, or, Sound-Hearted Lover’s Farewell to His Mistress,” all are intentionally constructed so that a lover may express the distress of his heart in different moods, and in each poem the speaker exhibits a different temperament. Their speeches are approximate dramatic monologues, yet their thin voices seem rather gestures or changes of tone played by an ingenious actor. According to the author,

they are all equally sad, for they are all equally in love, and in despair, when it is impossible for them to be otherwise; but if I have pictured their farewell complaints in such a way as to give you an idea that one lover is naturally of a melancholy, one of a cheerful, and one of a proud temper, I have done all that is intended.

(*Poems 1790*, pp. 95–96)

It is improbable, and almost absurd, to accept her premise that all the lovers are ‘equally’ in love and are ‘equally’ sad in their unrequited love, though it does seem that the author would not distinguish the depths of internal trauma each individual

character must have experienced in each different situation of disappointment. Nevertheless, Baillie's undivided attention to the specific psychology of a morbid emotional development subsisted throughout her literary career. *Plays on the Passions*, published anonymously in 1798, is regarded as her best ones, comprising a tragedy (*Basil*), a comedy on love (*The Tryal*), and a tragedy on hatred (*De Monfort*). The great success of the first volume incited the appearance of the second volume in 1802, which includes a tragedy (*Ethwald*) and the third in 1812. She is concentrated on tragic passions as typically masculine constructions, and Byron's conflicted heroes, such in *Manfred* or in *Marino Faliero*, had a strong influence on her writings. ("General Introduction," *A Selection of Plays and Poems*, p.xvi) Such fixedness on the one-dimensional feeling was criticized by Francis Jeffery as a 'mere personification of single passions.' (p. xxii)

One exception in *Poems 1790*, unspoiled by her engagement with fixed passions, is a series of poems titled 'A Story of Other Times, Somewhat in Imitation of the Poems of Ossian.' They are ostensibly linked to Ossianic poems, however loosely they deal with the study of the intensive passion of love. The subject matter is drawn from the Ossianic world of despair without spiritual atonement, and only the viewpoint is slightly shifted in each half-told story. It is as if the world in which these poems are embedded was forcefully set under the control of the omnipotent presence of the poet.

In his illuminating article on Romantic Women Writers, "Ann Yearsley to Caroline Norton: Women Poets of the Romantic Period" (*Wordsworth Circle* Vol. XXVI, 3, p. 119), Jonathan Wordsworth expressed his regret over Baillie's conversion to a dramatist: 'She had the values and many of the talents needed to write *Lyrical Ballads*, but instead she turned dramatist.' Although her popularity had far exceeded that of Wordsworth at the beginning of the 19th century, it is too narrow an approach to regard Baillie as a premature Wordsworth or a less talented poet. At the same time, it would be a misrepresentation to esteem her as a herald and advocate of feminism. In

fact, her impact on the literary figures of her own time was not slight, but it was mostly through her plays.

This chapter is mainly concerned to highlight the meaning of her allusive but not thin messages in her works, especially in her early poems, as they stand. Compared with the persuasive, sonorous voice of Wordsworth, her poems appear too subtle and subdued to be placed in the main current of the Romantic movement. However charming and attractive they may sound, they deliberately reduced the scope of their argument to the domestic social sphere so as to keep a vigil on the subtleties of moral behaviour during a period of radical social and cultural transformation. At their core, however, there always remains something which resists the simple schema of the double in her work proposed by feminist criticism. Her lament on the loss of domestic ties and relations may have something to do with her intention to deflate imperialist ambitions or to bring out an awareness of a new revolutionary sense of power. To measure the extent of Baillie's implicit attack on the dominant masculinist construction of her time will delineate, in reverse, several important characteristics of Wordsworth's radical position in that critical point of cultural transformation.

( 2 )

The naturalness and simplicity which characterize Baillie's poems have a close affinity with Hugh Blair's *Letters on rhetoric and belles lettres*. (Jonathan Wordsworth, *Ancestral Voices*, 96) Her family and cultural background supports this echo and intertextuality. Joanna Baillie (1762-1851) was born as the daughter of a Presbyterian minister in the manse of Bothwell, Scotland in 1762. She came from the most famous medical family of the period. Her uncle on her mother's side, William Hunter, became the celebrated anatomist and obstetrician, physician extraordinary to Queen Charlotte and founder of the Great Windmill Street School of Anatomy. His brother John followed William to London to assist him, and by 1788 he was the undisputed head of the

surgical profession and is remembered as one of the greatest of all experimental surgeons. According to McMillan, her insistence on domestic context ‘situated her in precisely the area where she learned the importance of career and acquired the strategies that enabled her to define and develop it.’ (“Dr. Baillie,” *1798: The Year of the Lyrical Ballads* 70) Joanna had a sister named Agnes, born in 1760, and a brother Matthew, born the next year. Matthew was adopted by William Hunter after the early death of his own father. He proved assiduous in learning, and, when his uncle died, he was able to continue his anatomical lectures. The manse in which Joanna spent the first four or five years of her life stood in a picturesque environment, on a sort of mound overlooking the valley of the Clyde. In 1769, her father was appointed minister of the collegiate church at Hamilton, and in 1776 Professor of Divinity at the University of Glasgow. It can reasonably be assumed that her father associated with Hugh Blair, who was also a doctor of Divinity. When Joanna was about ten years of age, she and her sister were sent to Miss McDonald’s boarding-school in Glasgow. Though her formal education is limited, it is not difficult to imagine that she was immersed in the highly intellectual atmosphere of Scottish Enlightenment, and that, mostly through paternal relationships, she must have been influenced by the thoughts and practices of so-called Scottish “Common Sense” group, which was characterized by the principles of primitivism, an advocate of which is Hugh Blair. As a professor’s daughter, she might have been allowed to sit in on Blair’s lectures.

As early as in her boarding-school days, her originality showed itself in dramatic form. She could weave any natural impulse or peculiarity of character in her classmates into dramas, which were presented at the school festivals. The happy schooldays in Glasgow ended with the death of her father in 1778. The widow Mrs. Baillie returned with Joanna and her sister to a house in Long Calderwood, Lanarkshire, which held for her many childhood memories, and which was now owned by her brother. In 1783, her brother Matthew was being educated at Balliol College, Oxford, who later inherited the London house on Great William Street from his maternal uncle, Dr. Hunter. His

mother and her daughters went to London to live with Matthew until his marriage in 1791. After the moderate success of the publication of *A Series of Plays: in which it is attempted to delineate the stronger passions of the mind. Each passion being the subject of A Tragedy and A Comedy* (1798), the Baillie women moved to Hampstead in 1802.

Distinct from other Romantic women writers who had to earn their livings by selling poems and novels, for instance Charlotte Smith or Ann Yarslay, Baillie could enjoy the respected and affluent upper middle-class life at Hampstead. Mother and daughters were at once received into the literary circle of the town, probably on account of their family connection with Mrs. Hunter. Samuel Rogers described Joanna in his journal on April 21, 1791 'as a very pretty woman, with a broad Scotch accent.' (Carhart 13) Joanna's devoted, assiduous attention to her mother, then blind as well as aged, was the object of admiring notice in Hampstead society. Joanna was a devoted domestic woman, tied down by the household chores.

In 1808, following the death of their mother, Joanna Baillie and her sister Agnes rented a new house near Hampstead Heath, where they continued to live until their deaths. The name Joanna Baillie is most closely associated with Hampstead, not only because she spent the remainder of her life there, but also because she was a delightful hostess of noted literary men and women of her age after she settled there. It is amazing to see how far and wide her social intercourse ranged simply by naming her admirers: Southey, Wordsworth, Lord and Lady Byron, Landor, Maria Edgeworth, Felicia Hemans, Maria Berry, Anna Leitia Barbauld, George Crabbe, Henry Crabbe Robinson and George Tickno. According to Donald H. Reiman, ("Introduction," *Series of Plays*, vi) Needless to say, she cherished her long-standing friendship with Scott. Landor enumerated Baillie, in 1818, as one of the three first-rate poets in England in a single twenty-year span in their time: 'Wordsworth, Southey, Miss Baillie, what a class!' In fact, to her simple home in Hampstead went most of the noted literary men



and women of England, as well as many from other countries. Wordsworth's concept of "culture" must have been formed in such a congenial surroundings.

Encircled by a group of admirers, she behaved herself as a lovable, sociable lady of the time. This is a rather surprising fact, when we take into consideration her interest in abnormal states of mind as a poet and playwright. She was very popular among a host of women acquaintances. Even Dorothy Wordsworth wrote to Mary Hutchinson, in May 1820 as follows:

There (i.e., at Mrs. Hoare's at Hampstead) we met Joanna Baillie who is one of the nicest of women—very entertaining in conversation, without the least mixture of the literary Lady.

(*The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth*, III Middle Years, Part II, 596)

Whatever mask she might have put on, she lived a life of literary lady beneath it, and her self-consciousness of being a writer manifested itself clearly in her theoretical justifications. In "Introductory Discourse" of *A Series of Plays*, her least gender-inclusive language seemed to transcend the limitations of femininity.<sup>(2)</sup> Joanna Baillie had never been culturally alienated in her life.

According to Feminist critics, the women writers are said to be always under the revisionary imperative, and 'have frequently responded to sociocultural constraints by creating symbolic narratives that express their common feelings of constriction, exclusion, dispossession.' (Sandra M. Gilbert, "What Do Feminist Critics Want?" *The New Feminist Criticism*, 35) Under their rather pessimistic verdict on women writers, Joanna Baillie should be claimed as a fortunate exception, enjoying an exceptionally privileged position in the history of women writers. To judge whether her case is rare one or not depends on the standpoint the critic takes toward various modes of public discourse which were propagated among Wordsworth's contemporaries. The marginalization of women was integral to the public sphere where patriarchal authoritative power is dominant. But Wordsworth was not a typical opinion leader of

that particular sphere. Young Wordsworth was essentially a liberal thinker, who endeavoured to assimilate his poetical discourse to the common language of men. (See Chapter 7) Later in the Regency, he changed his political stance and came close to conservative faction. He could be no more susceptible to the marginalized people nor to female writers of his age ever since.

Baillie was, on the other hand, well adapted to the double code of public sphere which admits and sustains the patriarchal power system. She was a paragon of the domestic woman who possesses 'the mild and retiring virtues' of the notable liberal thinker, Erasmus Darwin envisioned in 1798. (Erasmus Darwin, *A Plan for the Conduct of Female Education in Boarding Schools*, 3) Nevertheless, Feminist critics declare that she was not involved in 'the aesthetic cult of ladylike fragility and delicate beauty' nor 'the snowy, porcelain immobility of the dead.' (Sandra M. Gilbert & Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, 23) Her matronly capacity to supervise the household excelled in the female world and had nothing to do with 'a death-in-life.' (ibid., p.23) The most notable thing is that, although Baillie lived a life of an ideal domestic woman proposed by the conduct books of the mid-eighteenth century, she was free from the constraints of power relationships those conduct books delineated.

In representing the household as a world with its own form of social relations, a distinctively feminine discourse, this body of literature revised the semiotic of culture as its most basic level and enabled a coherent idea of the middle class to take shape. (Nancy Armstrong, "The Rise of the Domestic Woman" 897)

Her world is neither conventional nor revisionistic, which ironically betrays the norm of the 19<sup>th</sup> century women Feminism depicts. It should be emphasized that her attitude of hiding behind her literary work can be traced back to the tactics and ideals of a cool-headed natural scientist which her family's career cultivated in her. They aimed to combine didacticism, experimentation and theoretical justification from a completely objective viewpoint. As is shown in portraits of strong women such as

housewives, self-indulgent ladies, or mysterious aliens, for Baillie, houses do not necessarily imply symbols of female imprisonment where their central symbolic drama of enclosure and escape are enacted. As a result, her analysis of a morbid passion sometimes gives an impression of superficiality.

( 3 )

In spite of her literary fame among her contemporaries, her drama has never been revived nor read by a large public since then. Although her *A Series of Plays* (1798) was widely sold, (a fourth edition appeared in 1802, and a fifth in 1806), the stage production could not necessarily be said to have been a success.

On April 29, 1800, *De Monfort* was performed at the Drury Lane Theatre, with a cast that included such names as Mrs. Siddons and John Philip Kemble. According to an anonymous critic,

The excitement was great, and the disappointment commensurate. The audience yawned in spite of themselves, in spite of the exquisite poetry, the vigorous passion, and the transcendent acting of John Kemble and Mrs. Siddons.

(Carhart 18)

The book was published in 1798 anonymously, as her *Poems* had been in 1790. Baillie succeeded in her attempt to keep her authorship a secret. The name of Joanna Baillie was never printed on the title page before the third edition of 1800.

In reassessing Baillie's literary achievement, her strong attachment to the anonymity of authorship should not be neglected. In a culture whose fundamental definitions of literary authority are both overtly and covertly patriarchal, it is her own elaborate and subtle way to reconstruct her inescapable femaleness in the guise of male stories about the world. By denying a 'feminine' style of writing, she might have affected what Mary Eagleton calls 'macho pyrotechnics so as to enjoy a vicarious

sense of power,' (*Feminist Criticism* p.168) but her gender play was too naïve and vulnerable to achieve its aim. In spite of her effort to efface it or neutralize it, the gender of the author was perceived at once by a female writer, Mary Berry, as early as 1799. When she was sent a copy of *A Series of Plays* from the author, Berry was delighted to read it, and was said to discuss it in public as follows:

The author still refuses to come forward, —Neither fame nor a thousand pounds, therefore, have much effect on this said author's mind, whoever he or she may be. I say *she*, because, and only because, no man could or would draw such noble and dignified representations of the female mind as Countess Albin and Jane de Monfort. They often make us clever, captivating, heroic, but never rationally superior. (Carhart, 15)

In contrast, in 1798, Thomas Campbell attributed the author of these plays to a man in his favourable review in the *New Monthly Magazine*. It is interesting to note that the shrewd eye of a female reader detected the limits of Baillie's emotional approach to the characters, especially of 'the female mind,' which would make women feel 'never rationally superior' to men. Berry appreciated the long-neglected female sympathy toward the female mind, and its noble and dignified representations. Baillie was in fact a sophisticated advocate of the female sensibility which had been suppressed within paternalistic culture, and encouraged women to celebrate difference from the male 'norm.'

It was not her personal propensity to prefer psychological drama to poetry that had driven her thus from the masculine 'norm.' For one thing, the anonymity served Baillie as a sort of proper mask of the domestic woman in whom the particular combination of invisibility and vigilance is subtly made. Perhaps, she was afraid of revealing her excellence and talent. As Erasmus Darwin, one of her contemporary critics, pointed out, the domestic woman should not show eminence in almost anything: 'great eminence in almost anything is sometimes injurious to a young lady.' (Darwin 3) As the domestic woman fulfills her role by disappearing herself in the woodwork to

watch over the household, so did Baillie make herself invisible in anonymity. On the other hand, she tried to imitate a masculine discourse as much as possible. She might be counted among 'those women artists who signal their artistic independence by disguising themselves as men, or more frequently, by engaging in a transvestite parody of symbols of masculine authority.' (Sandra M. Gilbert & Susan Gubar 413) But her capacity to do so is limited. It is sad to see that her domestic effort of self-regulation and her faithful obedience to the tactics of family career to objectify ultimately deprived her of the power of self-interpretation. Her insistence on domestic context made her acquire the strategies in the fullest sense. Ironically, she seemed not to be aware of the limits of her pseudo-masculine discourse, nor of those of her disinterestedness.

The masculine voice which reached its peak in Milton found its persuasive spokesman in the great Romantic poets, starting from Wordsworth. Baillie could not understand the nature of this voice. In order to explicate this point, an examination is needed to determine at what point Wordsworth discarded Baillie's mask in his works. Needless to say, Baillie's "Introductory Discourse" of *A Series of Plays 1798* was known to Coleridge and Wordsworth, and exerted a considerable influence on their *Lyrical Ballads* and its "Preface." One of Wordsworth's conspicuous borrowings from Baillie is seen in "There was a boy," in which Montfort's speech in "De Montfort" in *A Series of plays* is clearly echoed. (Jonathan Wordsworth, *Ancestral Voices*, 96) Jonathan Wordsworth points out that 'Baillie has written in 1790 what is by any standards a lyrical ballad,' and that the ballad metre of Baillie's "the Storm-beaten Maid" coincides with four of Wordsworth's Lucy poems. Setting an other-worldly realm of the mind that the Storm-beaten Maid lived behind the beautifully sad half-told stories of Lucy in *Lyrical Ballads*, he went on further to suggest an original source of Wordsworth's imagination in Baillie. He says, 'the coincidence of rhythm heightens our sense that the Storm-beaten Maid and Lucy belong to the same uncanny world of

imagination.’ (Jonathan Wordsworth, “Introduction” *Poems 1790, Ancestral Voices*, 65)

The noticeable voice of the romantics is, however, the roaring one which trumpeted the brilliant vision of future in the storm of an ever expanding world. Usually, it is yelling out its ideology and prophesy, an autonomous self develops side by side with his own age of political and industrial revolution. As is clearly demonstrated in Wordsworth’s manifest in his great autobiographical poem *Prelude*,

Well might we be glad,  
Lifted above the ground by airy fancies  
More bright than madness or the dreams of wine.  
And though full oft the objects of our love  
Were false and in their splendour overwrought,  
Yet surely at such time no vulgar power  
Was working in us, nothing less in truth  
Than that most noble attitude of man —  
Though yet untutored and inordinate —  
That wish for something loftier, more adorned,  
Than is the common aspect, daily garb,  
Of human life.

(*The 1805 Prelude* V 590–601)

The role of the creative writer is sometimes seen as analogous to that of a political leader or religious saviour. It should aspire to ‘the most noble attitude of man’ and for ‘something loftier.’ From the outset, however, something irreconcilable with these masculine, high Romantic imports had overshadowed the works of Joanna Baillie. It enables her to make a cultural transmission from male and to female world smooth.

Born as a daughter of a Presbyterian minister, Baillie naturally never had abandoned a hope of a recuperation of the female voice. However fantastic and feeble it may sound, throughout her career, her female sensibility is kept intact in this male dominated new world, even after her anonymity had been cast off. The ideology of liberation of the self might attain its goal someday, but what she had cherished more

than a common political ideology was the consistent, domestic principles regulating her own world of convention. Compared to the world of Wordsworth, the subjective world of Joanna Baillie is governed by positive female virtues. It is the world somewhat self-consistent, regulated with an ethic of care which is one of the essential female moral norms and which emphasizes the primacy of the family or the community as its extension. Hers is a world governed by a matron. On this point, she distinctively stood aloof from what Gilbert and Gubar call angel-woman mysteries. Her matron is far from 'slim, pale, passive beings whose "charms" eerily recalled the snowy, porcelain immobility of the dead.' (Sandra M. Gilbert & Susan Gubar 25)

As she later pointed out in her "Introductory Discourse" of *A Series of Plays* (1798), 'passion genuine and true to nature' could be expressed in the description of 'the plain order of things in this every-day world.' ("Introductory Discourse" 20) Her effort to dissolve the mists of artificiality so as to regain naturalness and simplicity was certainly known to Wordsworth and Coleridge, when they were working on *Lyrical Ballads*. The suggested date of reading the book is by October 1798. (Duncan Wu, *Wordsworth's Reading 1770-1799* 8)

A good example of her style can be seen in "A Winter Day." The language thus in accord with the world of objects could surpass the vehement but false emotion fabricated by the poetic style full of 'decoration and ornament.' (l.20) "A Winter Day" begins with the charming observation of the rooster.

The cock, warm roosting, 'midst his feather'd dames,  
Now lifts his beak and snuffs the morning air,  
Stretches his neck and claps his heavy wings,  
Gives three hoarse crows, and glad his talk is done;  
Low, chuckling, turns himself upon the roost,  
Then nestles down again amongst his mates.

The rooster's condition of being is bound up with the duty of a morning call, to give 'three hoarse crows.' Once this task is fulfilled, he can enjoy his complaisant life

among 'his feather'd dames.' This indolent figure of a rooster symbolically announces a mode of culture in lively rural life which, as "A Winter Day" depicts, is dominated by 'dames' through the women's point of view. These feminine household principles concerning the basis of the power of surveillance are exchangeable with the general social policy. The dames know well enough the details of busy family cares entrusted to the wife and mother in the household. But the descriptions of busy household activities were not made from the child's viewpoint as Wordsworth had done in *The Prelude*.

    Their busy mother knows not where to turn,  
    Her morning work comes now so thick upon her.  
    One she must help to tie his little coat,  
    Unpin his cap, and seek another shoe.  
    When all is o'er, out to the door they run,  
    With new com'd sleeky hair, and glist'ning cheeks,  
    Each with some little project in his head.  
    One on the ice must try his new sol'd shoes:  
    To view his well-set trap another hies,  
    In hopes to find some poor unwary bird  
    (No worthless prize) entangled in his snare;  
                    ("A Winter Day")

The busy, gentle matron of the house does not pay attention to the boy's expectant joy of skating on the lake, though she might give him 'the summons.' Her self-regulation depends upon her feeling and principle. It is alien to 'vulgar power' as much as to 'something loftier.' The matron's supervision constitutes the domestic objects and even a form of value. So long as she clung to this world of objects, to 'daily garb of human life' in Wordsworth's terms, Baillie's concern ignored 'some little project' in the child's head. In stead, Wordsworth could work up the common scene into those lively episodes in *The Prelude*.

    It was a time of rapture! Clear and loud  
    The village clock tolled six; I wheeled about  
    Proud and exulting like an untired horse



That cares not for its home. All shod with steel  
We hissed along the polished ice in games  
Confederate, imitative of the chase  
And woodland pleasures.

*(The1805 Prelude I 457-463)*

Even if the solitary rapture of the mystic, transcendental experience the boy had in this skating scene, 'yet still the solitary cliff/Wheeled by me, even as if the earth had rolled/With visible motion her diurnal round' was characteristic to Wordsworth, the common joy of the children playing a game of chase is neatly cut off from Baillie's view point. Nor is there the thrill of stealing from the woodcock snares,

Scudding away from snare to snare, I plied  
My anxious visitation, hurrying on,  
Still hurrying, hurrying onward.

*(The1805 Prelude I 319-321)*

All of those thrilling activities led the boy to the profound recognition of the meaning of 'a higher language.' (Book III 107) However intense the boy's fear of his guilt might have been, both of these mental and physical areas are kept out of the matron's vigilance. Almost haunted by Burkean passion of fear, however, the solitary boy could make Nature impersonate the watch of his conscience.

I heard among the solitary hills  
Low breathing coming after me, and sounds  
Of undistinguishable motion, steps  
Almost as silent as the turf they trod.

*(The1805 Prelude I 329-332)*

The boy's mind, thus educated by pain and fear, is allowed to approach the sublime essence of Nature, 'something loftier.'

In the framework of the matron's viewpoint, the activities in the child's mind were thus clearly cut off and disregarded. It is not a simple matter of sexual polemic.

Rather, it recapitulates the cultural differences about which Wordsworth hovered in his poetico-cultural transference. Both in "A Winter Day" and "A Summer Day," Baillie's female discourse can skillfully eliminate the harsh sound of the social, political struggle those rustic people must have suffered. What is depicted there is an ideal community governed by love and joy. It should be noted, however, that this community, depicted in a rather idealized manner, is fundamentally different from a world of all surface where an interpretative mechanism resides in, changing masculine language of production, labour and wealth, into a more feminine one of objects.

In Baillie's work, the doctrine of self-regulation and the techniques of domestic surveillance are separated from the calculation of domestic economy. A good example is shown in the pastoral world depicted in "A Summer Day." It is under the protection of Mother Earth.

The dark-blue clouds of night in dusky lines,  
Drawn wide and streaky o'er the purer sky,  
Wear faint the morning purple on their skirts.

Even the clouds at the dawn show themselves in the image of young maidens wearing purple skirts. The meteor charms and beguiles the traveller as if it were a woman tempting him.

Or wand'ring fire which looks across the marsh,  
Beaming like candle in a lonely cot,  
To cheer the hopes of the benighted traveller,  
Till swifter than the very change of thought,  
It shifts from place to place, escapes his glance,  
And makes him wond'ring rub his doubtful eyes;  
(*"A Summer Day"*)

In this natural world described in the erotic discourse of a love game, a cooperative principle of community dominates the scene.

In ev'ry field, in ev'ry swampy mead,  
 The cheerful voice of industry is heard;  
 Leaving the smooth green meadow bare behind.  
 The old and young, the weak and strong are there,  
 And, as they can, help on the cheerful work.  
 The father jeers his awkward half-grown lad,  
 Who trails his tawdry armful o'er the field,  
 Nor does he fear the jeering to repay.  
 For there authority, hard favour'd, frowns not;  
 All are companions in the gen'ral glee,  
 And cheerful complaisance still their roughness,  
 With placid look enlightens ev'ry face.  
 ("A Summer Day")

This is an earthly paradise where an ethic of care predominates, and a forlorn outcast is received with a cordial welcome as a member of the family. The philanthropy rules this communal society.

The wife within, who hears his hollow cough,  
 And patt'ring of his stick upon the threshold,  
 Sends out her little boy to see who's there.  
 The child looks up to view the stranger's face,  
 And seeing it enlightened with a smile,  
 Holds out his little hand to lead him in.  
 Rous'd from her work, the mother turns her head,  
 And sees them, not ill-pleas'd.—  
 In comes the wearied master of the house,  
 And marks with satisfaction his old guest,  
 With all his children round—  
 His honest heart is fill'd with manly kindness;  
 ("A Winter Day")

Surrounded by the warm family care, the 'poor old soldier' 'feels how helpless and forlorn he is, / And bitter tears gush from his dim-worn eyes.' There is no indictment of an existing social code in Baillie's feminine discourse. The poor old soldier is protected in seclusion by the virtues of the private realm. In the words of Anne K. Mellor, it is 'the public sphere under the governance of women and feminine virtue,

celebrating the social and political domination of a domestic sphere located either in an idealised version of the feudal past or in an utopian future.’ (*Romanticism & Gender* 9–10) But, on the other hand, her emotional idealization of rural life makes it impossible for her to conceive some irresolvable contradictions inherent in the rural society as Wordsworth pointed out in “Home at Grasmere.” We can compare effeminate attitude of Baillie’s soldier to the ‘solemn and sublime’ figure of the discharged soldier in *The Prelude* (see Chapter 4) to make the difference more conspicuous.

Solemn and sublime

He might have seemed, but that in all he say  
There was a strange half-absence, and a tone  
Of weakness and indifference, as of one  
Remembering the importance of his theme  
But feeling it no longer.

(*The 1805 Prelude* IV 473–478)

Banned from a cordial welcome in Baillie’s feminine world, the soldier in *The Prelude* emerges in the night. The boy narrator encounters him on the public highway in the peaceful solitude of the night, but the soldier would not shed his tears nor complain about his past strife. Instead,

He said ‘My trust is in the God of Heaven,  
And in the eye of his that passes me!’

(*The 1805 Prelude* IV 494–495)

Perhaps, emotion might be a more pure response to nature and to other people than reason, but it is not so powerful. Emotional approach is not persuasive in delving the depth of one’s soul so as to have a better insight into the individual’s personality or dignity. Herein lies Baillie’s limitation of domestic vision of benevolence.

In order to highlight Baillie's feminine restriction, the analysis of her supernatural fantastic ballad "The Storm-Beat Maid" would be helpful.

All shrouded in the winter snow,  
The maiden held her ay;  
Nor chilly winds that roughly blow,  
Nor dark night could her stay.  
O'er hill and dale, through bush and briar,  
She on her journey kept

Fantastically, this beautiful other-worldly maiden gradually merges into the image of Lucy Gray (cf. Jonathan Wordsworth, "Introduction," Woodstock).

The stanza is a common one, but happens to be used in four out of five of Wordsworth's early Lucy Poems. As the poem develops it turns out that there is a story, and that Baillie has not merely played a part in the creation of Lucy, she has invented the lyrical ballad for herself. (*Wordsworth Circle*, 119)

Here again, we perceive a different spirit dominating, which is incongruous to the world of Wordsworth. Although Wordsworth was not imperceptible to its presence, Baillie's voice got used to integrating a fantasy and the principles of domesticity in a melodious language. This beautiful girl from another world who had intruded on the wedding party turned out to be the very girl jilted by the groom. She walked a long way in the snow to get there, so that 'Her robe is stiff with drizzly snow,/And rent her mantle grey.' Physically, she does possess the characteristics of the angel-woman, 'the snowy, porcelain immobility of the dead.' Yet, her beauty is akin to that of the nature, of the daughter of Mother Earth just as the clouds in the dawn depicted in "A Summer Day" are endowed.

Her face is like an early morn,  
Dimm'd with the nightly dew;  
Her skin is like the sheeted torn,

Her eyes are wat'ry blue.

Thanks to the strength of Mother Earth, she can win back the love of her jilted lover, and return to this world alive and happy. Baillie thus fulfils the feminine readers' wish for love recaptured.

Compared to such otherworldly presences as Geraldine in "Christabel" or Lamia in "Lamia," Baillie's girl looks more innocent and fragile. The Romantic imagination usually adds a rigorous judgmental attitude; it even prohibits its presence by ascribing its origin to evil. But, in the case of Baillie, we can see a contrary attitude. She assists the storm-beaten girl as a female friend or sister would, and determines a happy ending for her. Her lover returns to her in repentance, and promises to be her faithful guard forever.

When thou art weary and depress'd,  
I'll lull thee to thy sleep;  
And when dark fancies vex thy breast,  
I'll sit by thee and weep.

I'll tend thee like a restless child  
Where'er thy rovings be;  
Nor gesture keen, nor eye-ball wild,  
Shall turn my love from thee.

Penitent lover denounces thus his virility, and transforms himself to play a motherly or sisterly role to this exotic girl. In this way, he is expected to be tamed like the rooster in "A Winter Day", the poem placed at the beginning of 1790 *Poems*. This kind of reconciliation of sex in the domestic sphere is a fantastic solution, only possible from the female perspective. It transcends even the logic of gender equality. On the other hand, it is attended with the danger that it might ultimately lead the world to the female dominance, the subversion of the paternal authority. It can at least predict a social change, extending the values of domesticity into the public world. We should not

overlook this threatening sign hidden under the elaborate simplicity of Baillie's discourse. Her work offered a discourse that speaks to the people of her own time, that is, of women.

( 4 )

In 1798, the same year *Lyrical Ballads* was published anonymously, Baillie published *A Series of Plays* anonymously as well. Her book contained a very long and illuminating "Introductory Discourse." As was mentioned above, Baillie's discourse finds several resonance in Wordsworth's "Preface" of *Lyrical Ballads*.

[T]hose works which most strongly characterise human nature in the middling and lower classes of society, where it is to be discovered by stronger and more unequivocal marks, will ever be the most popular. ("Introductory Discourse" 20)

Low and rustic life was generally chosen, because in that condition, the essential passions of the heart finds a better soil in which they can attain their maturity, are less under restraint, and speak a plainer and more emphatic language; because in that condition of life our elementary feelings co-exist in a state of great simplicity, and, consequently, may be more accurately contemplated, and more forcibly communicated; ... ("Preface" to *Lyrical Ballads* (1802), *The Oxford Authors*, p.597)

Both Baillie and Wordsworth agree that the simplicity and naturalness they seek as the source of passions, and that those can be found only among the lower classes of society who live isolated from the evils of civilization, 'the influence of social vanity.' (ibid.)

In addition to the compassion for the marginal groups in the society, Baillie pleads for the reader's sympathetic imagination more than anything else in appreciating her works.

The highest pleasure we receive of poetry, as well as from the real objects which surround us in the world, are derived from the sympathetic interest we all take in

beings like ourselves; and I will even venture to say, that were the grandest scenes which can enter into the imagination of man, presented to our view, and all reference to man completely shut out from our thoughts, the objects that composed it would convey to our minds little better than dry ideas of magnitude, colour, and form; and the remembrance of them would rest upon our minds like the measurement and distances of the planets. (23)

Wordsworth repeated the same idea, but he modified it by the aid of the somewhat mechanical Association Theory, and consolidated it into that famous phrase 'the spontaneous overflow of feelings.' Although the poet is a man who possesses 'more than usual organic sensibility,' in the process that feelings work upon a certain subject on the poet's side, and on the poetry on the reader's, the continuation of and the repetition of this act are possible. Consequently, Wordsworth argues:

[B]y the repetition and continuance of this act, our feelings will be connected with important subjects, till at length, if we be originally possessed of much sensibility, such habits of mind will be produced, that, by obeying blindly and mechanically the impulses of those habits, we shall describe objects, and utter sentiments, of such a nature and in such connection with each other, ... (1802 "Preface," 598)

Maintaining the importance of emotional language, especially that of passion, Baillie prepared a way for a peculiar attitude of the poet in selecting the material. Fortunately, or unfortunately, she appears to be ignorant of Hartleyan Association Theory, which could have enlarged the framework of her poetico-cultural complex. Showing her wish for the domestic peace, she simply rejects national events such as war.

Great and bloody battles are to us battles fought in the moon, if it is not impressed upon our minds, by some circumstances attending them that men subject to like weakness and passions with ourselves, were the combatants. ("Introductory Discourse," 16)

Unless events or stories are told in an emotional language which can help the reader to perceive the human heart, and, moreover, unless those stories are read by



exercising the sympathetic imagination completely attuned to that of the poet, the seriousness of the events itself can be disregarded and thrown out of the scene. To the contrary, Wordsworth did not always stick to her kind of domesticated, emotional complex, though he tried to cultivate the notion of emotional response from a slightly different angle. He warns the danger of the emotional exhaustion, apathy.

[T]he human mind is capable of gross and violent stimulus;...a multitude of causes, unknown to former times, are now acting with a combined force to blunt the discriminating powers of the mind, and unfitting it for all voluntary exertion to reduce it to a state of almost savage torpor. The most effective of these causes are the great national events which are daily taking place... ("Preface" 599)

The 'great and bloody battles' are naturally implied in the phrase, 'the great national events,' but at the same time Wordsworth counted other events, such as 'the increasing accumulation of men in cities' among them. Since he was concerned much with the outcome of French Revolution and the Industrial revolution, these words can be accepted as implicit reference to them. From his glorified view of country life, urbanized life is no more dangerous than war, because, in the city, the uniformity of the people's occupation 'produces a craving for extraordinary incident, which the rapid communication of intelligence hourly gratifies.' Wordsworth's warning is that over-excitement abates the meditative power in the mind.

It is this arrogant supremacy of feminine emotion of 'over-excitement,' which tends sometimes to be irrational, that props the domesticated world of peace in Joanna Baillie; her world is essentially different from that of Wordsworth. The poet, in Wordsworth's notion, should have 'a greater knowledge of human nature' and should keep an eye on 'the goings-on of the Universe.' (op.cit.) Nevertheless, their incompatibility is not so serious. Wordsworth does understand this kind of female passion.

In *Lyrical Ballads*, the character most closely affiliated to the world of Baillie is, perhaps, Betty Foy, the mother of the idiot boy Johnny. The pleasure of reading this

beautiful poem cannot be gotten without our sympathizing with her heightened motherly passion. Her passions of anxiety for her lost boy and joy to recover him are expressed by the description of her motion. As she saw her Johnny returning home,

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

And Johnny burrs, and laughs aloud,  
Whether in cunning or in joy  
I cannot tell; but while he laughs,  
Betty a drunken pleasure quaffs,  
To hear again her Idiot Boy.

And now she's at the pony's tail,  
And now she's at the pony's head,  
On that side now, and now on this,  
And almost stifled with her bliss,  
A few sad tears does Betty shed. (ll.382-396)

If this poem had been written by Joanna Baillie, the story would have ended with this scene of joyful reunion. But Wordsworth continued, exploring this animated world. However beautifully it can be embraced by feminine sensibility, it is a world which is about to suffocate its inhabitants with maternal care and erotic temptation. Wordsworth made Johnny disrupt the bond by allowing him to speak in his own language, which lay behind the ordinary world of communication, though adjacent to it.

(His very words I give to you),  
“The cocks did crow to-whoo, to-whoo,  
And the sun did shine so cold.”—  
Thus answered Johnny in his glory,  
And that was all his travel's story. (ll.459-463)

The development of a literature of sensibility in the eighteenth century brought with it an emphasis on the situation of women as are seen in the novels of Fielding and Richardson. It developed the feminisation of discourse, which amounts to 'the cultural construction of the novel as an ideological arena in which the social contract is translated into a sexual exchange.' (Mellor 5) Although her genre is not a novel, and she was rather critical of the artificiality of those sentimental novels, (3) Joanna Baillie does not stand aloof from this general tendency. To the contrary, Wordsworth courageously explored the limits of her evocative, feminine discourse. So long as he claims the idea of the language of men, he is to confront the limits of Romantic ideologies of gender and genre, for it had precluded the language of women poets. Baillie's gender inclusive language just hovered over this critical area.

( 5 )

In November 1791, an Unitarian, Reverend William Enfield, wrote a favourable review of Baillie's *Poems; 1790* in the *Monthly Review*. It is a remarkable thing, because, according to Carhart (Carhart 168), the book was published anonymously under the title of *Fugitive Verses*, and turned out to be an absolute failure. It may well have been ignored by the critics. Although Enfield deserves to be called a sympathetic reader of Baillie, his review sets, on the other hand, several prerequisite conditions to be a good, sympathetic reader of Joanna Baillie.

The works are, Enfield says, meant for 'those readers whose taste is not too refined, or too fastidious, to be pleased with true and lively pictures of nature, sketched with a careless hand.' (Enfield 266) Those readers are, he continues, 'capable of discerning and admiring the fair form of simplicity' (ibid.), while the poems

can, indeed, boast no wild fictions to seize the fancy; and they have little of that richness of melody which, in many of our modern poets, so sweetly captivates the ear: but they contain minute and circumstantial descriptions of natural objects,

scenes, and characters; and they express, in easy though peculiar language, the feelings of undisguised and uncorrupted nature. (ibid.)

As Jonathan Wordsworth endorses it (4), Enfield's insight cleverly grasped the nature of *Poems 1790*, which is not serious nor realistic. It should be noted that, from the viewpoint of cultural transference, Enfield thus served as a cultural medium to combine Baillie's domesticated sphere to Wordsworth's poetry. Most of the poems included in *Poems 1790* are sketches made by a careless hand. The sympathetic readers should not seek there any recondite philosophy of nature nor any political ideology, but just should enjoy the fair form of simplicity, expressed 'in easy though peculiar language' no less than 'minute and circumstantial descriptions of natural objects, scenes, and characters.'

Simplicity and naturalness of 'the feelings of undisguised and uncorrupted nature' were what she tried to capture both in the poems and in the plays. Eight years later, in "Introductory Discourse" to *A Series of Plays*, as we have seen above, Baillie emphasised the naturalness, 'every touch faithful to nature' (*A Series of Plays* 20) and the simplicity, 'one simple trait of the human heart, one expression of passion genuine and true to heart.' (op.cit. 21) She says these attributes are the products of sympathetic imagination, and 'are derived from the sympathetick interest we all take in beings like ourselves.' (op.cit. 23) It is not difficult to hear Blair's echo in these phrases, too. In her poems, domestic affections have a transcendent authenticity in the face of contingencies of history.

In 1818, after a 30-year interval since Enfield's appreciative review had appeared, William Hazlitt made a rather deprecating comment on Baillie's plays. Actually, Hazlitt's voice represents that of the public sphere (dominated by male) of the age. As he himself was the son of a Unitarian minister and inherited strong liberal views from his father, Hazlitt did not deny every virtue found in her works. His standpoint is, however, not that of a sympathetic Unitarian. In his "Lectures on the English Poets," especially in Lecture "On the Living Poet," his unabashed, cool

estimation of Baillie's work is pungent: 'She is a Unitarian in poetry. With her the passions are, like the French republic, one and indivisible: they are not so in nature, or in Shakespeare.' (*The Complete Works of William Hazlitt in Twenty-One Volumes* Vol.5, 147) He seemed to reject her self-consistent household world supported by her female morality, which closes its door to the politics or to the economical ideology. He sniffed in disapproval her female textuality itself. Although Hazlitt admits that her tragedy, especially *De Monfort*, is tolerable with certain restrictive conditions, his diatribe on her comedies is harsh and severe, as if it had actually foretold the decline of her fame since the latter half of the 19th century till just a decade ago. In terms of Enfield, Hazlitt might have been a critic whose taste is too refined or too fastidious to be pleased with her feminine qualities.

[H]er comedy of the Election...appears to me the perfection of baby-house theatricals. Every thing in it has such a *do-me-good* air, is so insipid and amiable. Virtue seems such a pretty playing at make-believe, and vice is such a naughty word. it is a theory of some French author, that little girls ought not to be suffered to have dolls to play with, to call them *pretty dears*, to admire their black eyes and cherry cheeks, to lament and bewail over them if they fall down and hurt their faces, to praise them when they are good, and scold them when they are naughty. It is a school of affectation: Miss Baillie has promoted of it. She treats her grown men and women as little girls treat their dolls—makes moral puppets of them, pulls the wires, according to their cue and the title prefixed to each comedy or tragedy, not from any real passions of their own, or love either of virtue or vice. (147)

The term, 'baby-house theatricals,' would be too insulting to describe the nature of her tragedies as they are. Her original way of treating 'grown men and women as little girls playing with their dolls' was already conspicuous in *Poems 1790*, as is well seen in the images of lovers who make theatrical gestures in their farewell addresses. But they are inseparable from her female sensibility which requires sympathetic acquiescence.

To attack her incapability of understanding a passion under 'all its aspects of progress and maturity' does not necessarily indicate Hazlitt's originality. A similar attack had already been given to her by Francis Jeffrey in the *Edinburgh Review* in July 1803. In his lengthy review of Baillie's *Plays on the Passions*, he censured her fanciful delineation of a passion severed from the context of reality.

To delineate a man's character, by tracing the progress of his ruling passion, is like describing his person by the yearly admeasurement of his foot, or rather by a termly report of the increase of a wen, by which his health and his beauty are ultimately destroyed. (*Edinburgh Review* 2, 272)

He added accordingly, 'Plays have, for the most part, no moral effect at all: they are seen or read for amusement and curiosity only.'

The evaluation of Baillie's world, therefore, is the matter of taste relegated to a reader's option; whether one stands on Enfield's considerate side or on Hazlitt's polemical one. In other words, the issue is whether one should admit a moderate, peculiarly feminine view based mainly upon the conduct book norm of femininity or not. In terms of Carhart, 'Joanna Baillie's women are, with few exceptions, virtuous.' (Carhart 197) Her ideal English gentlewoman (5) is, like the heroine of *Lady Griseld Baillie*, regulated by the chivalric norm. 'None of heroes is sacrilegious or profane; adultery is almost unknown; dishonour of parents is rare; and one's neighbours goods are secure.' (op. cit. 203) Since she herself was tender and devoted and practised all homebred and homefelt virtues such as filial duty so well, both Baillie and her heroines constitute the paragon of domestic virtues in the Regency. Nevertheless, her work remains independent of this historical and cultural context. If the only way to interpret Baillie were limited to the acceptance of her moral priggishness, her works would become as insipid as the beer of yesterday.

Whatever stance one may take, one thing should not be forgotten; Baillie had a voice of her own, natural and simple. It echoes the voice of the affectionate and

benevolent domestic woman. Her works got a glimpse of her vivid images full of sympathetic good will and affection, with sympathetic interest. As Enfield pointed out, her 'easy though peculiar language' can be most beautifully heard in such poems as "A Disappointment" and "A Child to his Sick Grandfather," where 'one simple trait of the human heart, one expression of passion genuine and true to nature' ("Introductory Discourse" 21) are expressed with sympathetic imagination. Her language is adjacent to the one which really enables the essential passions to be expressed in a state of greater simplicity. It is the very language that Wordsworth strove to attain in *Lyrical Ballads*. The essential quality of Baillie's language will be revealed conspicuously, when we compare her description of an old man in the village with that of "The Old Cumberland Beggar." Baillie's description 'contains minute and circumstantial descriptions.'

Close by the cottage door, with placid mien,  
The old man sits upon his seat of turf,  
His staff with crooked head laid by his side,  
Which oft the younger race in wanton sport,  
Gambolling round him, slyly steal away,  
And straddling o'er it, flew their horsemanship  
By raising round the clouds of summer sand,  
While still he smiles, yet chides them for the trick,  
His silver locks upon his shoulders spread,  
And not ungraceful is his stoop of age.  
No stranger passes him without regard;  
And ev'ry neighbour stops to wish him well,  
And ask him his opinion of the weather.  
("A Summer Day")

This old man is a member of the community, respected by its constituent members for his wise discretion rooted in his experience, although naughty boys who stole his staff gambol round him '[b]y raising round the clouds of summer sand.' On the other hand, the old beggar in Wordsworth is a solitary Man, alienated on the margin of the community, though he is treated with care by the villagers.

He travels on, a solitary Man,  
 So helpless in appearance, that for him  
 The sauntering horseman-traveller does not throw  
 With careless hand his alms upon the ground,  
 But stops, that he may safely lodge the coin  
 Within the old Man's hat; nor quits him so,  
 But still when he has given his horse the rein  
 Towards the aged beggar turns a look,  
 Sidelong and half-reverted. She who tends  
 The toll-gate, when in summer at her door  
 She turns her wheel, if on the road she sees  
 The aged beggar coming, quits her work,  
 And lifts the latch for him that he may pass.

(ll.24-36)

Recognizing well enough the life-shortening effects of vagrant life, and disapproving of the social-political mechanism in society that inevitably produced beggars, Wordsworth claims a humane treatment of the beggar in this poem. An old man depicted in *Baillie* might be an ideal figure free from the network of any political ideology. Joanna Baillie's actual political position is difficult to pinpoint. Although in Hampstead she was intimate with Mrs. Barbauld while her active radicalism was at its peak, as McMillan points out, 'it seems likely that Joanna Baillie played her political cards close to her chest.' (McMillan, 81)

On the contrary, Wordsworth did bring in his protest against a political and ideological climate, which tends to regard workhouses as the main means for poor relief. Moreover, Wordsworth thought that giving support to a pauper directly, as the horseman-traveller or the woman at the toll-gate had done in this poem, was 'a more healthy practice for a community.' (Michael Mason, "notes" *Lyrical Ballads*, 308) Both of the above passages are told in a similar voice, but the former is characterised by 'such a pretty playing at make-believe,' and consequently lacks the political dimension the latter implies. It is because of this narrowness that Baillie's description of femininity in the rhetoric of particularity, in prosaic detail, is vulnerable to the



censure for depending ‘on the cultural devaluation of the domestic social sphere presided over by women.’ (Amanda Gilroy and Keith Hanley xxxi) To refer to the presence of a beggar or vice might be a naughty act to be hushed, sometimes to be punished in this matron presiding world, in spite of the fact that her 1790 *Poems* are full of working people.

Unlike most women writers who put little distance between their life and their art, sometimes confounding them, the media Baillie took up enabled her to explore a self-conscious attempt to set up an aesthetic distance. In her “Introductory Discourse,” Baillie asserts:

I have said that tragedy in representing to us good characters struggling with difficulties, and placed in situations of eminence and danger, in which few of us have any chance of being called upon to act, conveys its moral efficacy to our minds by the enlarged views which gives to us of human nature, by the admiration of virtue, and execration of vice which it excites, and not by the examples it holds up for our immediate application. (“Introductory Discourse” 42)

Her conception of drama is rigorously ethical. As a result, in her drama, ‘the passions are seen as potentially but not essentially, nor incurably, morbid.’ (McMillan 78) Her study of a particular passion is often morbid, and its progress is, nevertheless, full of quite a few ‘minute and circumstantial descriptions,’ so that they could often create an effect of emotional interlude. As Jeffrey pointed out above, the situations in which the characters are placed are often far from reality.

Perhaps, it is too covetous to demand reality to illusion produced by ‘the perfection of baby-house theatricals’ of Joanna Baillie. The touch of feminine edge, however, makes great compensation for her insensitivity toward political situations or depths of human abnormal psychology. Nevertheless, her mental theatre enables the passage of fixed passions observable. She imagines herself entering the dark recess of privacy, but consciously avoids involving herself in it, just as a priest or doctor bound by the oaths of profession. Her clinical study of a morbid emotion, however, is the most

self-conscious elaboration of Romantic program demanded for the drama, and the similar study was made by Wordsworth in *The Borderers* and by Coleridge in *Osorio/Remorse*. (6)

In *Count Basil*, the arrogant female wish to conquer the male and to domesticate him is expressed through the mouth of Victoria, a fair, stately and graceful lady.

Victoria. O! love will master all the pow' r of art,  
Ay all ! and she who never has beheld  
The polish' d courtier, or the tuneful sage,  
Before the glances of her conq' ring eye,  
A very native simple swain become,  
Has only vulgar charms.  
To make the cunning artless, tame the rude,  
Subdue the haughty, shake th' undaunted soul;  
Yes, put a bridle in the lion' s mouth,  
And lead him forth as a domestic cur,  
These are the triumphs of all-pow' rful beauty!  
(Act II, scene iv)

Count Basil is the poor victim of her arrogant beauty and self-indulgence. His lion-like dignity of a brave general is trampled under the feet of this merciless goddess to make him 'a domestic cur.' His poor soul is split between a masculine public code of chivalry, the public demand for loyalty to the state as General, and a feminine private code of consistent domesticity. The latter demands him to become a tamed domestic animal. The rooster in "A Winter Day" is situated as an ideal example. Count Basil's solution to subject himself to a feminine code is enacted as a form of suicide, a square refusal of the public code.

In *De Monfort*, the duplicity of love discourse, the suppression of either a feminine code or a masculine code, is insinuated by the robe metaphor. In Act II scene i, where the 'powerful spell / Of transformation reigns,' a hidden triangular relationship among De Monfort, his sister Lady Jane, and Marquis Rezenvelt, is suggested by the presence of the veiled Jane. De Monfort confesses,

De Monfort —But she of whom I speak  
Is the dear sister of my earliest love;  
In noble virtuous worth to none a second:  
And tho' behind those sable folds were hid  
As fair a face as ever woman own'd,  
Still would I say she is as fair as thee.

(Act II, scene ii)

This play is full of comments on the robe, signifying the delicacy of female sensitivity. The following scene, in which Countess Freberg chooses her robe, makes an agreeable interlude like a mask play in this gloomy tragedy, and is meant to please the female audience.

Theresa. Does not my lady like this easy form?

Lady. That sleeve is all awry.

The. Your pardon, madam;  
'Tis but the empty fold that shades it thus.  
I took the pattern from a graceful shape;  
The Lady Jane De Monfort wears it so.

Lady. Yes, yes, I see 'tis thus with all of you.

What'er she wears is elegance and grace,  
Whilst ev'ry ornament of mine, forsooth,  
Must hang like trappings on a May-day queen  
(Angrily to the Page, who is smiling to himself.)

Youngster be gone. Why do you loiter here?

[Exit page.]

The. What would you, madam, chuse to wear to-night?  
One of your newest robes?

Lady. I hate them all.

The. Surely, that purple scarf became you well,  
With all those wreaths of richly hanging flowers.  
Did I not overhear the say, last night,  
As from the crowded ball-room ladies past,  
How gay and handsome, in her costly dress,  
The Countess Freberg look'd.

Lady. Did'st thou o'erhear it?

The. I did, and more than this.

Lady. Well, all are not so greatly prejudic' d;  
All do not think me like a May-day queen,  
Which peasants deck in sport.  
(Act II, scene iii)

This comical dialogue is exchanged between the secondary characters of the play, Countess Freberg and her lady in waiting, and implies the unconscious rivalry of Lady Freberg toward Lady Jane. Behind this studied simplicity and natural carelessness, the antithesis of appearance and substance is emphasized. The appearance principle which conforms to female decency dominates the scene, however. It is this principle that can restore the order after the tragic collapse of the noble soul, the death of Marquis De Monfort. At the same time, it is this principle that muffled the true but incestuous love lurking in the soul of De Monfort. On the appearance, it transformed itself to the hatred to the other, would-be brother-in-law, Rezenvelt. After the soul murder of De Monfort, after his tragic suicide in the arms of Jane, the figure of his sister Jane appears to unify the dismembered world; she declares that she will redeem his fame by raising 'a humble, nameless tomb to him' within the wall of a convent. The romantic agony symbolized in the character of De Monfort has been given an atonement under the female-governed principle, which can establish a relationship with the others by reaching out them by means of the emphatic imagination. This is an ideal that had already been suggested in *Poems 1790*. The area it covers may be limited but, as Baillie insists, it results from the recognition that a genuinely impartial observer can not exist, and that a female sensitivity alone, however irrational it can be, can save the world from the chaotic confusion emerging from the masculine code of warfare. It is supported by a simple faith in the God Almighty and her hearty celebrations of rural life. She confirms that, after the terrible thunder, always comes the glorious scene:

The sun looks down on all this wild affray;  
As high enthron'd above all mortal ken,  
A greater Pow'er beholds the strife of men:  
(“Thunder,” ll 96–98)

From the first years of her writing, she believed in the divine mission and the human nature of Christ. Although Baillie demands an empathic involvement of the reader, the historical Scottish settings of her poems and plays helped her Scottish reader in search of its cultural identity reconstruct an imaginary past, just as Walter Scott had done. Her unobtrusive nationalism is to be discussed in detail in the next chapter. Baillie's subtle world constructed on Scottish culture becomes more meaningful, when we can acquire a viewpoint different from hers and tolerate the intentional shallowness of her simplicity and peculiar way of enclosure.

'The formation of a special language of sexuality' was half under way in the case of Baillie. As Nancy Armstrong suggests,

[t]his language by circulating between the psychological and the economic, as well as between the individual and the state—separated and reconstituted each other and so produced a discourse, a new way of packaging cultural information that changed the entire surface of social life. ("The Rise of the Domestic woman," *Feminisms*, 921)

The lack of reality in her enclosed world is derived partly from the narrowness and superficiality of her 'sympathetick interest.' She took on human beings and gazed upon them 'with affection,' but her empathy is largely ascribed to her particularized discourse of tender effeminacy itself. As she vaguely suggested, it could have opened a new area of Romantic sensibility. In the literary context of the age sensitive to the political and social conflicts, the discourse of cultural femininity has been muffled by the more sonorous male voice of benevolence, such as that of Wordsworth, Blake, Coleridge, or Shelley representing man's debt to nature or man's inner growth. In other words, Wordsworth's poetico-cultural transference flowed on ignoring the solicitous female voice. His maternal image is drawn objectively precise, but it is destitute of tenderness.

Behold the parent hen amid her brood—  
Though fledged and feathered, and well pleased to part  
And straggle from her presence, still a brood,  
And she herself from the maternal bond  
Still undischarged. Yet does she little more  
Than move with them in tenderness and love,  
A centre of the circle which they make;  
And now and then—alike from need of theirs  
And call of her own natural appetites—  
She scratches, ransacks up the earth for food,  
Which they partake at pleasure.

(*1805 Prelude*, V 246-256)

Baillie's voice made her poetry not only a better cure for human oppression or suffering, but also an optimistic fantasy which announces the coming of an upward or transcendence escape of the female self. She has never imagined a female primacy that would transcend sex roles, indeed. Nevertheless, a slight shadow of 'woman as an omniscient, omnipotent ruler of a matriarchal society' (Sandra M. Gilbert & Susan Gubar, *No Man's Land*, 50) is visible in her domesticated universe, and it is enlarging its domain in the poetico-cultural transference of Wordsworth. Even if any masculine voice dares to curb Baillie's fanciful, feminine intention to write poetry as a common playground in the community, it is destined to debilitate itself into a covert chastisement.

## NOTES

(1) Elizabeth A. Fay gives us a neat survey of the configuration of the women writers in the Romantic period as follows:

'Any discussion of women's intellectuality during the Romantic period must be dominated by the two pillars of the Bluestocking circle's legacy and Mary Wollstonecraft's overwhelming radicalism...Equally prominent, and to subsequent generations in the nineteenth century more familiar, was the Dissenting author Anna Laetitia Barbauld. Between the two positions of socially prominent Blues and politically prominent Wollstonecraft and Barbauld are the efforts and accomplishments of Catherine Macaulay Graham, Germaine de Stael, Anna Seward, Maria Edgeworth,

Hannah More, and other woman less literarily influential but culturally present, like the Ladies of Llangollen. In their wake lay the less radical and more disguised intellectual work of Joanna Baillie, Felicia Hemans, Mary Shelley, and the Young Elizabeth Barrett.’ (Elizabeth A. Fay, *A Feminist Introduction to Romanticism*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1998, pp.160–1)

(2) ‘Indeed, because of the overriding motivation of civic influence and control, Baillie’s ‘Introductory Discourse’ was also considered particularly masculine, and even when its authorship was confirmed it was still rumoured to be the work of her brother, Matthew.’ (Amanda Gilroy and Keith Hanley, “General Introduction,” *Joanna Baillie: A Selection of Plays and Poems*, London: Peckering & Chatto, xxxiii)

(3) ‘[T]hough great pains have been taken in our higher sentimental novels to interest us in the delicacies, embarrassments, and artificial distresses of the more refined part of society...’ (“Introductory Discourse,” *A Series of Plays*, 20).

(4) ‘On every point Enfield is right. Neither here, nor in the plays, does Baillie have “wild fictions” to seize the imagination. Even in her fluent stanzaic poems, she is far from being one of the “sweet singers” of the ‘80s, captivating the ear with melody.’ (“Introduction,” *Poems 1790*, A Woodstock Facsimile)

(5)           But she of gentler nature, softer, dearer,  
                  Of daily life the active, kindly cheerer;  
                  With generous bosom, age or childhood shielding,  
                  And in the storms of life, though moved, unyielding;  
                  Strength in her gentleness, hope in her sorrow,  
                  Whose darkest hours some ray of brightness borrow  
                  From better days to come, whose meek devotion  
                  Calms every wayward passion’s wild commotion;  
                  In want and suff’ring, soothing, useful, sprightly,  
                  Bearing the press of evil has so lightly,  
                  Till evils self seems its strong hold betraying  
                  To the sweet witch’ry of such winsome playing;  
                  Bold from affection, if by nature fearful,  
                  With varying brow, sad, tender, anxious, cheerful,—  
                  This is meet partner for the loftiest mind,  
                  With crown or helmet graced,—yea, this is!

(6) “General Introduction,” *Joanna Baillie: A Selection of Plays and Poems*, xix.

## Chapter 11

### The Lucy Prototype in *Poems 1790\**

#### — Wordsworth's Way of Parodying *The Poems of Ossian*

Right from the start, *The Poems of Ossian* was a hit with world-wide readers, including such distinguished persons as Goethe and Herder in Europe and Thomas Jefferson in America. A vogue for Ossian spread with its translation in various languages, such as Swedish, German, French, Spanish, Danish, Russian, Dutch, Bohemian, Polish, and Hungarian. (Stafford 163) The enthusiasm for Ossian had not yet subsided in the 1790s, during which Wordsworth started his career as a poet. James Macpherson, the author of *The Poems of Ossian* claimed that the creation of a new literary form which would conflate the epic, lyric, sublime, and dramatic into one was indispensable, and that this attempt was not incompatible with the literary canon of the Scottish Enlightenment by that time. It is no wonder that Joanna Baillie, sensitive to the taste of the general public, included the poem "A Story of Other Times; somewhat in imitation of the poems of Ossian" in her *Poems 1790*. Wordsworth was no less sensitive to Ossianic vogue than Baillie was. In view of the larger context of poetico-cultural transference of Wordsworth, it would be meaningful to consider how Joanna Baillie and Wordsworth reacted to this vogue respectively. Baillie was a Scottish female, a devotee of passion, responding to these great poems of the people, while William Wordsworth was an English male, a representative of High Romanticism proclaiming the idea of the sublime. The subtle cultural difference between them reflects not only the difference of Scottish and non-Scottish reaction toward Ossianic tradition but also the gender difference projected on creative imagination. Although Ossian might have been a fictive figure, Macpherson's *Ossian* is 'the collective product of the Scottish Enlightenment.' (Richard B. Sher, "Percy, Shaw and the Ferguson 'Cheat'," *Ossian Revisited*, 213) It is an outcome of the Pride of Scots



professing their cultural superiority over the English promoted by the Scottish literati. As Sher pointed out, '[n]ational prejudice towards Scotland was rampant in England during the second half of the eighteenth century,' (212) when the Scottish literati had been vigorously challenging the English assumptions of supremacy. It is natural that Macpherson's *Ossian* is imbued with their commonly accepted idea of 'sublime.' The comparative study of how the two concurring creative talents, Wordsworth and Baillie, reacted toward the literary conventions put together under the name of Ossian will account for a particular phase of cultural intersection. *Poems of Ossian* borrowed the style and the diction not only from the *Old Testament* and Homer but also from his contemporaries, Gray and Percy. In fact, Macpherson owed much to Percy's *Five Pieces of Runic Poetry* (1763), though he would not acknowledge it. Various incongruous social and historical elements are seen convoluted in *The Poems of Ossian*, which results in the parody in Wordsworth. The difference in sorting out these elements results either in the parody or in the imitation in Wordsworth and Baillie. Influences of *Ossian* are evidently shown in other Romantic poets, such as Burns, Blake (see "The Complaint of Ninathoma"), and Goethe. As Stafford points out '[l]ike *Hamlet* and *The Sorrows of Werther*, *Ossian* had an enormous appeal for the readers preoccupied with melancholy or even the idea of suicide.' (Fiona J. Stafford, "Dangerous Success," *Ossian Revisited*, 56) Whether they treated the borrowings from *Ossian* with or without discretion culminated in cultural skirmishes between the new and the old, the central and the peripheral, and the high-status and the low-status. The parody reorders the incongruous elements in cultural system. A careful scrutiny of those elements will explicate the nature and the limit of poetico-cultural transference of Wordsworth.

By 1790, when Joanna Baillie anonymously published a charming book of poetry titled *Poems 1790*, almost all the sophisticated readers had already accepted it as the fact that *Fingal* (1762) and *Temora* (1763) were not direct translation of Ossian's poems, but of fakes fabricated by James Macpherson himself. David Hume had already expressed his doubts about the antiquity of these poems from a historical viewpoint. His famous letter of 19 September 1763 to Hugh Blair states:

You think that the internal proofs in favour of the poems are very convincing; so they are; but there are also internal reasons against them, particularly from the manners, notwithstanding all the art, with which you have endeavoured to throw varnish on that circumstance: and the preservation of such long, and such connected poems by oral tradition alone, during a course of fourteen centuries, is so much out of the ordinary course of human affairs, that it requires the strongest reasons to make us believe it. (1)

Hume's suspicion was concerned with the possibility of immaculate purity of oral transmission during 'a course of fourteen centuries.' Nevertheless, it was Hugh Blair who set the key-note of this authenticity dispute in his "A Critical Dissertation of the Poems of Ossian." (1763) He ingeniously evaded Hume's scientific standpoint, and rather tried to associate Ossian's poems with the Romantic idea of the sublime. By setting the origin of language in strong, primitive emotions (as was discussed in detail in Chapter 8), he tried to make over the literary value of Ossian's poems. He evaluated them referring to the canon of the epics of Homer and Virgil. Blair's arbitrary esthetical examination was naturally attacked by Samuel Johnson, whose unsympathetic view of Macpherson's work is revealed in his *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland* (1750). Johnson was as doubtful as Hume about the authenticity of oral transmission in the Highlands, and, moreover, about the existence of any kind of written literary tradition whatsoever in Gaelic Scotland. His shrewd intuition did not fall short of the mark, because during his lifetime Macpherson himself could not unveil to the world the Gaelic manuscripts of Ossian, from which he claimed to have made his

own translation. The critical assaults from those who wanted to propagate the academic framework of history as science continued all the while. Finally, after the death of Macpherson in 1796, Malcom Laing's *The History of Scotland* (1800) came out, which prompted the formation of the Highland Society's Committee headed by Henry Mackenzie. After eight years' effort, Laing's *The Poems of Ossian, &c, Containing the Poetical Works of James Macpherson Esq, in prose and rhythm; with notes and illustrations by Malcom Laing, Esq.* (Edinburgh 1805) proved Macpherson's work was full of falsehood. The public was bewildered at Macpherson's intention to attribute the authorship of the poems he had translated to the legendary poet Ossian of the third century. In spite of his rejection of Macpherson's claims, Laing was sympathetic enough to recognise the nationalistic urges in Macpherson to glorify a relic of dying race. He did not hesitate to include Macpherson's 'first Essays in English Verse,' into his *Works* along with the other poems Laing himself attributed to Macpherson, 'in the attempt to prove him a poet capable of creating *Ossian*.' (Stafford, *Sublime Savage*, 48) This essay was discovered by the Reverend John Anderson after Macpherson's death in 1796. Laing's purism as the Gaelic scholar would not tolerate the spurious outcome produced by Macpherson, but his Scottish pride was not alien from Macpherson's patriotic enthusiasm to recuperate the spiritual damage after the collapse of Jacobite Rebellion (1745-6). Both of them tried to propagate the relic that once Scotland had produced a great national poet. An objective study on the question of authenticity finally appeared in *Report of the Highland Society's Committee* in 1805. In it, the Highland Society announced to the skeptical world that Ossianic poetry not only existed in the Highlands, but was 'common in general and in abundance; that it was of a most impressive and striking sort in high degree eloquent, tender, and sublime.' (2) The conclusion of the Committee was not unequivocal in deciding to what extent Macpherson exercised liberties of inserting passages, softening incidents, or refining the language.

These dubious points concerning the authenticity of Ossian have been long left unsolved along with the validity of oral transmission, and the extent to which Macpherson gave creative embellishment to his translation. A sensible critical judgment is given to them recently by Fiona Stafford that Macpherson 'was inclined to view the oral tradition as the unreliable medium of a people yet to experience "civilization" and that Macpherson's *Ossian* is 'a text belonging exclusively to neither Gaelic nor English Culture, and can only be understood sympathetically as an attempt to mediate between the two.' (Stafford, "Introduction," *The Poems of Ossian and Related Works*, XV) It is an outcome of double-voiced discourse the eighteenth-century Scotland where the social tension was harsh between an official society keen to classicize Scottish literary tradition and the native tribes whose growing interest was directed toward local dialects and literary traditions; the latter 'pitted precisely against both English cultural and linguistic domination and any notion of a homogenous, monologic culture.' (Graham Allen, *Intertextuality*, 27)

Joanna Baillie, who was not isolated from the native society, would not abandon her role of mediating the mutually concurring cultures, male vs. female, or the Scottish vs. the English. Crossing over these cultural barriers, an implicit chain of allusion is discernible, which starts from Macpherson to Baillie, and then, with some diversion, to Wordsworth. The chain becomes more conspicuous, if it is viewed by the practice of parody. In fact, Ossian's way of describing female beauty is naively imitated by Baillie, and, ultimately, this elaborate way of infusing natural and female beauty is shown sublimated in Lucy figure in Wordsworth. In order to trace this subtle chain of influence from Ossian to Wordsworth in the context of poetico-cultural transference, Dentith's postmodern definition of parody is helpful; 'any cultural practice which makes a relatively polemical imitation of another cultural production or practice.' (Dentith, *Parody*, 37)

Born in Bothwell as a daughter of Presbyterian priest, Baillie was brought up, in a closed society, so-called '*Presbyterian cabal*.' (Sher 215) The symbolic order of the

national pride, Ossian, was always a great national poet for her to adore and imitate. Her affectionate imagination, ‘the sympathetic interest’ (“Introductory Discourse,” *A Series of Plays* 1798, 23) was cultivated in this close-knit society and remained valid enough to make her perceive and imitate the beauty of Macpherson’s *Ossian*. In her innocent adoration of *Ossian* she employed its device of half-told stories, and did not hesitate to introduce the ghosts that recurrently appear in them to her own story so as to evoke the atmosphere of an ancient Gaelic world. Her descriptive power was displayed without impairing the strength of Ossianic similes. In describing female beauty, her description echoes the similes of nature frequently used in *The Poems of Ossian*. On the other hand, Wordsworth took a rather ambivalent attitude towards Macpherson’s *Ossian*. By 1800, when he wrote the famous “Preface” to *Lyrical Ballads*, he, like other intellectuals of his age, (3) professed his own judgment that Macpherson’s translation was a fake, but he would not go so far as to deny the existence of the legendary, blind, bard warrior Ossian.

In 1803, when Wordsworth toured Scotland with his sister Dorothy, he showed an almost naïve reverence to the spirit of Ossian. After enjoying a marvellous view of the Falls of the Bran mirrored on the walls and ceiling of a small apartment in the pleasure ground of Duke of Athol, they went up the glen of the Bran on 9 September. From these recollections, Wordsworth wrote two poems on Ossian; “Glen Almain,” which was discussed in detail in the previous chapter, and “Effusion in the Pleasure-Ground.” (4) The difference of the tone in these two poems tells eloquently Wordsworth’s change in his critical assessment of Ossian. Although the former poem shows the sympathetic echoing of Ossianic air, in the latter poem “Effusion” sounds a voice despising the artificiality, especially high in its conclusion.

Thus (where the intrusive Pile, ill-graced  
 With baubles of theatric taste,  
 O’erlooks the torrent breathing showers  
 On motley hands of alien flowers

In stiff confusion set or sown,  
Till Nature cannot find her own,  
Or keep a remnant of the sod  
Which Caledonian Heroes trod)  
I mused; and, thirsting for redress,  
Recoiled into the wilderness. (ll. 119–128)

It is notable that the undertone of censure here already announces the coming of that harsh disdain in his “Essay, Supplementary to the Preface (1815).”

In “Glen-Almain” (composed May–June 1805), his retrospect was centered on how he had felt the presence of Ossian as *genius loci* at the very moment when he stood at that narrow glen, Glenalmond on 9 September 1803. The poet sensed Ossian’s presence in the stillness and tranquility permeated in this rough and melancholy landscape, and confesses he heard his singing voice in ‘murmurs on/ But one meek Streamlet.’ Wordsworth perceived this ‘awful and serious emotion’ in the ‘solitary rural scenes’ of Glen-Almain. (See Chapter 10) In “Glen-Almain,” he stressed that a strong contrast of stillness and turbulence are being fused together by a numinous presence, that is, the spirit of dead Ossian. Thus, the poet came to be aware of ‘[a] presence that disturbs’ him. The poet could summon the spirit of the Bard out of rough sights and wild sounds of the narrow glen, where everything seemed to be in the ‘unreconciled’ state, in the incompatible mixture of life and death.

Nevertheless, Wordsworth was also aware of the fact that this numinous presence of *genius loci*, Ossian, is essentially alien to the religious context of Christianity, because the Gaelic tradition did not admit any form of resurrection. The only solace offered after death for the Gaelic warrior is that of fame. Naturally, Wordsworth could not accept that ‘presence’ in the context of genuine Gaelic convention. He felt the opposite characteristics in Ossian’s poetry, the ‘tenderness and sublimity,’ (Blair 36) existent in an ‘unreconciled state’ instead.

When he perceived a qualitative difference between the passions Blair evaluated and the one he felt there, the poetico-cultural transference in Wordsworth is set in

motion. For one thing, he transferred it to the realm of internalized passions as if it were a sign of something equivalent to his inner revelation; 'restoration: ...feelings too / Of unremembered pleasure.' ("Tintern Abbey" ll.31-2) The cultural situation Wordsworth chose to sit in is essentially paradoxical and intertextual. Meditating on the complete absence of 'this lonely place,' Wordsworth could evoke 'the happy feelings of the dead' all the better. At Glen-Almain, being possessed of his own discursive consciousness, he steps on further to celebrate Ossian's absence, death, rather than his life in dubious chain of continuity.

Although Wordsworth's description of the landscape is already permeated with traces of the words and uses of the other, this intertextuality serves as a metaphor for this cacophony, between the natural objective sublime and the internal pathetic tenderness, implying the split self. The transcendence of this rupture is what Blair summed up as an Ossianic quality: 'He (Ossian) moves perpetually in the high region of the grand and the pathetic.' (Blair 37) Nevertheless, Wordsworth left the chasm of the split self unbridged, implicitly relating it to the involute issue of his own. In that special historical moment, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, clash of ideologies, world-views, opinions, and interpretations are actively embodied in the intertextual dimension, and the flowering of parody is witnessed as well. Undoubtedly 'there are social situations or historical moments when parody is likely to flourish, and to become the medium of important cultural statements.' (Dentith 31) Historically speaking, Wordsworth was at the centre of these special cultural situations, where a parody is inevitably produced 'in the to-and fro of language, in the competition between genres, and in the unceasing struggle over meanings and values that make up any social order.' (Dentith 188) It is inevitable that Wordsworth relied much on the parodic form than the Blairian epic one.

On one hand, Wordsworth's acceptanc of Ossian imply a cultural challenge to the Scottish enlightenment. In this light, Wordsworth's Lucy stands for an example of 'the parodic recycling of prestigious cultural material.' (Dentith 31) Wordsworth discerned

a vulnerability of cultural forgery in Ossian's text, which helped him to write a parody of his own. The vicissitude of his norm of evaluation of Ossian underlines the fact that an inevitable historical and social product is created in the tension of author and reader relationship.

Although Wordsworth's sympathetic assimilation to the paganism has been overtly manifested by 1805, it gradually subsides and even runs contrary in 1815. Wordsworth's severance from the Scottish Culture, epitomized in his tracks of critical stance toward Ossian, provides one of covert signs in his poetico-cultural transference.

( 2 )

Allegedly, "Essay, Supplementary to the Preface" is Wordsworth's attempt to reevaluate the tradition of English poetry from Shakespeare to his own age, but actually it was a defense of his own poetics in the face of his failing popularity. In spite of his conviction, *The Poems* (1815) was a failure. The argument was delivered in the form of a counter-attack against Francis Jeffrey, editor of the *Edinburgh Review* and the leading figure of the Scottish literati. Curiously enough, Wordsworth's argument resounds with a multiple echo of Blair: '[w]ith the young of both sexes, poetry is, like love, a passion.' (*Selected Prose*, 387) Wordsworth's stance did not completely revolt against his mentor, Hugh Blair. Both Joanna Baillie and Wordsworth belong to a belated culture from the viewpoint of glorious Celtic past, but they made a contrast with each other in revering this cultural past. Hugh Blair served as a competent mediator not only between them but also between the Highlanders' sense of their own special culture and society and the Romantic reverence to the poetic genius, Ossian. His main concern is on the language and on the analysis of the exotic poetic style. Actually, Macpherson possesses a style '[i]ncantatory, cumulative, emotional, this is a style calculated to make its readers 'glow, and tremble, and weep.' (Jacobus 192)



Moreover, Macpherson's strange rhythm and syntax are sprinkled with exotic names, Ullin, Cairbar of Atha, or Cormac. These exotic elements, along with the description of landscape, helped him to create an atmosphere of Celtic past, however illusory it may be.

Blair's comments explicate the quality of a 'distinct' description of the landscape which Wordsworth observed in Macpherson's text. Blair begins his argument with a general discussion of poetic genius; '[a] part of original genius is always distinguished by his talent for description,' (378) whereas a second-rate writer's conception of the object is 'vague and loose.' (378) After he praises Ossian declaring '[t]hat Ossian possesses this descriptive power in a high degree,' (378) he proceeds to prove an accumulated effect of Macpherson's genius from a passage of "Carthon: A Poem."

I have seen the walls of Balclutha, but they were desolate. The fire had resounded in the halls: and the voice of the people is heard no more. The stream of Clutha was removed from its place by the fall of the walls. The thistle shook there its lonely head: The moss whistled to the wind. The fox looked out from the windows; the rank grass of the wall waved his head. Desolate is the dwelling of Morina; silence is in the house of her fathers. (*The Poems of Ossian* 128)

To the contrary, Wordsworth in 1805 accuses Ossian's writing style as full of 'falsehood' or of 'spurious' imagery (*Selected Prose*, 404), and finds 'everything (that is not stolen) is in this manner defined, insulated, dislocated, deadened.' (404-5) It is in defiance to Blair, who appreciates it as having the reverse quality.

Ossian is always concise in his descriptions, which adds much to their beauty and force. For it is a great mistake to imagine, that a crowd of particulars, or a very full and extended style, is of advantage to description.

("A Critical Dissertation" 88)

In 1815, Wordsworth appeared to deny all the esthetical judgments Blair had made in defending the quality of Macpherson. It is easy to accuse Wordsworth as a turncoat. The matter is not so simple, though. Wordsworth's deviation from Blair's aesthetics is made of complex causes inherent in his poetico-cultural transference. His patriotic nationalism as the English could be counted among them. Referring to Malcolm Laing (see Blair 405), Wordsworth disclosed his indignation against *The Poems of Ossian* as a bogus text, accusing it to be 'a motley assemblage' consisting of 'this pretended translation.' Set in the perspective of the word 'plagiarism' as Laing used, Macpherson's *Poems of Ossian*, contains more than a thousand resemblances with Percy's. In this sense, Wordsworth's stance would be adequate in view of the intertextual skirmishes between Wordsworth and Blair.

In the Regency Wordsworth was losing his popularity, and Blair's influence was fading out, although by 1798 Wordsworth had already lost tolerance for the 'gaudiness and inane phraseology' as they were clearly stated in "Advertisement" to *Lyrical Ballads*. (*Selected Prose*, 275) Obviously, in accordance with the drastic changes in social and cultural framework by 1815, Wordsworth seemed to have gained a rigid, moralistic point of view. He came to detest a prevailing fashionable taste in the literary world. At the same time, unfortunately, he seemed to have lost a common sense recognizable in Walter Scott, who appreciated the achievements of Macpherson in his review on Malcom Laing. With a sort of empathy, Scott made an appropriate comment on *The Poems of Ossian* discriminating in favour of the *Poetical Works of James Macpherson* against *Report by Henry Mackenzie's Committee*.

But, while we are compelled to renounce the pleasing idea, 'that Fingal lived, and that Ossian sung,' our national vanity may be equally flattered by the fact, that a remote, and almost a barbarous corner of Scotland, produced, in the 18th century, a bard, capable not only of making an authentic impression on every mind susceptible of poetical beauty, but of giving a new tone to the poetry throughout all Europe. (*Edinburgh Review*, July 1805)

As an inborn Scottish, Walter Scott could still adhere to the nationalistic urges, 'our national vanity,' that Laing reproved in Macpherson's motivation and that sustained a large part of Scott's popularity. (See Chapter 12) Wordsworth's infuriated reprobation on 'this far-famed Book,' therefore, can be ascribed to his defiance against or deviation from the main stream of literary fashion and the language of closed society. His defiance to contemporary taste had already been expressed in the *1805 Prelude* more conspicuously, in which Ossian is duplicated to the figure of the theatrical preacher in Book VII. (See the detailed discussion in Chapter 9) Wordsworth quoted Ossian just because it was as popular as Gesner's *The Death of Abel* at that time. In other words, in 1805, both poetry of Ossian and that of Gesner were the very outmoded text to be scrutinized and parodied. The popularity of Gessner's work coincided with that of Macpherson's. In a sense, Gessner was the most successful poet of Pastoral Poetry in 18th century England. It is no wonder that Coleridge and Wordsworth, who were in need of money during their walking tour to Lynton in early November 1797, planned to write a prose tale 'in the manner of Gessener's *Der Tod Abels*.' (Duncan Wu, *Wordsworth's Reading 1770-1799* 62) Later their idea was realised in Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner." While discussing the basic design of *Lyrical Ballads*, both of them were attracted no less to the German Idylls than to the Scottish pseudo-epic. In spite of their theoretical refutation, the young radical poets, Wordsworth and Coleridge, were more susceptible to the popular culture in 1798 than in the Regency.

( 3 )

Several years before he encountered the spirit of Ossian at Glen-Almain, Wordsworth created the image of Ossianic tenderness and beauty in the so-called Lucy poems. Through the accumulation of the similes borrowed from the natural scenery, and through the domestication of Ossianic images by Joanna Baillie,

Wordsworth's Lucy figure is made to interweave herself with nature as if she were its integral element. In fact, she appears before the reader as an essential joy the nature delivers to us. In the beautiful passage in "A Story of Other Times," the daughter of Lorma is described with a pile of similes: her eye is 'like a sun-beam on water,' her hair 'like the light wreathing cloud,' and her smiles are 'like a glimpse from the white riven cloud,/When the sun hastens over the lake, and a summer show'r ruffles its bosom,' and so on. All the natural things controlled by author's sympathetic viewpoint are set equivalent to the components of female beauty. The daughter of Lorma is delineated and destined to be like one of these passive woman figures in *Ossian*, who are unable to change their circumstances and committed suicide.

In Baillie's imitation, however, a sense of decline, which characterises Macpherson's *Ossian*, is rather enfeebled. It seems that her feminine sensibility holds an instinctive abhorrence for 'the feeling of cheerless desolation, of the loss of the pith and sap of existence, of the annihilation of the substance, and the clinging to the shadow of all things as in a mock-embrace.' (Hazlitt 18) This is mostly because

the sorrowing women of Macpherson's Celtic world may be a similar expression of the disintegration of society; not only were the Highland Communities in decay, but there was a pervading sense of the decline of the modern civilisation.

(Stafford, 106)

Baillie's affectionate world where benevolent love predominates is governed not only by a female sensibility but also by her Unitarian faith. She simply abhors 'the horror of a world without God.' (107) Along with the poetical works, Baillie is to carry out the divine mission of the interpreter of the human nature of Christ. Baillie believed in the divine mission and the human nature of Christ. Although she demands the sympathetic imagination of the reader, the reader in her communicative relationship stands for the congregation. Baillie's subtle feminine world would become more meaningful if it is viewed in comparison with that of the other, such as more vigorous didactic one of

Wordsworth. In 1798, both Baillie and Wordsworth were tightly involved in a social and cultural relationship where the vogue of Ossian was still alive.

Generally speaking, when a double or multiple standard of the literary canon exists in an intellectual society, an evaluation of a certain literary text is liable to invite the danger of being parodied. Moreover, 'the only thing that all parodies can be said to have in common is the "conscious playing with a literary work."' (Rose, *Parody: Ancient and Post-Modern*, 31) By making the most of this ambiguous judgment, a parodist either changes one viewpoint to the text or brings in another one which can lead to the production of something new out of the text in question. As Rose points out (Rose, 39), the targeted text is decoded, distorted or its form is changed, whether the action is motivated by contempt or by sympathy with the imitated text. Well aware of the multiple standards of judgment existing for *Poems of Ossian*, Baillie worked out an imitation in *Poems 1790*. Admitting two attitudes the parodists can take toward the original, contempt or admiration, in the latter case, a covert acknowledgment stands 'that the parodist has an admiring attitude of some kind to the "target" or "model" which had been made a part of the parody text.' (Rose 46) Baillie's attitude toward *Poems of Ossian in 1790* can be classified as the latter, that of sympathy and admiration, though she shifts to the former one of contempt later, in 1798. Her plays, especially "Count Basil", is full of spicy acrimony toward the emotional excess.

The parody can exist only when the external reader can perceive 'the "signals" given in the parody text which relate to or indicate the relationship between the parody and the parodied text and its associations.' (Rose 41) Baillie gave many signs to her sympathetic readers, in the forms of the names of the characters or of the place where the incidents took place. The text in 1790, "A Story of Other Times", shows the reverence and admiration toward Ossian. In this lovely, exotic poem, Baillie tries to duplicate the tone of tenderness and sublimity of the original. In her own sympathetic mode, Baillie succeeded in modifying the creative expansion of the Ossianic text. Her attitude is not satirical at all. For that purpose, Baillie provides the framework of the

double narrative to organize the half-told, evocative love story of Lochallen, the hero of the tribe Mora, and Orvina, daughter of Lorma. Thus a commonplace plot of physical conflict, love, and rape is embedded in an impassioned epic style. The ghost of the raped victim, Orvina, tells her sad story to her love, Lochallen. Baillie thus elaborately traces the outline of Ossianic tragic love stories, but dares to make use of the narration by the voice of the ghost to the living. In *Ossian* the ghost's story is usually told by the bard Ossian himself, though.

Another modification given by Baillie in "A Story of Other Times" has much concern in a shift of the narrative point of view. The story is narrated not by the Bard Ossian but through the contemporary view-point, through the dialogue set between contemporary Scottish father and son, Lathmon and Allen. Heading toward the deep narrow glens of Glanarven, they find themselves lost while travelling through the heath. Later, they are forced to stop for the night in the remains of the sea-beaten tower of Arthula, once the seat of the white-headed Lorma, father of fair Orvina. The plot is simple enough. Lochallen, the son of the king of Ithona, is sent for help by old Lorma, who has long been under attack by Uthal and is in need of help. Lochallen and Orvina fall in love. While Lochallen is away home, conquering the revolt on the island of Uthal, the tower of Arthura is attacked and burned to the ground, and the maid of his soul is kidnapped by Uthal the chief of Ithona, the very foe Lochallen sought to fight with. He had snuck from his island while the battle was still in progress. The story of the crude and unmanly behaviour of the tribe of Ithona is told by the ghost of Orvina to Lochallen after he reaches desolate Arthula in the dead silence of the tower. Thinking her lover is slain as well, the poor maid commits suicide: 'I flew to the steep hanging rock: / I threw my robe over my head; and I hid me in the dark closing deep.'

Baillie's way of story telling brings out two special points as regards the historicity of parody. One is the treatment of the ghost, and the other is the description of the maid. In *Ossian*, a ghost appears in front of the Bard Ossian and demands him to sing the funeral song, because 'it was the opinion of the times, that

the souls of the deceased were not happy, till their elegies were composed by a bard.’ (“Notes,” 443) (6) In Baillie’s poem, the apparition of Orvina stood before her lover Lochallen, and in ‘[A] voice, like the evening breeze when it steals down the bed of the river’ implores him to raise a tomb on her sake.

Yet O do not leave me, Lochallen, to waste in my watery bed !  
But raise me a tomb on the hill, where the daughter of Lorma should lie.

Here Baillie denounces the epic convention on behalf of fame discourse, because she let the ghost speak out with more humane tenderness. But she did not make any objection to the concept of a ghost as a supernatural being. On this point, she differs from Wordsworth. He flatly denies ghostly or bodily presence in the Lucy poems.

The inheritance of the legacy of Ossian is descended to Wordsworth by-passing Baillie. Since the parody is socially and politically multivalent, it exercises a predominant function in the history of cultural forms. Even though social and historical situations of Baillie and of Wordsworth are different, the difference itself provides a favorable condition for Wordsworth to parody the prevalence of Ossian. While Baillie, female Scottish writer, is still bound in closed social situations under a strong sense of a powerful preceding Scottish culture, Wordsworth, alien to that culture, lives in an open society of the British. He recognised a sort of cultural belatedness as regards the Scottish nation. The dissimilarity of cultural self-confidence in Baillie and Wordsworth produces a distinctive, ideological peculiarity in their parody, especially in a description of female beauty in a mode of Ossian. If ‘parody has the paradoxical effect of preserving the very text that it seeks to destroy’ (Dentith 36), in a text-to-text relationship, the parodic expression finds itself producing a generated significance in a specific text, an implicit mock of affectation in Wordsworth, and an adorable imitation in Baillie.

It is not difficult to catch a glimpse of Wordsworth's Lucy in the following description of the lovely maid Orvina, for her grace and delicacy is depicted with the simile of Natural beauty.

She was graceful and tall as the willow, that bends o'er the deep shady stream.  
Her eye like a sun-beam on water, that gleams thro' the dark skirting reeds.  
Her hair like the light wreathing cloud, that floats on the brow of the hill,  
When the beam of the morning is there, and it scatters its skirts to the wind.  
Lovely and soft were her smiles, like a glimpse from the white riven cloud,  
When the sun hastens over the lake, and a summer show'r ruffles its bosom.

Ossian's descriptive power reaches its height in his exquisite painting of the hero's features or his soul in and after the battle. It is tinged with a solemn almost pathetic air, as is evidently seen in the ruins of Balclutha in "Carthon: A Poem."

I have seen the walls of Balclutha, but they were desolate. The fire had resounded in the halls: and the voice of people is heard no more. The stream of Clutha was removed from its place, by the fall of the walls...The thistle shook, there, its lonely head: the moss whistled to the wind. The fox looked out, from the windows. The rank grass of the wall waved round his head. (*The Poems of Ossian* 128)

The objective description of the landscape—the changing course of the stream, the thistle, the fox, and the rank grass around its head—all serve to heighten the desolate loneliness of defeat and death, which is nothing but an ideological representative of the fall of the Scottish culture in epic style.

Baillie's descriptive power keeps, none the worse, its level as high as that of Ossian. It can produce the tender effect on the sympathetic imagination of the reader. The subtle description of Orvina by Baillie is comparable to the following description of Agandecca in "Fingal" Book III.

The daughter of snow overheard, and left the hall of her secret sigh. She came in all her beauty, like the moon from the cloud of the east—Loveliness was around



her as light. Her steps were like the music of the songs. She saw the youth and loved him. He was the stolen sigh of her soul. Her blue eyes rolled on him in secret; (*The Poems of Ossian* pp.73-4)

The difference is obvious between the laconic description of Ossian and Baillie's more detailed but softened one, though. Later in her "Introductory Discourse" of *A Series of Plays* (1798), Baillie insists that 'passion genuine and true to nature' expressed in the description of 'the plain order of things in this every-day world' could surpass the vehement but false emotion caused by the poetic style full of 'decoration and ornament.' (*A Series of Plays* 20) In this assimilation of passion and nature in numinous female symbol, however, she clears the way for Wordsworth.

In her female discourse, natural beauty is used as a vehicle of imagery. Orvina is referred to as an integral part of physical nature. In this sense, she has a lot of similarity to Wordsworth's Lucy, who 'Rolled round in earth's diurnal course/With rocks and stones and trees.' ("A Slumber Did My Spirit Seal") Slender and feeble like a willow as Orvina is, she is not distinguishable from a plant on the shore nor from the reflection on the river bed. To describe her bright eyes as warm as the sunshine implies that she is the sun itself, that rolls 'round in earth's diurnal course.' Her abundant hair like a bright cloud also assimilates her with Lucy, to whom '[t]he floating clouds their state shall lend.' ("Three Years She Grew") In a sense, the materiality of Baillie's supernatural being is transferred to the natural materiality of 'a living child.' Lucy Gray in Wordsworth is a solitary, ghostly presence who 'sings a solitary song/That whistles in the wind.' These resemblances distinctively tell of Wordsworth's intentional adaptation of Baillie's Ossianic heroine. Because of this intertextuality, she can claim the right to belong to the category of 'a border image of survival.' (Jonathan Wordsworth, *The Borders of Vision*, 419)

A copy of Baillie was available at Alfoxden when both Wordsworth and Coleridge were at the height of the *Lyrical Ballads* (see Wu, 8). Moreover, Baillie is writing 'in the ballad-metre used in four out of five of the Goslar Lucy Poems.' (Jonathan

Wordsworth, "Introduction" to *Poems 1790*) In carrying out, in her peculiar way, the practice of parodying Ossianic heroines, plucking them out of the epic context and transplanting them into the natural scenery of Scottish Moor, Baillie actually molded a prototype of Lucy.

With the Storm-beat maid it is easy to imagine his being impressed by the poem, and at some later stage writing Lucy Gray (first of the Lucy Poems, and nearest to ballad narrative) in the same metre and something of the same idiom.  
(Jonathan Wordsworth "Introduction")

Accordingly, Baillie's feminine parody of Ossian needs to be scrutinized along with her supernatural fantastic ballad, "The Storm-Beat Maid."

All shrouded in the winter snow,  
The maiden held her ay;  
Nor chilly winds that roughly blow,  
Nor dark night could her stay.  
O'er hill and dale, through bush and briar,  
She on her journey kept

Thus the heroine of the poem is introduced to the reader as if she were a frozen apparition from the dead. She had walked a long way in the snow to get there, so that "Her robe is tiff with drizzly snow, / And rent her mantle grey."

Yet heedless still she held her way,  
Nor fear'd the crag nor dell;  
Like Ghost that thro' the gloom to stray,  
Wakes with the midnight bell.

( 4 )

This beautiful other-worldly maiden was depicted by Baillie in the image of a ghost and reappears in Wordsworth's ballad, "Lucy Gray." Here a covert acknowledgment

of the “target” is Ossian’s text, while its “model” is based on Baillie’s text.’ In Wordsworth’s ballad, several glimpses of Lucy Gray are set as echoes of the storm-beat maid. On a stormy night, Lucy went on errand to the town,

The storm came on before its time:  
She wandered up and down:  
And many a hill did Lucy climb:  
But never reached the town.  
(“Lucy Gray”ll.29–32)

The next morning her parents found her tiny footsteps disappeared from a snow covered bridge over a river;

—Yet some maintains that to this day  
She is a living child;  
That you may see sweet Lucy Gray  
Upon the lonesome wild.

O’er rough and smooth she trips along  
And never looks behind;  
And sings a solitary song  
That whistles in the wind. (ll 57–64)

The distinct difference is that Wordsworth never referred to Lucy Gray as the ghost; he only insinuated her numinous presence.

Oft I had heard of Lucy Gray;  
And, when I crossed the wild.  
I chanced to see at a break of day  
The solitary child. (ll.1–4)

Before admitting ‘Baillie and Wordsworth are of kindred spirits,’ it should be scrutinized with care whether a spirit of Wordsworth’s Lucy bore something incongruous to Baillie’s poem. Into the framework of *Poems of Ossian*, Baillie

integrated a fantasy of other-worldliness with natural reality, while her own world was always supported by a genuinely feminine principle. In the context of Lucy poems, however, Wordsworth seems to have been repelled against the very idea of reviving the ghost, the descendant of the Storm-Beat Maid. If he were to admit it, it would put the male under female dominance. He kept Lucy silent, in stead, barely allowing her to remain as a part of physical nature. His prototype of Lucy is a mythic figure personified in the shape of Stera, as Nutting text in DC. MS. 16 indicates.

Ah! what a crash was that! with gentle hand  
Touch these fair hazels---My beloved Maid!  
Though 'tis a sight invisible to thee,  
From such rude intercourse the woods all shrink  
As at the blowing of Astlpho's horn.—  
Thou, Lucy, art a maiden "inland bred"  
(*Lyrical Ballads and Other Poems, 1797-1800*, p.305)

Just as Orvina was depicted in the similes of natural beauty, the prototype of Lucy remained as a maiden 'inland bred.' Mythical Stera was thus transformed into the image of a simple country girl, reminding of a maiden 'inland bred.' Without the intervention of Baillie's effort to naturalize the beauty of the heroines of Ossian, Wordsworth's prototype Lucy would not have been born. He borrowed and extended the image of Ossianic heroine from Baillie's. The raped Orvina in Baillie's "A Story of Other Time" is transformed to that of the guardian spirit of hazel woods.

The Lucy poems first appeared in the joint letter of William and Dorothy to Coleridge on 14 or 21 December, 1798. They sent it from Gosler to Coleridge staying in Ratzeburg. This letter contains two original Lucy poems, "She Dwelt Among the Untrodden Ways," "Strange Fits of Passion," an original lines of "Spots of Time" in *The Prelude*, the skating episode, the boat stealing episode and the original form of "Nutting." The transformation of Lucy is, therefore, not irrelevant to Wordsworth's

parodic intention of twisting the accepted poetic decorum and that of dignifying ordinary lives.

In the first poem, Lucy was dead; 'on the Heath she died' and 'now she's in her grave.' In the second one, the narrator is caught in the fear of anticipating her death: "O mercy" to myself I cried / "If Lucy should be dead." The last stanza suggests that she is dead, and the narrator cherishes 'her laughter light' when he told her of his anxiety. In both poems, however, no ghost of Lucy comes back to the narrator, consequently there exists a clear line of demarcation between this world and other world. Wordsworth presents an image of such a presence to the reader, but, at the same time, he half undercuts them. Wordsworth thus flatly denies the concept of legendary ghost. If we accept the definition of parody in terms of Bakhtin, as artistic speech phenomena as two-ways directed (Rose p.126), Lucy poems are a parody of Baillie's poems. As a sympathetic reader of Baillie, Wordsworth invites us the reader to accept the existence of someone else's speech, i.e., Baillie's behind it. Who are able to gloss 'the language of the ancient earth'? In his Gosler poems the question remained insoluble, suggesting incomprehensibility is derived from the poet's vital unease. Even the solitary rapture of the mystic, transcendental experience the boy had in the skating scene, 'yet still the solitary cliffs/Wheeled by me, even as if the earth had rolled/With visible motion her diurnal round' was not the one commonly shared by everybody, but the physical sense of palpable nature revealed in these lines is not distant from Baillie's description of Ossianic heroine. It is at the core of Lucy-like existence. The joy of the children playing a game of chase on ice is, on the other hand, alien to Baillie's conventional view point which admits the presence of a ghost as well as the resurrection of a ghost.

Instead of fixing the obscure border area, the intertextual space, between the dead and the revenant, Wordsworth tried to revive the other-worldly existence in this world in a different way. Curiously, Baillie did not include her poem, "The Storm-Beat Maid" in her *Fugitive Verses* of 1840. Perhaps she came to recognize well enough the

limit of how to make use of a cultural feminization in order to deal with political issues. But this unexplored area had been better conquered by Wordsworth, especially in his Lucy poems. Wordsworth noticed that this twilight of Gaelic supremacy in Baillie's text, where the ghosts are allowed to come and go freely, was vulnerable to the attacks of harsh reality. Nevertheless, he does admit the presence of supernatural world, where only the reader with sympathetic imagination can enter.

## NOTES

(1) Quoted from David Raynor, "Ossian and Hume", *Ossian Revisited*, Howard Gaskill ed., Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1991, p.149.

(2) 'Although the Committee had found poems which corresponded almost literally to passages in Macpherson's *Ossian*, however, they were unable to obtain 'any one poem the same in title and tenor with the poems published by him.' (Fiona Stafford, *The Sublime Savage*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1988, p.125).

(3) We can see a typical contemporary response to *Ossian* in a letter to the editor of *The Monthly Magazine*, May 1797.

Sir

Having been long an enthusiastic admirer of the poems ascribed to the Scottish bard *Ossian*, and as there has been such a diversity of opinions respecting their originality, I cannot help feeling interested in the ascertain-ment of the truth...One of the principal facts to be investigated is, whether the compositions, said to be handed down traditionally, from a remote period, and still preserved among the Highlanders, in the Erse tongue, bear sufficient resemblance to the translations of Mr. MACPHERSON, to justify the belief in the authenticity of the latter? (p.362)

(4) Chronologically, the latter belongs to the later period: it was possibly composed 19 August 1814, but probably not completed until between 1820 and 1827.

(5) 'suggested date of reading: by 1787... "All hail, Macpherson! Hail to thee, Sire of *Ossian*!" The narrator of *The Vale of Esthwaite* (1787) describes his meeting with a spectre-guide who leads him into a Virgilian underworld beneath Helvellyn:...' Duncan Wu, *Wordsworths Reading 1770-1799*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993, p.92.

Wordsworth's quotation is as follows:

The blue waves of Ullian roll in light. The green hills with aged oaks surround a narrow plain. The blue course of a stream is there. On its banks stood Cairbar of Atha. his spear supports the king; the red eyes of his fear are sad. Cormac

rises on his soul with all his ghastly wounds” (*Temora: Book First, The Poems of Ossian*, p227).

(6) For instance, in “Conlath and Cuthona:a poem,” the ghost of Conlath appears and speaks to Ossian,

Sleeps the sweet voice of Cona, in the midst of his rustling hall? Sleeps Ossian in his hall, and his friends without their fame? The sea rolls round the dark I-thona, and our tombs are not seen by the stranger. How long shall our fame be unheard, son of the echoing Morven? (*The Poems of Ossian*,124)

\* This paper was originally given at the Wordsworth Summer Conference at Dove Cottage 1998.

## Chapter 12

### Symbiosis of Two Romantic Narratives on the Chivalric Past

#### — *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* and *The White Doe of Rylstone*

In the broader context of poetico-cultural transference, the dynamic process of Wordsworth's modulating viewpoints is involute, centering on the issues of language, gender and patriotism. Through the discussion on *The White Doe of Rylstone*, this chapter deals with the extent of Wordsworth's dependence on the reader's imaginative faculties, focusing on the author-reader relationship. *The White Doe of Rylstone* touches on the sensitive issue of how the precarious linkage of an imaginative symbol and a material presence is affected by the rift among the reading public and the deterioration of the people.

Romantic reconstruction of the past was usually untroubled by historical difference, at least in the eighteenth century. According to Ian Haywood, it was an inevitable incident, because, in the relevant territory of historiography, '[t]he writing of history was regarded as an art.' (Haywood 17) An 'art' meant fiction at that time. An identification of historiography with literature was most typically shown in the form of a romance. (1) In fact, 'the Romantics are untroubled by historical difference, because it is just in the emphatic recall of a distant time or exotic culture that they hope to demonstrate the imaginative faculties downgraded by Enlightenment reason.' (Paul Hamilton, *Historicism* 82) This zeal to search an imaginary source head of history, which must have originated *elsewhere*, prevailed in the cultural climate of England till the end of Regency. It was accompanied by the development of natural history. At the turn of the eighteenth century, romance was thought to be inspired by the empathetic recall of a time in the past or in the exotic culture. The authors hoped to demonstrate the imaginative faculties displaced by reason, while shifting and



scrutinizing the ambiguous line between fact and fiction in the evanescent transmission of the past.

In the 1790s, Wordsworth still believed in the republican idea of language as a common reservoir possessed by the reader and the author so that he could expect sympathetic cooperation on the readers' part in understanding the narrative he created. But his affinity for the people appeared to have died out at some point during the Regency, with their deterioration into a mob. The turning point in his unconditioned approval of readers' understanding must have had something to do with transformation of his and their awareness of history. The vehement controversy was discernible in the intellectual climate of the age. The commercial failure of *The White Doe of Rylstone* is partly derived from Wordsworth's peculiar way of putting a distance between the adorable past and the contemporary polemics, but is mostly due to the vehement controversy based on the difference of institutional dogmas proposed by political and religious establishments. His indecision in choosing the side is reflected in the symbolic meanings of the white doe. In this sense, Wordsworth's romance, *The White Doe of Rylstone*, stands in sharp contrast to Walter Scott's *The Lay of the Last Minstre*(1805), the best-seller of the era, which was designed to employ pleasurable unreal illusion set within the scheme of medieval romance and the polemical doctrines of Christianity.

( 1 )

Wordsworth himself thought *The White Doe of Rylstone* as 'an attempt to call forth an imaginative response as strongly as it presented the imagination as subject, and in doing so, to share power and sensitivity with "the people".' (Kristine Dugas, "Introduction" 12) Wordsworth's objectives are clearly stated in his letter to Coleridge written on 19 April 1808.

[I]f the Poet is to be predominant over the Dramatist,—then let him see if there are no victories in the world of spirit, no changes, no commotions, no revolutions there, no fluxes and refluxes of the thoughts which may be made interesting by modest combination with the stiller actions of the bodily frame, or with the gentler movements and milder appearances of society and social intercourse, or the still more mild and gentle solicitations of irrational and inanimate nature.  
(*Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth; The Middle Years* 222–223)

The poet's means of teaching these spiritual subtle movements is integral part of the pleasure in reading the poem, so long as the particular purpose of the poet is giving pleasure to a human being. Nevertheless, this ambitious Romance was inflicted by a commercial failure, and met the censures of the unsympathetic readers, such as Charles and Mary Lamb and Coleridge, even at the stage of manuscript reading. Lamb thought the poem lacked action. Coleridge was well aware of the fact that the poem was imitative of the meter he used in *Christabel*; the meter was suitable for the dramatic narrative. Naturally, Wordsworth felt humiliated, for it was a few days before he read Canto I to the Lambs and Hazlitt that Wordsworth flatly confirms, 'I say not this in modest disparagement of the Poem, but in sorrow for the sickly taste of the Public. The *People* would love the Poem of Peter Bell, but the *Public* (a very different Being) will never love it.' (*Letters* 194) Confronting the rebuff of the Lambs, the unsympathetic reader, Wordsworth tried to identify himself with the people, with their heart and imagination.

The distinction between the vulgar and unimaginative reading public and the simple people first appeared in February 1808, in Wordsworth's letter to Sir George Beaumont, and it was just the time when he was preparing the manuscript of *The White Doe of Rylstone* for the publication. Along with *Peter Bell*, Wordsworth intended that *The White Doe of Rylstone* should carry the hortatory, meditative–religious bent which would appeal to the people. An effort to think with the author in a religious, meditative mood is a desirable response that the author demands his readers so that they can

share part of the poem's teaching function. The time paradigm can demonstrate fluctuation of this response.

On the other hand, the rift among the reading public entails the issue of classifying the power group which the reader is supposed to belong to. Wordsworth did not identify himself with any group whatsoever, but he tried, at least, to adjust himself to his radically changing intellectual climate which transmuted itself with the socio-historical variants. From a political point of view, whether the readers belong to the radical group or the conservative one becomes meaningful, while from the religious aspect it is determined by their choice of church. In the Regency, at least, Wordsworth seemed to have woven certain close-knit power relations in the gentry. In a sense, it is a voluntary denial of his creed as a young radical in the 1790s.

After the failure of the French Revolution, and during the composition of *Lyrical Ballads* and *1805 Prelude*, in the Regency especially, Wordsworth's commitment to cultural involution mitigated his affinity for the people. Assumedly, he became doubtful about the quality of sympathetic imagination on the readers' side. The turning point must have had something to do with transformation of historical power as reality, and Wordsworth's awareness of it. He detested the people's moral deterioration into a mob. The mob is unstable and their violence is too arbitrary to demonstrate the historical necessity. Because, in Wordsworth, '[h]istorical reality and the visionary are one' (Alan Liu, *Wordsworth: The Sense of History* 35), his repugnance against the mob is sustained by his sense of history or his denial of history. His ambivalent attitude toward history is all the more conspicuous in a Romance, *The White Doe of Rylstone*, whose reference to history is allegedly based on Whitaker's chronicle, *The History of the Original Prish of Whalley, and Honour of Clitheroe* (1801) and *The History and Antiquities of the Deanery of Craven* (1805). ("Introduction," *The White Doe of Rylstone* 3) The power of imagination is unstable and surprising, because such fantastic figuration as the White Doe is employed as 'the strongest kind of engagement with history.' (ibid.) In writing *The Prelude*, Wordsworth succeeded in retracing 'the

entire itinerary by which the poet learned to create his crowning denial of history: autobiography.' (ibid.)

Ironically, the commercial failure of *The White Doe of Rylstone* let Wordsworth to stick to his peculiar way of diffidence. The screening process proceeding in the intellectual camp, brought out such a victim as Macpherson, as was discussed in the previous chapter. Both Wordsworth and Scott were not immune from this general atmosphere. The issue touches on a highly charged argument as to the extent and the depth of Wordsworth's commitment to cultural involution. Needless to say, the double activity he demands of his ideal reader was not so perceptible in *The Two-Part Prelude of 1799*. In revising that autobiographical frame work to Five Books and to Thirteen Books in 1805, and finally Fourteen Books in 1832, the poet as the author-reader wavers between active, independent reading on the reader's side and compulsory understanding from the author's. (See Chapters 3 & 4) So far as this reciprocal relationship is actively carried out, Wordsworth was more demanding than Scott was.

In the first week of January, 1805, when Scott's *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* came to the market, its success was instantaneous and immense in scale. Through the success of this narrative romance in poetry, Scott could carve a glorious career as a popular romance writer. Ten years later, he turned to the novel, and his Waverly novels would not have existed without this success. When, at the close of the year 1807, Wordsworth began to write *The White Doe of Rylstone* during his visit to his wife Mary's brother at Stockton-upon-Tees, he was naturally conscious of Scott's success. Later, in *Isabela Fenwick Note*, he stated the following:

The subject being taken from feudal times has led to its being compared to some of Walter Scott's poems that belong to the same age and state of society. The comparison is inconsiderate. Sir Walter pursued the customary and very natural course of conducting an action, presenting various turns of fortune, to some outstanding point on which the mind might rest as a termination or catastrophe.

(“Notes,” *Wordsworth's Poetical Works* 543)

*The White Doe of Rylstone* kept an eye on the fantastic materials described in Percy's Ballad, "The Rising of the North," in addition to the historical reference made in Whitaker's books, *The History of the Original Parish of Whallery, and Honour of Clitheroe* (1801) and *The History and Antiquities of the Deanery of Craven* (1805). Both of them, Percy's narrative and Whitaker's chronicles, helped Wordsworth to reorganize the norms, and to enlarge the boundaries of the Romantic narrative.

In the 1790s and subsequent decade, the line of demarcation between historical writing and fictitious history is still unclear. Scientific historical writing comprehends the record of either 'the entire history of some state or kingdom, through its different revolutions' or 'the history of some one great event, or some portion or period of time which may be considered as making a whole by itself.' (Blair, *Lectures*, XXXV 478) To this category belong annals, memoirs, and lives. So far as the manner of narration is concerned, interest and pleasure are required in historical writing. An embellishment of history, such as the picturesque description of scenery, light and humorous dialogue or the philosophical and moral distinctions in character, gradually came to claim its own right. History was still considered to be an area in which aesthetic expression and symbols of all kinds might have developed out of original creativity. In fact, some historical writing was itself a form of historical fiction, an amalgam of fact and fiction. Along with epistolary writing which fulfills these requirements, fictitious writing, known as romance which includes ballads and novels, entered the main stage of historical writing.

Fictitious writing, though regarded as peripheral and insignificant, became very popular during the Regency era. It satisfied the demand of the young readers, endowed with fancy, who sought for more diversified and surprising events, a more splendid order of things than that which one comes across in true history. Hugh Blair, the representative critic of the age, admitted the significance of fictitious history as a means of efficient public education.

They furnish one of the best channels for conveying instruction, for painting human life and manners, for showing the errors into which we are betrayed by our passions, for rendering virtue amiable and vice odious.

(*Lectures*, XXXVII, 506)

Because of its ancient origin and contingent relation to history, romance poetry could not completely sever itself from the idea of history itself. It keeps on occupying central position during the Regency. Among Romantic poets, Scott, Coleridge, and Wordsworth contributed to the establishment of romance as a genre of poetry, and interestingly they were not unacquainted with each other. All of them endeavoured to explore the peripheral, indeterminate zone in which the difference between fantasy and actuality were no longer secure.

Wordsworth and Coleridge met Scott for the first time during a tour of Scotland with Dorothy in 1803. Moreover, in September 1805, Scott took the Wordsworths to Melrose Abbey. Even if personal relationships had not existed, from a panoramic viewpoint of British Romanticism, the intertextuality of the three major works, *Christabel*, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, and *The White Doe of Rylstone*, all of which were composed in the alleged framework of Romance, could have set the keynote of Romanticism in the first decade of the 19th century, and predicted its due course. While reconstructing the chivalric past, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* enhanced Romantic sentiments to identify implicit homogenised feelings with patriotism.

Interestingly, Scott admitted in 1830, in his "Introduction" to *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, that Coleridge's *Christabel* influenced him in the work. He borrowed its irregularity of versification; four stresses to the line, whatever its length or rhyming. He said,

Amongst others was the striking fragment called *Christabel*, by Mr. Coleridge, which from the singularly irregular structure of the stanzas, and the liberty which it allowed the author to adopt the sound to the sense, seemed to be exactly suited to such an extravaganza as I meditated on the subject of Gilpin Horner.

(Sir Walter Scott, "Introduction" to 1830 version 13)

Although Coleridge was the first poet to apply this sound pattern which had long been used in comic poetry to serious poetry, Scott's ingenuity enabled him to add something new to this pattern.

Indeed the supernatural was so common in narrative poetry of the 18th century, that Coleridge achieved 'new intensities' 'blending the supernatural with personal obsession and guilt,' while Scott 'found a means of being pleurably unreal.' (Jonathan Wordsworth *Visionary Gleam* 92) Wordsworth took the role of an in-between. The problem lies why Wordsworth's romance was somewhat deflected from this line of influence. He dared to reorganise the norms of history while perpetually enlarging the boundaries of the Romantic narrative. In spite of dealing with 'the same age and of state of society,' ("Notes" 543) Wordsworth's romance was not accepted by the reading public. His poetico-cultural transference hovers around this involute of historical consciousness, which perpetually is sorting out what is common and what is eccentric.

( 2 )

Since it provided the rhythm and the narrative mode both *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* and *The White Doe of Rylstone*, *Christabel* has furnished the other authors in the Romantic period with pseudo-medieval settings. As is obvious in Gothic forms, Romantic sentimental excess and its transgression of order are liable to degenerate into the superficiality and the uncanny. The dark side of Romanticism thus threatens metaphorically the light of reason, due to its implicit challenge to all order, and ultimately it aims to identify form with meaning in this shadow of evil and perversity. This Romantic monstrosity is reflected in the irregular mode of versification, but Scott and Wordsworth could narrowly escape from this danger by imaginatively reconstructing the past by means of several magical devices. By measuring and

adjusting the distance between the narrative and its reader, both of the poets succeeded in expressing their intuitive, historical perception that Romance is one of the persuasive narratives of the nation. Their viewpoints were, however, not identical.

The details of the landscape, which the Wordsworths must have enjoyed in 1805 under Scott's guidance, were almost faithfully traced as a background for the narrative in *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*. The impressive description of Melrose Abbey takes its root in Scott's enthusiasm for the Scottish past and the monastery.

If thou would'st view fair Melrose aright,  
Go visit it by the pale moonlight;  
For the gay beams of lightsome day  
Gild, but to flout, the ruins grey,  
When the broken arches are black in night,  
And each shafted oriel glimmers white;  
When the cold light's uncertain shower  
Streams on the ruin'd central tower;  
When buttress and buttress, alternately,  
Seem fram'd of ebon and ivory;  
When silver edges the imagery,  
And the scrolls that teach thee to live and die;  
When distant Tweed is heard to rave,  
And the owlet to hoot o'er the dead man's grave,  
Then go—but go alone the while—  
Then view St. David's ruin'd pile;  
And home returning; soothly swear,  
Was never seen so sad and fair!

(Canto Second I)

Scott knew well enough that magical enchanting moment when the ruined Abbey threw its shadow of desolation. He turned to create an illusory construct for imaginative activity to transfigure the objects. Transformation was only possible in that illusion under 'the pale moonlight' and by a solitary communion with that magical charm. The landscape for Scott not only means something sad and fair, but enhances his sense of allegiance to the Scottish nation.



Scott had already published three volumes of *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* by the time *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* was published. These are the successful recovery of the Scottish ballads which Scott had taken so much pain to collect in the vales of Ettrick and Yarrow, while throwing himself energetically into his duties as Sheriff of Selkirk. A similar kind of enthusiasm to recover a cultural unconscious repressed in history is seen working in *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*. Actually, these ballads ignited no less a suppressed national identity than Scott's repressed creative imagination. Although he was not aware of it, his fancy must have been haunted by a magical spell, the spell of the Wizard, personified in Michael Scott in *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*. Thus, in his letter to Wordsworth dated March 16, 1805, he writes:

Having thus expelled from my brain the Fiend of Chivalry & sent him to wander at will through the world I must sweep & garnish the empty tenement & decorate or rather fill it with something useful, least the former tenant should return with seven devils worse than himself & take possession for good & aye.

Scott gladly admitted that he had found a way to set his imagination free, to release 'the Fiend of Chivalry,' and to let him 'wander at will,' liberated from the bondage of the Chivalric past. In *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, he contrived several magical devices to attain the purpose; the retrieval of his magic book through the excavation of the Wizard's tomb in the cell of Melrose Abbey, the introduction of the Goblin Page who shouts only '[l]ost! lost! lost!' and the appearance of Michael Scott following the shout of the elvish page, '[f]ound! found! found' with thunder, and so on. The evocation of terrors is set in the framework of the narrative through the voice of old Bard. He deplores his failing power and personal tragedy, but he scarcely doubts the presence of an enthusiastic audience.

Scott's national pride and trust in his compatriot was felt as something foreign to Coleridge. In his letter to Wordsworth written in early October 1810, Coleridge referred to Scott's *Lady of the Lake*, and analysed the attractions of a Romance poem

as ‘a Recipe for poems of this sort.’ The background scenery, in his sarcastic words, makes ‘a vast string of patronymics, and names of mountains, Rivers, &c — the most commonplace imagery the Bard looks against as well as new.’ The details of Mediaeval chivalric life are used to revive the ancestors’ way of life: ‘all the nomenclature of Gothic Architecture, of heraldry, of Arms, of Hunting, &Falconry,’ and the Bard as the narrator makes ‘some pathetic moralising on old times.’ These factors no less disparage the essential qualities of Scott’s Romance. Scott was well aware of the essential marginality of the characteristic protagonist of romance, the bard. In the confined context of national historiography, however, the bard plays the role of the indigenous historian of a proud but declining nation, i.e., the Scottish nation.

( 3 )

Persisting to stay in those ambiguous border zones, where the decision of the status of a text as history or as romance is entirely at the hands of readers, Wordsworth determined not to imitate Scott’s fiction-oriented style in *The White Doe of Rylstone*. Instead, within the frame of romance which permits the coexistence of fact and fiction, he tried to represent an incommensurable double temporality of history. This double refraction involves the ambivalent rift evinced as the double function of history of the nation. Implicitly, it refers to generalization of knowledge and to cultural segmentation which tries to block this generalization. In other words, it concerns with the simple question of how the accumulation of rags and patches of everyday life is connected to the historical fact. In terms of Homi Bhabha, this double function refers to ‘“double” writing of the performative and the pedagogical’ of history. (“DissemiNation” *Nation and Narration* 305) (2) It is because the borders of the nation are constantly enclosed with ‘the process of identity constituted by historical sedimentation (the pedagogical)’ and ‘the loss of identity in the signifying process of cultural identification (the performative).’ (Bhabha 304) The success of Scott’s *The*

*Lay of the Last Minstrel* was due to the fact that it denied this double function of history. As a result, it succeeded to consolidate the implicit homogenization of the Scottish as a nation. To the contrary, Wordsworth's concern was always on the individualization of the subject as a nation. What he worried about is that 'gross realities, / The incarnation of the spirits that moved / Amid the poet's beauteous world' (*The 1805 Prelude* VII 509–511) might not be effaced by the oratorical enchantment of the political leader such as William Pitt the younger ingeniously set on the nation like 'a hero in romance.' (VII 538) Fortunately, Wordsworth was indifferent to or ignorant of the Scottish collective consciousness, which was organized around the awareness of what threatened the survival of the group. After the failure of the Jacobite Rebellion, a relic of the dying race was entrusted to the singing bard. The desire to encourage Scottish literature can be seen in *Edinburgh Review*, a literary journal founded in 1755. But it only served to reveal 'an uncomfortable feeling of literary inferiority to England.' (Stafford, *The Sublime Savage* 114) Scott was dimly aware of the distinction between 'real fact' as poetry's subject and 'historical fact,' but what Scott aimed at was the pedagogical writing of history. In this particularized context of history as pedagogy, he ignored the historical referent. Even if national life or patriotic feeling is signified as an internal contradiction or frustration of the individual subject, these internal rifts are to be redeemed in a repetitive and reproductive process. Scott was the poet who well recognised the sentimental healing process of a poetical making of history. Accordingly, he tolerated to reserve the fantastic, magical device as the Goblin Page in *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*. In order to gain 'immediacy,' he introduced the wizard Michael Scott into the tale, so that his book would provide a source of supernatural power. Disbelief is not only suspended but also recommended to the readers.

By contrast, for Wordsworth, historical reality and visionariness meant one and the same thing. In *The White Doe of Rylstone*, Wordsworth would not only obliterate referentiality to history, but tried to visualize the historical consequences by means of

the fantastic figuration of the white doe. In addition, he set the spiritual communion with the doe in the context of a religious argument, though unsuccessfully.

The magnificent scenery of the Yorkshire Dale, especially in and around the Bolton Priory, (3) and the Ballad in Percy's Collection, entitled "The Rising of the North," could be enumerated as two direct incentives urging Wordsworth to compose the long and pathetic Romance, *The White Doe of Rylstone*. Wordsworth, nevertheless, did not have as much enthusiasm for the reconstruction of a glorious past as did Scott. The narrator of the poem is critical of the subject, the Great Northern Insurrection in 1569. It was a plot to undermine the Monarchical Institution of Queen Elizabeth in an attempt to bring about a marriage between Mary Queen of the Scots, who was at that time a prisoner in England, and the Duke of Norfolk. Their declared intent was to restore the Catholic faith, to settle firmly the succession of the crown, and to prevent the destruction of the ancient nobility. Two powerful noblemen in the North, the Earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland, powerfully pushed this mutiny for the sake of Catholic Emancipation. In the poem, this confusing but not so convincing reason for the mutiny is uttered by old Norton, father of heroine Emily.

"The Minds of men will own  
No loyal rest while England's Crown  
Remains without an Heir, the bait  
Of strife and factions desperate;

—Brave Earls! to whose heroic veins  
Our noblest blood is given in trust,  
To you a sufficient State complains,  
And ye must raise her from dust.  
With wishes of still bolder scope  
On you we look, with dearest hope;  
Even for our Altars—for the prize  
In Heaven, of life that never dies;  
For the old and holy Church we mourn,  
And must in joy to her return. (ll. 643–656)

Just before his energetic speech encouraging chivalric valour is given, the reader is already informed of the opposite opinion, given through the entreating voice of his eldest son, Francis. He asks his father not to join the rebellion.

“O Father! Rise not in this fray—  
The hairs are white upon your head;  
Dear Father, hear me when I say  
It is for you too late a day !  
Bethink you of your own good name:  
A just and gracious queen have we,  
A pure religion, and the claim  
Of peace on our humanity. (ll. 381–8)

The religious strife was not settled, even in the 12th year of Queen Elizabeth’s reign. On the other hand, as Francis clearly stated, the institution was firmly consolidated till then. Later, in the detailed description of the riot, the reader is informed of the fact that the people who joined this insurrection degenerated into a lawless, irreligious, volatile mob.

Knight, burgher, yeoman, and esquire,  
And Romish priest, in priest’s attire,  
And thus, in arms, a zealous Band  
Proceeding under joint command,  
To Durham first their course they bear;  
And in Saint Cuthbert’s ancient seat  
Sang mass,— and tore the book of prayer,—  
And trod the Bible beneath their feet. (ll. 707–714)

Religion can thus easily slip into a political pretext. The historical situation Wordsworth tried to project on this scene might have been the one he witnessed in Paris after the French Revolution. In this narrative, anyway, the Catholic emancipation in the North was presented as a mere pretext for the ambitious and discontented Northern earls. It was nothing but the Insurrection. The confusion of the material and

the spiritual worlds implicit in the earls' motive led and instigated the people to war and death. At the time of composing *The White Doe of Rylstone*, Wordsworth's mind was occupied with the political problem and confusion which the Catholic emancipation movement in the 1800s posed. As his letters to Wrangham written between 1808 and 1811 show, Wordsworth feared that 'any degree of emancipation would eventually lead to Catholic establishment, which would be constitutionally dangerous.' (Baron, *Language and Relationship in Wordsworth's Writing* 212) Just as was the case of the Northern Insurrection in the 16th century, the polemic against Catholicism accompanies the threat against the nationality itself. It ought not to be discussed within the framework of religion, because it highly concerns with an identity of the otherness in unanimous community, and ultimately undercuts the idealized notion of the constituency, the people-as-one. The idea of an idealized unity of the people is as fragile as the fantasy can be. From the viewpoint of history as performance, its frailty constitutes the essential core, though paradoxically. It allows the poet like Wordsworth to keep taking an ambivalent attitude toward national culture as zones of control or those of abandonment, whether he chose exclusive aloofness or willing participation. Accordingly, it is inseparable from the impetus that determines the course of Wordsworth's poetico-cultural transference.

( 4 )

Scott's Romance, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, does not lack criticism of the chivalric past, but its tone is attenuated, for it is consistently told by the old bard.

Unlike the tide of human time,—  
Which, though it changes in ceaseless flow,  
Retains each grief, retains each crime  
Its earliest course was doom'd to know;  
And, darker as it downward bears,  
Is stain'd with past and present tears.

Low as that tide has ebb'd with me,  
It still reflects to Memory's eye  
The hour my brave, my only boy  
Fell by the side of great Dundee.  
(*The Lay of the Last Minstrel* Canto Fourth II)

The old Bard is depicted not so much as the bard-historian, but as Walter Scott himself, who '[s]hould thus, with ill-rewarded toil, / Wander a poor and thankless soil, / When the more generous Southern land / Would well requite his skilful hand.' (Canto fifth XXX) His personal, lamenting voice indicates the presence of the author throughout the tale. He intently is filling in the gaps between the past, the gorgeous Chivalric world, and his rather prosaic contemporary world, the present misery. The idea that nations are invented has become more widely accepted these days, and in the main current of poetico-cultural transference the Romantic literature is complicit in the creation of nations. At the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, nations came to be regarded as 'imaginary constructs that depend for their existence on an apparatus of cultural fictions.' (Timothy Brennan "The national longing for form" *Nation and Narration* 49) If a nation is equated with 'a soul, a spiritual principle,' (Ernest Renan, "What is a nation?" *Nation and Narration* 19) Scott's romance with imaginative embellishments of the ballad is a necessary instrument of writing history which fulfils the requirements of cultural fiction, and his comrades as the general public is equivalent to the nation itself. For Scott, the ballad form is an empty closet which needs the decoration and garnishment, because it is meant for public use, and should not be stored for private pleasure. His own 'soul' as the Scottish makes it possible for him to share the two requisites of the nation: 'the possession in common of a rich legacy of memories; the other is present-day consent, the desire to live together, the will to perpetuate the value of the heritage.' (ibid.)

Scott's confidence in the oneness, a large-scale solidarity of the Scottish nation, presents a sharp contrast to that diffident, internalized voice of Wordsworth we hear at the opening of *The Prelude*:

Was it for this  
That one, the fairest of all rivers, loved  
To blend his murmurs with my nurse's song,  
And from his alder shades and rocky falls,  
And from his fords and shallows, sent a voice  
That flowed along my dreams?  
(Book I ll. 271–276)

Wordsworth's voice is that of a poet who tries in vain to represent the performance of history in a non-pluralistic voice. When Scott's public-oriented voice of the minstrel as a bard-historian is set in opposition to Wordsworth's mute murmuring, subjective voice of the poet, a correlation between an individualization and a reinforcement of the totality of the pedagogical knowledge of history becomes all the more conspicuous. Scott and Wordsworth set the different variables standing for individuality and totality in order to solve this unknown equation between nation and history. The pedagogical Scott could find his narrative authority in a tradition of the people, located in the imagined community of the nation. Wordsworth, however, had to represent 'the collective voice of the people as a performative discourse of public identification.' (Bhabha 309) He managed it 'in a language of incommensurable doubleness that arises from the ambivalent splitting of the pedagogical and the performative.' (ibid.)

In searching of cultural identities in the context of a non-pluralistic politics of difference, Wordsworth was obliged to bear a part in carrying out a critical reflection of the past, instead of indulging in a nostalgic adoration. In place of the Old Bard, who intrudes between the story and the reader, Wordsworth had to manipulate symbolic objects to express the mutually exclusive movements of religious faith and political voice in *The White Doe of Rylstone*. The technique itself is indicative of his main theme, for 'his largest theme is the denial of history.' (Alan Liu 39) The narrative of *The White Doe of Rylstone* evolves the theme of suffering, real and fictional. It commingles the description of the heroine Emily and her daily life with that of her



meditative communion with the white doe recurrently. This half dramatic structure requires a lot of imagination on reader's side. Unable to join the fight, Emily is situated on the margin of the Northern Insurrection, but her spiritual ordeal and faith for internal peace is set equal to the military proceedings in the narrative. Her silent voice repeatedly throws doubt on the homogeneity of the people. Both the standard of the Nortons and the white doe are made to symbolize these external and implicit proceedings so as to suggest ambivalent movements of history. Wordsworth intended to achieve, obliquely but fantastically, the representation of reality as a historical process. His intention to commingle what was with what ought to be was hardly understood by his contemporary readers. His sister Dorothy was confident that the story of the white doe would be favorably accepted by those who 'are above the common level of taste and knowledge,' (*Letters*, I 203) and she entreated Coleridge the immediate publication of the poem. But Coleridge was more sharp-tongued. In his aggrieved letter sent to the publisher Longman on 21 May, 1808, he says;

God forbid, your Sister should ever cease to use her own Eyes and heart, and only her own, in order to know how a Poem *ought* to affect mankind; but we must learn to see with the Eyes of others in order to guess luckily how it *will* affect them— Neither do I *wish* her to learn this; but then I would have her learn to entertain neither warm Hopes or confident Expectations concerning Events dependent on minds & hearts below the distinct Ken of her sympathies.

*(Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, I 631)*

In addition to the varying dynamics of author and reader relationship, Wordsworth's concern was whether his artifice might not invalidate the truth of the tale itself. He emphasized that readers must be prepared to yield to his fictiveness, and that the whole artifice to represent pain was important. In his note to Francis Wrangham (January 1816), he said,

Throughout, objects (the Banner, for instance) derive their influence not from properties inherent in them, not from what they are actually in themselves, but

from such as are bestowed upon them by the minds of those who are conversant with or affected by those objects.

(*Letters II* 276)

Accordingly, the standard is not a simple object but a symbol of the righteousness inherent in the cause of rebellion, old Norton's religious zeal. In other words, reality in his historical narrative is presented to be an artifice to integrate individuals struggling and suffering on the margin. This theme of cultural identification of the marginal individual is what has been perpetually posed in Wordsworth, since *Lyrical Ballads* and the performative narrative of the border feud, *The White Doe of Rylstone*, does not make an exception. It is because these borders are faced with 'a double temporality: the process of identity constituted by historical sedimentation (the pedagogical; and the loss of identity in the signifying process of cultural identification (the performance.)' (Homi K. Bhaba "DissemiNation," *Nation and Narration* 304) Wordsworth put special emphasis on the latter.

As a result of his denial of history as a whole, in *The prelude*, Wordsworth was haunted by profound cultural 'undecidability.' (ibid.) Standing on this brink, he tries to define the question of community and communication by means of the social imagery in a Romance form, thus creating an ancient past in a fictive artifice of historical continuity. His viewpoint was not set in the enclosure of religion, especially when he was entangled in the dispute over *The White Doe of Rylstone*. On 5 June 1808, he wrote to Francis Wrangham, writer and Church of England Clergyman:

I will allow with you that Religion is the eye of the Soul, but if we would have successful Soul-oculists, not merely that organ, but the general anatomy and constitutional frame must be studied; farther, the powers of that eye are affected by the general state of the system. My meaning is, that piety and religion will be best understood by him who takes the most comprehensive view of the human mind, and that for the mind; and that this is best promoted by a due mixture of direct and indirect nourishment and discipline.

(*Letters I* 249)

In *The White Doe of Rylstone*, the standard of vermilion and gold colours implies what Wordsworth calls ‘the system’ as something alternative to religion. The standard functions as an apparatus of cultural fiction, the solidarity of the Nortons. It was embroidered with the Sacred Cross by the hand of Lord Norton’s daughter Emily. The Cross figured with the five wounds the Lord bore has a Catholic implication. The banner represents not only the Standard of the Rebellion but also the symbol of Norton’s fatherly pride. Under this banner, old Norton leads his eight brave sons, a gallant band, to the battlefield. Among them, however, Francis is not convinced of the righteousness of this military act no more than his sister Emily. Yet, he unwillingly obeys his paternal authority.

‘Gone are they, bravely, though misled;  
With a dear Father at their head!  
The Sons obey a natural lord;  
The Father had given solemn word  
To noble Percy

(ll. 461–5)

In spite of his Anglican faith, Francis is conscious of his own ‘sympathy of Sire and sons’ running deep and awful in his soul. Under ‘meek filial smiles,’ Emily also represses her own Anglican faith, although ‘her Faith leaned another way.’ (l. 873) The banner functions thus as a symbol of contradictory motivations publicly as well as privately. The Insurrection itself collapses after the betrayal of the barons (Nevill is utterly dismayed, / For promise fails of Howard’s aid; / And Dacre to our call replies / That *he* is unprepared to rise. ll. 1133–6). Nevertheless, the old warrior Norton is determined to fight to the last.

— ‘Even these poor eight of mine would stem —’  
Half to himself, and half to them  
He spake—’ would stem, or quell, a force  
Ten times their number, man and horse;

This by their own unaided might,  
Without their father in their sight,  
Without the Cause for which they fight;  
A Cause, which on a needful day  
Would breed us thousands brave as they.' (ll. 853-861)

Their wretched fight ended in a tragic way. The rebel followers, mobs congregated for materialistic aims, fell down, and were put to rout by the systematic attack of the royal army. But old Norton cries to his son Francis before the final fall, '[a] rescue for the Standard.' He wants to see the banner flying in Bolton Priory as a symbol of the Catholic faith so as to prove his Faith to posterity. Too much obedient to his filial duty, Francis, carrying the Banner, takes a lonely journey home, but is seized as a traitor on his way. And he dies a tragic death, having inflicted 'the wounds the broidered Banner showed.' The Banner thus signifies the chaotic confusion of chivalric virtues; it represents the 'joyful pride' of the riot, but also implies fortitude of patience and heroic martyrdom as well. This transference of the connotations of the banner provides the implicit action of the poem, and, simultaneously, discloses the phases of performance of history itself, constantly introducing an otherness into the process of signification. In history, plural conflicting virtues usually reiterate each other. The banner thus absorbs the fissured individual faiths on the margin, whether it is based on Protestantism or reminiscent Catholicism loosely based on chivalric moral virtue. It is likely that a strong will of denying history as a science in Wordsworth leads to the deepest realization of history, for 'such denial is also the strongest kind of engagement with history.' (Liu 35) So far as the text of *The White Doe of Rylstone* is concerned, the realization process is still on its way, because the factual reference to history, its textuality, has not been sufficiently integrated with fancy yet.

In *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, on the contrary, chivalric valour was not undermined by the self-consciousness nor by religious strife. Instead, Scott took up crude magical devices: the wizard Michael Scott and ugly dwarf Goblin Page. Scott sent a long letter of apology to Anna Seward on 21 March 1805, in which he candidly tells of

the secrets of his creation, and then coolly analyses the defects of the Goblin Page in *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*.

The Dwarf Page is also an excrescence, and I plead guilty to all the censures concerning him. The truth is, he has a history, and it is this: The story of Gilpin Horner was told by an old gentleman to Lady Dalkeith, and she much diverted with his actually believing so grotesque a tale, insisted that I should make it into a Border ballad... At length the story appeared so uncouth, that I was fain to put it into the mouth of my old Minstrel... In the process of the romance, the page, intended to be a principal person in the work, contrived (from the baseness of his natural propensities I suppose) to slink down stairs into the kitchen, and now he must e'en abide there.

(*The Letters of Sir Walter Scott* 242-243)

In fact, the Goblin Page caused no lasting damage. In spite of his innate charm belonging to the world that is bound by no rules, not only Scott himself but also Francis Jeffrey, the editor of *The Edinburgh Review*, thought his presence incongruous to the poem. In the April issue of 1805, Jeffrey censures this magic device severely as 'the capital deformity of the poem' and 'this ungraceful intruder.' Like the silent presence of Melrose Abbey, these magical devices, the Goblin Page and the wizard Michael Scott, play an important role in transforming sordid reality into a fanciful dream and igniting illicit faith to true faith. For the sake of 'Michael's restless sprite,' people took a pilgrimage to Melrose Abbey at the end of the poem. Within the rules and restrictions of Mediaeval romance, magic arts, though illicit and not blessed at all, can be thus happily embedded in the framework of Christianity. There is no cruelty nor pain in the poem. Without falling into the negative side of gothic romance, which adjoins itself to the uncanny and horrible, and yet by representing the internalized world of guilt, anxiety, and despair, the magic devices in *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* build up the fantasy world of the pleasurably unreal.

In *The White Doe of Rylstone*, the doe haunts the characters as a supernatural presence. The original image in Dr. Thomas Whitaker's *History and Antiquities of*

*Craven* contained the legend of the mysterious white doe which visited Bolton Abbey during service-time on Sundays. The doe seems to come from Rylstone, the ruined home of the Nortons. Nevertheless, in the poem, it is equated to an image of the dead Mother in the first half of the narrative, and later it symbolizes the pure and innocent soul of Emily.

...an Image faint,  
And yet not faint — a presence bright  
Returns to her — that blessed Saint  
Who with mild looks and language mild  
Instructed here her darling Child,  
While yet a prattler on the knee,  
To worship in simplicity  
The invisible God, and take for guide  
The faith reformed and purified. (ll. 1033–1041)

Interestingly enough, Emily first saw the doe under an oak tree. The scene reminds the reader of Christabel's encounter with Geraldine in Coleridge's *Christabel*. (4)

And so — beneath a mouldered tree,  
A self-surviving leafless oak  
By unregarded age from stroke  
Of ravage saved—sate Emily.

When, with a noise like distant thunder,  
A troop of deer came sweeping by;  
And, suddenly, behold a wonder!  
For One, among those rushing deer,  
A single One, in mid career  
Hath stopped, and fixed her large full eye  
Upon the Lady Emily (ll. 1648–1664)

Unlike Scott's Goblin Page, who sneaks out into the kitchen, this incarnated spiritual guide remains forlorn and solitary till the end of the story, living in the ruin of Rylstone and refusing the human community. The material being of white doe itself

suggests the possibility of numinous presence in such a precarious border area between subject and object, as Lucy and the Leech Gatherer do. In other words, the historical performance the banner symbolizes in the narrative is undercut by the presence of suffering Emily and her passive communion with Nature. Memory and the supernatural maternal presence are symbolized in the white doe, 'whose appearances always brighten the poetry with a peculiar radiance and mystery of their own, like the recurrence of a lovely theme in music.' (Mary Moorman, *William Wordsworth: A Biography; The Later Years* 111) Emily, the passive and sorrowful heroine, receives the power of meditative imagination as well as the limitations the world imposes on her. In silent communion with the doe, she accepts consolation and restorative power from nature. As Kristine Dugas points out, '[t]his communion, ultimately suggestive of a spot of time, rejoins the sufferer to the sources of restorative power.' ("Introduction" 41)

( 5 )

Coleridge was not happy with *The White Doe of Rylstone*. A 'disproportion of the Accidents to the spiritual Incidents' (de Selincourt, "Notes" 545) was so conspicuous, he said, and he feared that it might be accepted as 'a covert attack on Scott's originality.' (ibid.) The former censure would be appropriate enough as the above analysis showed, but, so as to evaluate the latter one, another viewpoint would be required.

While writing *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, Scott was clearly aware of the manners and the sentiments of the age mostly represented in the opinions of his friends and acquaintances, who constitute, in terms of Scott, 'the society of my *commis*.' ("Introduction" 7) They were perpetually invading themselves in the creative process. Scott encouraged them to do so, as he wrote in 1830; 'The work was subsequently shown to other friends during the progress, and received the *imprimatur* of Mr. Francis

Jeffrey.’ (“Introduction” 16) Scott evaluated their opinions just as he did in recovering the old ballads. Through this direct cooperation with the reader, his performance gained vigour and brilliance as in the case of Goblin Page out of the grotesque legendary story of Gilpin Horner. If he had rejected them and confined himself to the old romances, the popularity of his work would not have been as great. Without his great skill to epitomize the age, and, moreover, without his effort to describe the historical event of Border feud in the sixteenth century in details, the story itself would have owned a patchy and whimsical appearance. This empathy and enthusiasm for past chivalric glory in Scott made him envision the patriotic discourse in unison with a collective identity of the people, and it is what Wordsworth could not share with Scott. The description of the noble lords either in the English camp or in the Scottish clan is vivid and forceful enough, and the fight between Richard of Musgrave and Henry of Cranstoun wearing the armour of William of Deloraine is depicted with such a high tone and clarity that it reminds us of the battle of Hector and Achilles in *Iliad*. An unsigned reviewer in *Literary Journal* of March 1805 commented on this evident imitation:

But on these subjects he generally avoids being particular as much as possible; and hence the common observation that few of his heroes have any character at all. So captivating, however, are the strains of that poet, that while we read we cannot imagine they could be altered for the better.

The comparison between the ‘captivating’ heroes in *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* and the wretched Nortons tied in the filial band but overpowered by the insurgent Powers clearly reveals the essential difference of the two poets’ stances toward war; one thinks it praiseworthy, while the other hated it.

As a writer, Scott was gifted with the genius to incorporate fanciful ingredients of machinery based on popular superstition into the inconsistent particulars of the ancient Borderers without overburdening the poem. Moreover, in *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, Scott wanted to liberate his long cherished ideas on the chivalry. His letter



to Wordsworth clearly shows his literary ambition to liberate 'the Fiend of Chivalry' and to let him 'wander at will through the world.' He wanted to reconstruct and revivify the vision of the chivalric past by making most of materials of his own.

In terms of Coleridge, Scott accomplished the work by means of the secondary imagination which 'dissolves, diffuses, dissipates its order to recreate.' (*Biographia Literaria* Chap. 13, 304) Scott's intention is not necessarily based on 'the eternal act of creation.' As the first step of this secondary creative imagination, fancy, Scott made the most of Coleridgean liberty of sound pattern, the method 'to adapt the sound to the sense.' At the same time, he imitated the macabre setting of the story, the extraordinary power of language founded on 'a rejection of the conventional phraseology of regular poetry, in favour of forms of expression.' (William Taylor of Norwich, *The Monthly Magazine*, Mar. 1796) A manly sentiment, found in Homeric expression, was recaptured by Scott through the hurrying vigour of his rhythm. These essential qualities which make up the charm of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, Scott learned from Bürger in translating his romantic ballads. They have become useful devices in creating new sensibilities in readers whose taste had been formed by the Augustan poets, such as Johnson and Pope. When Scott first read the opening stanzas of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, written in galloping rhythms of irregular four-beat lines, to his friends, Will Erskine and George Cranston, 'they were so startled by his metrical novelties that they found little to say.' (Edgar Johnson, *Sir Walter Scott: The Great Unknown* 197) Disappointed by their response, Scott threw the manuscript in the fire. But later both Erskine and Cranston found their memories haunted by what they had heard. By their exhortation, Scott resumed the poem.

To Scott, literature imposes on the writer 'the task to pleasing the public.' He was a faithful disciple of Hugh Blair, indeed, echoing his mentor's idea and words. Nevertheless, in order to accomplish the task, the writer needs the warm support of the reader more than anything. On the other hand, in the Regency, Wordsworth determined to write for the few, as his letter to Francis Wrangham clearly stated.

Of the White Doe I have little to say, but that I hope it will be acceptable to the intelligent, for whom alone it is written. (18 Jan. 1816)

Even if he predicted the commercial failure due to his refusal of the public as the exclusive reader, Wordsworth would not have succumbed to their demand. After years of procrastination, in 1815, *The White Doe of Rylstone* was published by his sister Dorothy's exhortation. In the April 1815 issue of *The European Magazine*, Wordsworth began his letter to the editor with the following phrase: '[T]he great aim of poetry is to please.' The reading public of 1815 was still demanding the entertaining and spectacular elements in the poetry rather than 'this moral Strain,' (*The White Doe of Rylstone* 1.62) the reflective contemplation. Wordsworth's egotistical elitism is obvious as well: 'It is an awful truth, that neither is, nor can be, any genuine enjoyment of Poetry among nineteen out of twenty of those persons who live, or wish to live, in the broad light of the world.' ("To Lady Beaumont," May 1807) Accordingly, the target reader is a people endowed with 'pure absolute honest ignorance' 'with respect to the thoughts, feelings, and images, on which the life of my Poems depends.' (ibid.) However asymmetrical the ratio of the reading public and the people may be in Wordsworth's calculation, all of them constitute integral parts of Romantic sensibility. This peculiar sensibility to confound the factual with the imaginary is no more reflected in self-consciously sustained historical discourses of the public than is submerged in the people's willful partiality. Actually, the Victorian readers who made a pilgrimage to Bolton Abbey expected to see a white doe at this strikingly romantic ruin in Yorkshire; it was 'because Wordsworth has identified Bolton Abbey as the place where one ought to see a white doe.' (Steven Gill, *Wordsworth and the Victorians* 1) They were, at least, able to appreciate, as the poetic pleasure, the spiritual serenity reconstructed after the personal loss, which was neglected by the Romantic readers.

If all cultural artifacts are to be read as symbolic resolutions to real, political and social contradictions, the narrative form itself can be regarded 'as an ideological act in its own right, with the function of inventing imaginary or formal "solutions" to unresolvable social contradictions.' (Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious* 79) The fact that around 1815 his poems met poor reception by his readers seemed to push Wordsworth toward limiting his objectives as well as the scope of his readers. His course of poetico-cultural transference was also obliged to deviate from the public demand. Nevertheless, his culture-oriented narration deserves to be considered as a prediction of the post-structural view of history, which thinks of history 'not as a series of brute facts but as a narrative generated in one way or other' or as 'the itinerary of the silencing.' (5) Both Scott and Wordsworth were endowed with a keen, rare sense of history, although the former tried to return to the pedagogical discourse through an improbability. While not reconstructing the chivalric past but imaginatively recreating history within the scheme of Christianity, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* could pedagogically cultivate Romantic sentiments. Finally, the fictive past is made to identify itself with implicit homogenised national, Scottish patriotism.

*The White Doe of Rylstone* stands in a remarkable contrast to this Scottish Romance, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*. Its narrative is close to a more objective, historical discourse, shaping itself the pedagogic discourse. What distinguishes the two poets is the fact that Wordsworth had much recourse to the aid of imagination as a spiritual mediation. Although the poem is framed within the artifice of romance, it urges the reader along to attain individualized perception of history, historical self-understanding. Wordsworth's romance thus controls the process of unconscious creativity of the people, giving them the spontaneous joy of narrating a historical past. Moreover, this performance can create a kind of moral consciousness which is called a nation in a large aggregate of men, the people. The moral demands 'the abdication of the individual to the advantage of the community,' (Renan 20) and suggests an ultimate goal of Wordsworth's poetico-cultural transference. Conformity to this moral

conscience orients the individual toward probing the best way of being right in the future, that is, 'to know how to resign oneself to being out of fashion.' (ibid. 21) The solitary white doe is a performative symbol of an idealized individual capable of the abdication for the sake of organic communion of the author–reader relationship.

## NOTES

(1) Ian Haywood quotes the following passage from Gilbert Stuart's comment in *Critical Observations concerning the Scottish Historians Hume, Stuart, and Robertson* (1782).

'The various fortunes of this illustrious princess, the ever–changing scene of her life, and the tragical catastrophe which put a period to her woes, soften the details of public affairs with the feelings of private life, and add to History all the charms and interest of Romance.' (p.7)

(2) 'We then have a contested cultural territory where the people must be thought in a double–time; the people are the historical "objects" of a nationalist pedagogy, giving the discourse an authority that is based on the pre-given or constituted historical origin or event; the people are also the "subjects" of a process of signification that must erase any prior or originary presence of the nation–people to demonstrate the prodigious, living principle of the people as that continual process by which the national life is redeemed and signified as a repeating and reproductive process.' (Homi K. Bhabha, "DissemiNation," *Nation and Narration*, 297)

(3) Probably between 6 and 10 July, 1807, Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy took a trip to Otley and went up the Wharf as far as Bolton Abbey according to Dorothy's letter to Catherine Clarkson.

(4) Mary Moorman points out (*William Wordsworth: A Biography*, 112) another echo from *Christabel*. Emily is compared to "the last leaf" by her elder brother Francis,

—But thou, my Sister, doomed to be  
The last leaf on a blasted tree;  
If not in vain we breathed the breath  
Together of a purer faith; (ll. 566–9)

The image of 'the last leaf' is also used in *Christabel* to announce, though covertly, the tragic destiny of the heroin.

There is not wind enough in the air  
To move away the ringlet curl  
From the lovely lady's cheek—  
There is not wind enough to twirl  
The one red leaf, the last of its clan,

That dances as often as dance it can, (ll. 45–50)

(5) ‘To an extent I think the post-structural project would look at history not as a series of brute facts but as narratives generated in one way or another...The point is not to recover a lost consciousness, but to see, to quote Macherey, the itinerary of the silencing.’ (Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *The Post-Colonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues*, New York & London, Routledge, 1990, 31)

## Conclusion

Wordsworth's empathy to the implicit 'culture' accomplishes the expected but unsatisfactory end by 1815. The *Poems 1815* was published in March, and *The White Doe of Rylstone* in May. Unlike the case of *Lyrical Ballads*, he could acquire some popularity, on one hand. In fact, *Poems* established Wordsworth's position as the great poet of his day. The book directly influenced the later Romantics such as P. B. Shelley, Byron, Keats, though Blake was furious with it.<sup>(1)</sup> In the context of poetico-cultural transference in Wordsworth, however, "Preface" to *Poems* is significant, because several signs of the collapse of his ideal of 'One Life' are here evidently detected. The signs suggest that Wordsworth almost emotionally came to deny the purports of *Ossian* poems, which stand for the core of the Scottish culture. He even sneers it as the poems begotten 'by the snug embrace of an Impudent Highlander upon a cloud of tradition,' and he condemns offhand its falsehood. (*The Prose Works*, III 77) His aesthetic norm became so rigid as to include intolerance to something alien and uncultivated. His sympathetic attitude toward the implicit 'culture' has changed so thoroughly as to accept the rigid literary canon of 'taste.'

At this stage, the connotations of the word 'culture' change in his text, which evidences his aesthetical norm itself. In the previous year 1814, *The Excursion* introduced the word 'culture' with the connotations of high culture, signifying excellence in mind, faculties, and manners which are to be cultivated by education and training, but a trans-valuation of implicit 'culture' has not been erased yet. His poetico-cultural transference thus reveals itself here as something reciprocating with his peculiar development of the notion of culture, which varied from the way of life of the lower class in the 1790s to a sign of superiority and excellence seen only in the educated people by 1815. In a sense, the trans-valuation, or double coding, of 'culture' depends on the current norm of his day. The conformity to the prevalent norm is observable not only in Wordsworth's statement in "Essay, Supplementary to

the Preface” of *Poems* (1815), but also in S.T.Coleridge’s great work, *Biographia Literaria*(1815). Susceptibility to the atmosphere of the age of multi-culture is more conspicuous in Coleridge, though. As is widely admitted, Coleridge wrote *Biographia* as a sort of retort to Wordsworth’s *Poems*.<sup>(2)</sup> He candidly criticizes the defects and beauties of Wordsworth’s poetry, and, especially in Chapter 22, he devoted himself to writing an admirably impersonal review of Wordsworth the poet. Although both Wordsworth and Coleridge took the similar stance toward the implicit ‘culture’ while working in collaboration with *Lyrical Ballads*, their intimate relationship was completely gone in 1815. Indeed, Coleridge once avowed himself to be a co-editor of “1800 Preface” to *Lyrical Ballads*.<sup>(3)</sup> Nevertheless, the two poets reached different standpoints in defining what poetry is. In 1815, Coleridge censures Wordsworth for the fault of confounding copying of the real language of men with imitating it as an emanation of the creative process of nature. The basic structure of Coleridge’s argument is on the basis of the idea of association. <sup>(4)</sup>

I include in the *meaning* of a word not only its correspondent object, but likewise all the associations which it recalls. For language is framed to convey not the object alone, but likewise the character, mood and intentions of the person who is representing it. In poetry it *is* practicable to preserve the diction uncorrupted by the affectations and misappropriations which promiscuous authorship, and reading not promiscuous only because it is disproportionally most conversant with the composition of the day, have rendered general.

(*Biographia Literaria* II 142-3)

Unlike Wordsworth, who could not cast willingly the shadow of ‘One Life’ as a republican ideal, Coleridge was a shrewd realist. He is too well aware of the limit of human abilities and their activities. Even in its proper boundary, where a creative process is activated, the poet should comply with ‘a watchful good sense, of fine and luminous distinction, and of complete self-possession.’ (ibid.143) Creative action is, therefore, supposed to comply with harmonious law of association. Discriminating two kinds of truth, – ‘*truth, narrative and past is the idol of historians (who worship a*

*dead thing*) and truth operative, and by effects continually alive, is the mistress of poets' (ibid. 127), Coleridge makes two remarkable comments in Chapter 22. The first comment is that '[i]t (i.e., *The White Doe of Rylstone*) is the FIRST GENUINE PHILOSOPHIC Poem.' (ibid.156) The second one is that, though 'the nature of the thoughts and the subject' is interesting, 'perhaps intelligible to but a limited number of readers.' (ibid. 154)

These remarks are noteworthy, especially in view of Wordsworth's poetico-cultural transference. For one thing, Coleridge tries to refute the image of Wordsworth as *sweet, simple poet* in it. In truth, Wordsworth long remained as a target vulnerable to ridicule due to his affectation of simplicity and his choice of heroes and heroines among the lower class. In defiance of this derogating tendency, Coleridge claims that Wordsworth is gifted with 'IMAGINATION in the highest and strict sense of the word.' (ibid 151) Quoting lines from "Mad Mother," Coleridge shows how the increased sensibility is subsumed into one despotic thought 'by the blending, *fusing* power of Imagination and Passion.' (ibid. 150) Admitting the greatness of Wordsworth as the poet, Coleridge reveals himself as a writer tormented by the fear of rejection by the multitudinous public, on the ground of being abstruse. On the other, what lies latently in his mind is the moral and religious desire to serve, lead, and educate as many people as possible.

Wordsworth is not immune from the dilemma inherent in the author-reader relationship, so long as he is aware of 'a structure of undecidability at the frontiers of hybridity.' (Bhabha 312) While Coleridge's pedagogic desire inevitably conflicts with his profound interest in highly intellectual, esoteric subjects, that is, philosophy, Wordsworth struggles with the implicit chasm widening in the image of the crowd and the public. In spite of Coleridge's ambivalent feelings toward Wordsworth in 1815, it would not be presumptuous to assume that Wordsworth cherished the similar pedagogic desire and the interest to educate the public, though his historical writing had a tendency toward performative, as was discussed in the previous Chapter.



Coleridge's remarks did not miss the point at all. Nevertheless, as Bhabha points out,

The scraps, patches, and rags of daily life must be repeatedly turned into the signs of a national culture, while very act of the narrative performance interpellates a growing circle of national subjects. In the production of the nation as narration there is a split between the continuist, accumulative temporality of the pedagogical, and the repetitious, recursive strategy of the performative.

(Bhabha 297)

The discrimination of the reading public becomes the crucial key to understand the substance of Wordsworth's poetico-cultural transference in terms of 'a split.' Behind the creative process of Wordsworth, nevertheless, a detached view point of spectator is seen working as was distinct in Book VII of *The 1805 Prelude*. His peculiarity as the poet is particularized by the phase of utter non-sympathy with the subjects, half feeling *for*, but never equating *with* the subjects.

The constituent factors of Gothic form, Romantic sentimental excess and its transgression of order, are liable to degenerate the work into the superficiality and the uncanny. Both Walter Scott in *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* and William Wordsworth in *The White Doe of Rylstone* exercised the romantic monstrosity derived from the exorbitant sensibility enhanced in the era in their own irregular mode of versification. The former introduced such familiar magical figures as Wizard, Michael Scott, and Goblin Page into the narrative, while the latter introduced the mysterious presence of the white doe in its narrative. All of these devices meant to recast the significance of heroic deeds during the past border feud and to project it in the context of contemporary religious conflict. As a consequence of commingling these Gothic features, the narrative itself is liable to delete the outline of history as the factual truth itself. And yet, both Scott and Wordsworth cleverly succeeded to evading that danger of total negation of history, however monstrous their sentimental exaggerations by means of magical devices appear to be. Their marvelous feats were

accomplished by correctly measuring and adjusting the distance between the narrative and its reader who are bound to live within the social and cultural context. What distinguishes their narrative is, accordingly, due to the difference of their attitude toward the national spirit in the reader. Wordsworth could not have shared the Scottish comradeship. Moreover, in the implicit action of poetico-cultural transference, the intentional repression of emotional attitude emerges in Wordsworth toward the history open to the people as the historical 'objects' of a nationalist pedagogy, while he approaches the main stream of establishment. This historical performance of repression, which contingently accorded with his personal ambition, led him to some main divergence in the flow of modernity.

Although culture is thought to be a parameter carrying the multiple possibilities of history which sometimes can hold contrary trajectories, one for the past and the other future, the involute movement of eddying makes culture reorganize in an imaginary fusion. However contradictory as it may sound, a feat to reorganize culture by means of imaginary fusion was barely made possible by Wordsworth the poet, who is endowed with that special kind of Imagination and a keen sense of supremacy of language. He still believed in 1815 that 'life and nature are described as operated upon by the creative or abstracting virtue of imagination,' (*The Prose Works* III 83) but at the same time he came to realize himself being tightly enmeshed within a network of politics-history-society-sexuality. On the other hand, his detachedness from the crowd drives him to ignore the popularity, the implicit cultural demands of the public.

In this detached position, Wordsworth carried out the senseless modification of the word, *popular*, applying it to new works in poetry, as if there were no test of excellence in this first of the fine arts. He insists that all men should run after artistic productions, as if urged by an appetite, or constrained by a spell!

The qualities of writing that best fitted for greater reception are either the ones

as startle the world into attention by their audacity and extravagance; or they are chiefly of a superficial kind, lying upon the surfaces of manners; or arising out of a selection and arrangement of incidents, by which the mind is kept upon the stretch of curiosity, and the fancy amused without the trouble of thought.

“Essay, Supplementary to the Preface,” *The Prose Works*, 83)

Behind this acrimonious comment on popularity, an insinuation was made targeted to the popularity of Scott the best-seller. No wonder, both Scott and Wordsworth as the rival poets living in the Romantic age full of commotion did possess an intuitive, historical perception that Romance is one of the persuasive narratives of the nation, though their viewpoints toward the nation itself were not identical. To both of them, history is not a scientific study but a version of narration. They can still believe in the existence of a divine will as a natural master narrative. While writing *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, Scott, who was conscious of the marginalized existence of his natives Scottish people, is clearly aware of the manners and the sentiments of the age. In fact, these constituents of mass culture were largely expressed in the opinions of his friends and acquaintances, those who formed, in terms of Scott, ‘the society of my *commis*.’ To Scott, therefore, literature is primarily meant for pleasing his *commis*, the friends and the common readers of his native land, that is, the public on his camp. Living in the cultural environment where the influence of Blair was still intensive enough as regards the norm of writing history as an art, Scott naturally was so intent on realizing the pedagogic function of his Romance as giving his discourse an authority based on the emotional understanding. Therefore his narrative can freely talk of the previous or constituted historical origin or event.

Living on the social as well as geographical margin of the same cultural network, Wordsworth had to suffer from the poor reception of his poems by the public at large, especially around 1815. By that time, as the inconclusive ending of *The Excursion* suggests, Wordsworth came to understand the divergent, involute flows rising up in the public mind during the Regency. Much discernible controversy had been given for

and against the industrialization and the imperialism. He was, then, obliged to limit his objective, that is, the scope of his readers. Unlike Joanna Baillie and Scott, the Scottish spirit meant for Wordsworth something fundamentally alien to his nation, something that should be denied at the core for the righteousness of Imperialism. Although he relied much on the Hatley's Association doctrine and the principle of organic universe, Wordsworth could not but differentiate "us" from "them," nor liberate himself from political, religious and sexual point of view. Whether he likes it or not, he had become a functionary of the British institution by accepting Distributorship of Stamps in 1813, while *The Excursion* was being written.

Apart from these external factors, in the midst of the involution of concurring cultures, Wordsworth can be said to hold a stubbornly ego-centric and selective personality. He tries to subordinate narrative to personal emotion. Consequently his culture-oriented narration was given a political aspect so as to reflect the diversity in social and religious conflicts symbolically. In *The White Doe of Rylstone*, the tragic story of the Nortons is told by focusing on Francis, who is split between the religious and the filial allegiances. So far, the relationship among the subjects and objects is not shown as finite or definite in this dream-like text. Instead, it is represented implicating the inner conflicts performed in the history. Just as always suggested in his characters in the rural environments, the spiritual and social symbols in this narrative, the white doe and the standard, are made to carry several contradictory connotations, while his rhetoric is driving to reach One, Unity, in the associational framework of religion. Consequently, his Oneness is vulnerable under the threat of collapsing. Even if it falls down to pieces, the trajectory of each piece of variant, of its referent, is not distinct yet. They were always changing, and will be with his historical perceptions as the traces of his meticulous textual revisions show. His yearning to seek such poetry as 'something evermore about to be' impels him to move on. This perpetual movement of amorphous flow resembles that of mist the boy witnessed at 'Spots of Time' and symbolises the nature of Wordsworth's

poetico-cultural transference.

The scope and the boundaries of his language are not stable either. It is internally undercut and fissured. For example, in *The White Doe of Rylstone*, as the thinking subject, not only the hero Francis Norton but also the poet-narrator himself had to fight with the ignorance and vulgarity of the people. The standard of the Nortons embroidered by the heroin Emily thus symbolizes the structural instabilities of the fissured subject and the incoherence of the author. The mysterious presence of white doe thus actualizes a repeating and reproductive process of the nation. In a sense, the structural instabilities of the fissured self in cultural formation form the very core of poetico-cultural transference in Wordsworth. In this Romance, those instabilities are reflected in the narration, while the narrator is wavering over the people and the reading public, as if he were embodying the movement of standard. As a result, in Wordsworthian texts, not only the subject itself but also the language of its discourse is digressing to transcend the limits of each contour.

Several subversive wishes were announced in the "Preface"s of *Lyrical Ballads*. However daring they may sound, they do not carry enmity against present institutions. To a certain extent, Wordsworth in 1798 unconsciously feared the threat of a new, revolutionary sense of despotic power of Imperialism, which threatens the insistent stability of social control. It was the time the French invaded the Swiss Republic. In 1802, he predicts its danger more distinctly in the image of Napoleon who was about to gain despotic power.

I grieved for Buonaparté with a vain  
And an unthinking grief – the vital blood  
Of that man's mind, what can it be ? What food  
Fed his first hopes ? What knowledge could *he* gain?  
'is not in battles that from youth we train  
The governor who must be wise and good  
And temper with the sternness of the brain...  
("I grieved for Buonaparté with a vain")

Wordsworth intentionally alienated himself from the political conflicts surged over the people after the Revolution, so that he could step aside from the straight forward way of progress, a great cause of modernity. He was too well aware of that danger of bourgeois energy which lurked behind the power politics with the strong intention of driving forward materialism in the domain of commodity exchange. In *Lyrical Ballads*, he was more sympathetic to its victims such as old parents of a prodigal son in "Michael," or the poor shepherd of "The Last of the Flock," but he would not propagate Jacobin ideology in these poems. Wordsworth's idea on the nature of power conflicts is moderately expressed in verse form, which is not completely free from German or Celtic influence. He borrowed a form of ballad or Romance at least from the people living in the border area as an appropriate tool for political discourse. Here again, his language is seen internally undercut and gradually split. His easy way of borrowing materials as well as forms from different cultures also suggests the nature of his intuitive grasp of cultural network of relationship. The symbol for him means an attractive tool which enables him to achieve a fusion of subject and object. He knew too well of the implications of the famous line of Wallace Stevens that 'poetry is the supreme fiction.' ('A High-Toned Old Christian Woman' l.1) In the context of poetico-cultural transference, his unconscious representation of conflicts is achieved in a form of denial, targeting the reader as the people. He attributed the cause of conflicts to politics of nation, perhaps on the hope that the continual process of the involute the national life is ultimately redeemed.

What Wordsworth endeavoured to assert in an artifice of ballad or of Romantic narratives is that the visions of historical science and poetry must be left essentially in a parallel position, and that however contradictory they may appear, only poetry can endure the tension of complementary ways of perception. As the revisionary process of *The Prelude* demonstrates, poetry is transference of his mind as well as of his cultural surroundings. The contingency and variation are integral constituents of

his narrative, however conflicting they may appear in view of a dynamic and spiritual conception of life as One. Wordsworth's poetic world, especially the one revealed in the fantastic Romance, *The White Doe of Rylstone*, embodies an imaginary, almost unattainable process of conciliation. But conflicts narrated there are inevitably associated with those the modernity engaged in. Since the poetico-cultural transference in Wordsworth is deeply set in the irrevocable flow toward modernity, it is bound to waver between a polarity of passion and reason, between the controlling effort of the mind and the social allegiance, however unreasonable and inconceivable they may be. In this way, Wordsworth predicts the coming of the post-structural view of history in his poetry.

Notes:

(1) '1815 was the edition that Shelley took with him, first to Switzerland, and then to Italy. It was in this form that Wordsworth inspired in Byron the unusual responsiveness of Childe Harold Canto Three: "to me/High mountains are a feeling." This was the text that prompted Keats to regard Wordsworth as "deeper than Milton," and that brought forth Blake's passionate marginalia - half admiring('This is all in the highest degree Imaginative and equal to any Poet'), half indignant:

Natural Objects did & now do weaken deaden and Obliterate Imagination in Me  
Wordsworth must know that what he Writes Valuable is Not to be found in  
Nature.' (Jonathan Wordsworth, *Ancestral Voices*, 149-150)

(2) 'Wordsworth's new edition of the *Poems* and its Preface continued to haunt Coleridge all through the writing of the *Biographia*: to such an extent that, as late as mid-August, when he had completed over half of his own manuscript, he was still thinking of his work — both Preface and the poems — as a rival twin to Wordsworth's edition.' ("Editors' Introduction", *Biographia Literaria*, I 1)

(3) '...although' Wordsworth's Preface is half a child of my own Brain/& so arose out of Conversations, so frequent, that with few exceptions we could scarcely either of us perhaps positively say, which first started any peculiar Thought...yet I am far from going all length with Wordsworth...I rather suspect that some where or other there is a radical Difference in our opinions respecting Poetry—'

(Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Letters*, II 830)

(4) Although in Chapters V and VI of *Biographia Literaria* (1817) are allocated to the

rejection of Hartley, Coleridge's objections against Hartley's system is particularly 'against untenable physiology of the hypothetical vibrations in his hypothetical oscillating either of nerves. Had this been really the case, the consequence would have been, that our whole life would be divided between the despotism of outward impressions, and that of senseless and passive memory.' (*Biographia Literaria* I 111) 'Despite these vehement attacks upon Hartley's vibrations Coleridge does not sneer at his former teacher. He defends the integrity of Hartley's work and deplors Priestley's suppression of the vibration theory of Part I, and he concludes that Part II of the *Observations on Man* attests the rightness of Hartley's heart despite the errors of his understanding' (Theodore L. Huguelet, "Introduction," *Observations on Man, His Frame, His Duty, And His Expectations, (1749)*, Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, xv) Coleridge says, '[I]t is fashionable to smile at Hartley's vibrations and vibratiuncles; and his work has been re-edited by Priestley, with the omission of the *material* hypothesis. But Hartley was too great a man, too coherent a thinker, for this to have been done, either consistently or to any wise purpose...Hartley was constrained to represent as being itself the sole *Law*.' (*Biographia Literaria*, I 110)



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