

A STUDY OF THE SONNETS OF WILLIAM
WORDSWORTH, EXCLUSIVE OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL SONNETS

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PREFACE

Although Wordsworth has been considered by critics from his own day to the present time to be one of the greatest of English sonneteers, so far as I have been able to determine, no one has, as yet, made a particular study of his sonnets as a group. Scholarly research may be found concerning certain isolated sonnets, but the field, as a whole, is relatively untouched.

In this thesis I have made a detailed study of the sonnets of William Wordsworth, exclusive of the ecclesiastical sonnets. By limiting the scope of the subject, I believe that I have been able to make a more thorough and exhaustive study of those sonnets than would otherwise be possible. I have attempted to analyze these poems from the standpoint of rime, rhythm, language, imagery and ideas. In making this study I am concerned not so much with Wordsworth, the philosopher, as with Wordsworth, the artist.

In my study of these sonnets I have endeavored to employ the methods of poetical analysis which are set forth by Professor Cleanth Brooks in his book, Understanding Poetry. That is, in my examination of the rime, rhythm, language, and imagery of the sonnets, I have not looked upon them as isolated parts of poetic composition, but I

have regarded them as interrelated elements, no one of which may prove complete or conclusive in itself, but all of which may contribute to the idea involved. The basic principles of my study, then, are those given by Professor Brooks. The application of those principles in regard to these particular sonnets is my own.

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Autrey Nell Wiley, the director of this thesis, for developing and encouraging my desire to learn, for showing me the value of intellectual integrity by her own example, and for leading me to a deeper appreciation, not only of Wordsworth, but of all literature.

Betty Ann Fulmer
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CHAPTER I

WORDSWORTH, THE SONNETEER

In the course of his long and prolific literary career, William Wordsworth composed poems of all types, ranging from such works of length as "The Excursion" or "The Prelude" to his shorter narrative and lyric pieces and that great portion of his poetry, the sonnets. He published approximately 514 sonnets, of which 132 were the ecclesiastical sonnets which this thesis does not attempt to study. The remaining 382 sonnets will be the basis of the present examination, although it is obvious that not every one of these can be analyzed and evaluated in the limited space of this thesis. I shall attempt to classify according to type and to make selections of sonnets representative of my classifications.

Before the actual analysis is begun, it is perhaps well to attempt to form an estimate of Wordsworth as a sonneteer. Possibly, the best way to do so is to consult Wordsworth himself and to review the statements of his literary critics from his own day to the present time. Of the abundant critical comment upon his literary efforts available to the student, however, relatively little deals primarily with Wordsworth as a writer of sonnets. I have attempted to glean from this mass of criticism all that

pertains to Wordsworth as a sonneteer and to present estimates together with Wordsworth's own view of the poetic form which he used so frequently and well. Thus we anticipate ensuing chapters of this thesis which analyze the sonnets, themselves, and lead the reader to make his own critical evaluation of Wordsworth's mastery of the sonnet form.

I. Wordsworth's Regard for the Sonnet

In 1833 Dyce wrote to Wordsworth, asking that he be allowed permission to dedicate a book, Specimens of the English Sonnets, to him. Wordsworth replied, in part:

Do you mean to have a short preface upon the construction of the sonnet? Though I have written so many, I have scarcely made up my own mind upon the subject. It should seem that the sonnet, like every other legitimate composition, ought to have a beginning, a middle, and an end; in other words, to consist of three parts, like the three propositions of a syllogism, if such an illustration may be used. But the frame of metre adopted by the Italians does not accord with this view; and, as adhered to by them, it seems to be, if not arbitrary, best fitted to a division of the sense into two parts, of eight and six lines each. Milton, however, has not submitted to this; in the better half of his sonnets the sense does not close with the rhyme at the eighth line, but overflows into the second portion of the metre. Now, it has struck me, that this is not done merely to gratify the ear by variety and freedom of sound, but also to aid in giving that pervading sense of intense unity in which the excellence of the sonnet has always seemed to me mainly to consist. Instead of looking at this composition as a piece of architecture, making a whole out of three parts, I have been much in the habit of preferring the image of an orbicular body,--a sphere or a dewdrop. All this will appear to you a little fanciful; and I am well aware that a sonnet will often be found excellent, where the beginning, the middle, and the end are distinctly marked, and also where it is distinctly separated into

two parts, to which, as I before observed, the strict Italian model, as they write it, is favourable.¹

Wordsworth's comparison of a sonnet to a dewdrop or a sphere rather than to a piece of architecture is closely allied with the theory of poetry advanced by Professor Cleanth Brooks, upon whose theories this thesis is based. Professor Brooks states:

. . . . The question, then about any element in a poem is not whether it is in itself pleasing, or agreeable, or valuable, or "poetical," but whether it works with the other elements to create the effect intended by the poet. The relationship among the elements in a poem is therefore all important, and it is not a mechanical relationship but one which is far more intimate and fundamental. If we should compare a poem to the make-up of some physical object it ought not to be to a wall but to something organic like a plant.²

Wordsworth's high regard for the sonnet as a form of poetic expression is evidenced not only in the large number of sonnets that he wrote but also in the statements that he made in sonnets written in defense of the sonnet as a type. These are the two which begin "Scorn not the Sonnet; Critic you have frowned" and "Nuns fret not at their convent's narrow room." In the latter Wordsworth speaks of the pleasure that he finds within the limited bounds of the sonnet:

¹William Wordsworth, Wordsworth's Literary Criticism, ed. Nowell C. Smith (London: Oxford University Press, 1925), pp. 247-248.

²Cleanth Brooks, Jr., and Robert Penn Warren, Understanding Poetry (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1947), pp. 18-19.

In truth the prison, unto which we doom
 Ourselves, no prison is: and hence for me,
 In sundry moods, 'twas pastime to be bound
 Within the Sonnet's scanty plot of ground;
 Pleased if some Souls (for such there needs must be)
 Who have felt the weight of too much liberty,
 Should find brief solace there, as I have found.³

Wordsworth not only held the sonnet in high esteem but felt confident of his own mastery of the form as is indicated in a letter that he wrote to Lady Beaumont, referring to his sonnets dedicated to liberty:

. . . . these sonnets, while they each fix the attention upon some important sentiment, separately considered, do at the same time, collectively make a poem on the subject of civil liberty and national independence, which, either for simplicity of style or grandeur of moral sentiment, is, alas! likely to have few parallels in the poetry of the present day.⁴

The fact that his poetry was severely criticized by many did not seem to affect Wordsworth in the least. If he noticed the adverse criticism of the day, he attributed it to the ignorance or careless reading habits of his public. In the letter to Lady Beaumont referred to in the preceding paragraph, he remarked:

. . . . never forget what, I believe, was observed to you by Coleridge, that every great and original writer, in proportion as he is great or original, must himself

³William Wordsworth, The Poetical Works of Wordsworth, ed. Thomas Hutchinson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1933), p. 250.

⁴William Wordsworth, Wordsworth's Literary Criticism, p. 50.

create the taste by which he is to be relished; he must teach the art by which he is to be seen. . . .⁵

Perhaps Wordsworth was able to create in his readers a taste or an appreciation for his writings, or perhaps his work developed in quality as the years went by. At any rate, with few exceptions, Wordsworth gradually came to be acknowledged, even by his contemporaries, as one of the truly great English poets. Many ranked him with Shakespeare and Milton as a master of the sonnet.

II. Criticism by Wordsworth's Contemporaries

During his literary career Wordsworth did not lack the attention of the critics. The publication of his early work, particularly, called forth loud, adverse, and often unfair criticism. This response was probably due, in the main, to Wordsworth's attempt to formulate a new theory of poetry, which is incorporated into the "Preface" to Lyrical Ballads. It was a relatively simple matter for the critics to point out discrepancies between his theory and his practice, and this they did with evident delight. Too, the literary critics of the day seemed to take an almost sadistic pleasure in pointing out again and again the ludicrous elements in "The Idiot Boy," "Alice Fell," or "Peter Bell." Many of them tended to pass over the wealth of really good poetry in order to make cutting and vicious attacks on a

⁵Ibid., p. 54.

few pieces generally considered inferior and certainly no indication of Wordsworth at his best. Gradually, however, the majority of the critics began to recognize the poetic genius in their midst. Of the various poetic forms issuing from the pen of William Wordsworth, few have received higher or more deserved praise than the sonnets.

In July of 1807 Lord Byron wrote the first review of Poems, in Two Volumes, the first publication by Wordsworth to contain sonnets in any quantity. His review, published in the Monthly Literary Recreations, stated:

. . . . The characteristics of Mr. Wordsworth's muse are simple and flowing, though occasionally inharmonious verse; strong and sometimes irresistible appeals to the feelings, with unexceptional sentiments. Though the present work may not equal his former efforts, many of them possess a native elegance, natural and unaffected, totally devoid of the tinsel embellishments and abstract hyperboles of several contemporary sonneteers. The last sonnet in the first volume, p. 152, is perhaps the best, without any novelty in the sentiments, which we hope are common to every Briton at the present crisis; the force and expression is that of a genuine poet, feeling as he writes:

"Another year, another deadly blow,
Another mighty empire overthrown." etc.⁶

Byron retracted his praise in his Detached Thoughts published in 1821: "In 1807, in a Magazine called Monthly Literary Recreations, I reviewed Wordsworth's trash of the time."⁷

Whether or not Byron had decided he was wrong in his early

⁶An Estimate of William Wordsworth by His Contemporaries, ed. Elsie Smith (Oxford: Kemp Hall Press, Ltd., 1932), pp. 70-71.

⁷Ibid., p. 72.

review after thorough study and evaluation of the works involved, or whether his delayed condemnation was prompted by jealousy or personal dislike is a matter for conjecture. It seems unlikely, though, that a man of Byron's intellectual powers could have made such a complete reversal of his evaluation unless some prejudice had been involved. To speak of Wordsworth's writing as having the "force and expression of a genuine poet," and then to call that same work "trash" opens a rather wide gap, seemingly indicating that the reviewer had allowed personal or emotional factors to affect his critical faculties.

The Annual Review and History of Literature for 1807 contained a long article, probably written by Arthur Aikin, editor of the Review, which referred to the sonnets:

The Sonnets, a portion of which are dedicated to liberty, are formed on the model of Milton's and have a certain stiffness--but they hold a severe and manly tone which cannot be in times like these too much listened to--they bear strong traces of feeling and of thought, and convince us that on worthy subjects this man can write worthily.⁸

Francis Jeffrey in the Edinburgh Review of October, 1807, ranked Wordsworth's sonnets far above his other writing and deplored the fact that a writer capable of such poetic heights should so often produce work of inferior quality.

All English writers of sonnets have imitated Milton, and, in this way, Mr. Wordsworth, when he writes sonnets, escapes again from the trammels of his own unfortunate system; and the consequence is, that his

⁸Ibid., p. 90.

sonnets are as much superior to the greater part of his other poems, as Milton's sonnets are superior to his. ["On the Extinction of the Venetian Republic" and "London" quoted in full.]

When we look at these, and many still finer passages, in the work of this author, it is impossible not to feel a mixture of indignation and compassion, at that strange infatuation which has bound him up from the fair exercise of his talents, and with-held from the public the many excellent productions that would otherwise have taken the place of the trash now before us.⁹

In January, 1808, in the Eclectic Review, an unknown reviewer spoke less kindly but recognized Wordsworth's genius in the sonnet, "On the Extinction of the Venetian Republic." He considered this sonnet a "rare example of excellence either in Mr. Wordsworth or any other English Sonneteer."

The Sonnets contained in Poems, in Two Volumes, in point of imagery and sentiment, are perhaps the most poetical of all these motley productions; but they are exceedingly unequal, often obscure, and generally heavy in the motion of the verse: the lines too are frequently so intertwisted, that if they were not printed in lengths of ten syllables, it would be difficult to break them into metre at all.¹⁰

On February 12, 1808, Henry Crabb Robinson wrote his brother a letter in which he mentioned Wordsworth's sonnets dedicated to liberty:

The political sentiments of his (Wordsworth's) Sonnets appears to me the best men can nourish at the moment--the quintessence of which is compressed in a line, "O grief that earth's best hopes still rest on thee."¹¹

⁹Ibid., p. 82.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 95.

¹¹Ibid., p. 97.

Robinson met Wordsworth in March of that year and came to know him perhaps better than any other man.¹² He met Southey the same month and wrote his brother about a conversation he had with him at a dinner at Mr. Aikin's: "I praised Wordsworth's Sonnets and Preface. In this Southey joined. He said the Sonnets contain the profoundest political wisdom. . . ."13

In March, 1815, the first collective edition of the poems of Wordsworth was published, and in November it was reviewed in the Monthly Review:

Mr. Wordsworth's sonnets in honour of liberty may boast; in many instances of distinguished merit; and they seem to have been called forth by the genuine feelings of joy or indignation, as patriotism successfully opposed tyranny or was cruelly opposed by it, in the late eventful struggles. Why will Mr. Wordsworth ever be so untrue to himself as to desert the manly and vigorous style of this burst of poetry?¹⁴

Frequently, Wordsworth was compared to Milton. Often the comparison was favourable to the more modern poet; sometimes, it was not. In a criticism of the volume published in 1816 containing the "Thanksgiving Ode" and other shorter pieces, a critic of the Eclectic Review, July, 1816, remarked: "The spirit of Milton has not rested on Mr. Wordsworth, unless it be in some of his noble sonnets, in which he more

¹²Ibid., p. 98.

¹³Ibid., p. 97.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 219.

than rivals the great puritan champion of liberty."¹⁵

Hazlitt, in his series of lectures on the English poets delivered at Surrey Institution in 1818, was not quite so lavish in his praise but did comment favourably upon Wordsworth as a sonneteer:

. . . . His standard of poetry is high and severe, almost to exclusiveness. He admits of nothing below, scarcely of anything above himself.

. . . . Milton is his great idol, and he sometimes dares to compare himself with him. His Sonnets, indeed, have something of the high-raised tone and prophetic spirit.¹⁶

Again, Wordsworth was compared to Milton in an article published in Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, August, 1822. In this article the critic reviewed the volume entitled Wordsworth's Sonnets and Memorials containing "Ecclesiastical Sketches" and "Memorials of a Tour on the Continent, 1820":

. . . . Milton's sonnets furnished a model to Wordsworth: but he has far surpassed his model both in thought and expression. A few of Milton's sonnets are exceedingly fine; but even these owe much of their power over minds to ideas and feelings associated with his personal character and high and unhappy destiny. In future times, Wordsworth's will be read with somewhat similar emotion; for although his own existence has been tranquil, aloof from all agitating public affairs, and unconnected with the goings on of governments, yet his spirit has been often among them as vividly and energetically as Milton's own: and the whole heart and soul of his poetry has

¹⁵Ibid., p. 262.

¹⁶William Hazlitt, Lectures on the English Poets and Spirit of the Age (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1910), p. 258.

been poured over human life, to ameliorate and dignify it, to expose error and delusion stript of all their pretences, and to show the foundations of true national greatness. Independently of all such personal associations, Wordsworth's sonnets, we repeat it, are infinitely superior to Milton's. They embrace a wide and various range--and of themselves constitute a great Work. Considered as to composition merely, they are perfect;--the music flows on like a stream or rolls like a river, or expands like the sea, according as the thought is beautiful, or majestic, or sublime. . . .¹⁷

Leigh Hunt in the first volume of The Book of the Sonnet (1867) made a less favourable comparison between the two poets.

. . . . there could be no comparison in point of greatness between the genius, however fertile and admirable, manifested in his [Wordsworth's] contemplative effusions, and the mighty epic-sustaining powers of Milton. I must also take this opportunity of observing, that, considering the less advanced nature, in some respects, of the times in which Milton lived, Wordsworth did not show anything like equal enlargement or independence of mind. He was too much afraid of what is called "committing himself;" and the weak and misplaced notion of strong-mindedness, which induced him to devote a portion of his sonnet-warblings to advocacy of the "punishment of death"--as though a nightingale should encourage the vigils of a hangman--was deplorable.¹⁸

III. Criticism from Matthew Arnold to the Present

In 1888 Matthew Arnold published his second series of Essays in Criticism, which contained a very fine chapter on Wordsworth. Arnold confessed to being pro-Wordsworth but certainly did not give wholesale approval to all his

¹⁷Elsie Smith, op. cit., pp. 347-348.

¹⁸The Book of the Sonnet, ed. Leigh Hunt and S. Adams Lee (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1867), p. 86.

works. As a matter of fact, he believed that the poet's genius would have been more easily and quickly granted if those pieces generally considered poor had been removed from the collections of his works. The inferior writing being removed, there would have been still, according to Arnold, a vast volume of work of the highest quality. Arnold did not make a specific statement regarding the sonnets but did say: "His best work is in his shorter pieces, and many indeed are there of these which are of first-rate excellence."¹⁹ Speaking of poetry in general, Arnold stated:

It is important, therefore, to hold fast to this: that poetry is at bottom a criticism of life; that the greatness of a poet lies in his powerful and beautiful application of ideas to life,--to the question: How to live.

. . . . Where, then, is Wordsworth's superiority? It is here; he deals with more of life than they [Burns, Keats, Heine, and certain other poets] do; he deals with life, as a whole, more powerfully.²⁰

Saintsbury, speaking of Wordsworth's use of the sonnet, had this to say:

. . . . Its thoughtfulness suited his bent, and its limits frustrated his prolixity, though, it must be owned, he somewhat evaded this benign influence by writing in series. And the sonnets on "The Venetian Republic," on the "Subjugation of Switzerland," that

¹⁹Matthew Arnold, Essays in Criticism, Second Series (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1911), p. 135.

²⁰Ibid., pp. 143-144, 148.

beginning "The world is too much with us," that in November 1806, the first "Personal Talk," the magnificent "Westminster Bridge," and the opening at least of that on Scott's departure from Abbotsford are not merely among the glories of Wordsworth, they are among the glories of English poetry.²¹

As for Wordsworth's technique as a sonneteer, Saintsbury regards it unfavorably: "Of the full prosodic beauty of the sonnet I do not think he was ever master."²²

Courthope praised Wordsworth as a sonneteer yet remarked upon the fact that the poet often used the form mechanically and for many subjects ill-suited to the nature of the sonnet. He stated:

. . . . The first fruit of his invention was the unrivalled Sonnet conceived on Westminster Bridge in 1802; and, having once realized his command over it, he made the sonnet his favourite form of metrical composition. . . . a more judicious selection of subject matter would probably have reduced his two or three hundred sonnets actually, approximately five hundred to the same number as Milton's; but the quality of this residuum ranks with the work of the author of Paradise Lost.²³

In 1926 Crosland wrote at length of Wordsworth as a sonneteer. He, too, complained about Wordsworth's employing the sonnet for subjects unfit for that form. He deplored the slackness in the poet's efforts and stated that it was his firm belief that Wordsworth never strove for a sonnet in

²¹George Saintsbury, A History of Nineteenth Century Literature (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1920), p. 55.

²²George Saintsbury, A History of English Prosody (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1923), III, 74.

²³W. J. Courthope, A History of English Poetry (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1926), VI, 211.

his life, or for any other poem.²⁴ Yet despite all this, Crosland recognized Wordsworth as one of the greatest of the English sonneteers:

. . . . He is known by forty passable and ten perfect things who had grace enough for four hundred perfections if he would have striven.

. . . . It is unfortunate that Wordsworth should have possessed only a limited conception of the importance of the instrument which he handled with such consummate power and large spiritual effect. . . . Wordsworth was one of those sonneteers . . . who simply would be sonnetting at all hours and in every condition of wind, weather and circumstance.

. . . . Nevertheless, William Wordsworth was William Wordsworth, and though he produced sonnets almost by sleight of hand, so to speak, and greater in number than those of any English writer before or since, scarcely one of them is devoid of a sort of saving grace, some of them rank among the noblest that were ever written, and all are suffused with a peculiar reflectiveness, a still flame of meditative beauty that was new to literature, and new to the English sonnet, and that opened up for the latter fields of motion and rapture which had not before been invaded or attempted.

. . . . The modern English sonnet as we conceive of it and hope for it, began with him, and in its glories, achieved and to come, he must always have a part.²⁵

From the evidence presented in this chapter, we can see that Wordsworth, as a sonneteer, although sometimes criticized adversely, is praised highly in most instances. Critics who speak disparagingly in regard to his other work rank his sonnets with the best that English literature has

²⁴T. W. H. Crosland, The English Sonnet (London: Martin Secker, 1926), p. 209.

²⁵Ibid., pp. 211, 39, 215.

produced. I am of the opinion that these sonnets did not "just happen," as some critics are inclined to believe, but that they are the result of a mastery of techniques of rime, rhythm, and imagery, each contributing in the portrayal of the idea presented. Just how successful the poet was in his use of these techniques will provide the basis of the succeeding chapters.

CHAPTER II

END-RIME

In attempting an adequate explanation of the function of rime, one of the most important yet controversial aspects of poetry, I shall examine numerous conflicting theories and endeavor to present that one which seems the most logical. These various theories lean either toward the acoustical or the rhythmical phases of rime. Dante (1265-1321) acknowledged the significance of both and advocated that they be combined to produce a unified artistic effect,¹ but few authors have tried to correlate the two.

Mr. Henry Lanz, a modern theorist who has made a thorough study of rime from the physical standpoint, recognizes the value of both the rhythmical and the acoustical aspects. He says a line of poetry constitutes a musical phrase, the key note of which is the end rime, which focuses attention upon the places that are rhythmically important, the chief of these being the end of the line. Stress upon end-rime corrects certain "interruptions" within a line, and end-rimes indicate the arrangement of poetry into stanzas or other divisions. In attempting to evaluate the acoustical function of rime, Mr. Lanz states:

¹Henry Lanz, The Physical Basis of Rime (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1931), p. 155.

. . . . rime has a physical basis in the melody of vowels. These melodies produce strong emotional responses. The contents associated with those responses can never be conveyed to us in any other way except through the medium of rime. . . . every rime creates an emotional response. But it does not follow that any emotion can be expressed in rime except emotions which are born together with rime. The latter are unique, and are untranslatable into the language of other emotions. . . . Thus rime is a specific emotional response associated with certain physical situations.²

The chief effect of rime, then, is emotional. Given an art in which he appeals to the minds and hearts of his readers through the meanings and associations connected with words, the poet widens his field when he seeks to reach the sensuous nature of man through the medium of rime. The addition of rime to rhythm intensifies the emotional appeal, but the emotions aroused are not those to be named, such as "love," "hate," and "fear," but emotions which are indefinable.

In this chapter I shall analyze from the standpoint of rime the twenty sonnets of 1802³ and show how these sonnets

²Ibid., p. 299.

³Those dedicated to national independence and liberty: "Fair Star of evening, Splendour of the West," "Festivals have I seen that were not names," "Great men have been among us; hands that penned,"* "Here, on our native soil, we breathe once more," "I grieved for Buonaparte, with a vain," "Inland, within a hollow vale, I stood," "Is it a reed that's shaken by the wind," "It is not to be thought of that the Flood,"* "Jones! as from Calais southward you and I," "Milton! thou shouldst be living at this hour," "O Friend! I know not which way I must look," "Once did She hold the gorgeous east in fee," "The voice of song from distant lands shall call," "Toussaint, the most unhappy man of men," "We had a female Passenger who came," "When I have borne in memory what has tamed."*

Miscellaneous sonnets: "Dark and more dark the shades of evening fell," "Earth has not anything to show

are an accurate representation of Wordsworth's sonnets as a whole. In this group he uses the Italian form, as did Milton, whose sonnets inspired him. He often deviates from the strict Italian octave rime scheme of abbaabba, although he uses this form more than any other. In the sonnets of 1802 he employs the conventional Petrarchan octave in eleven or in fifty-five per cent of the twenty sonnets. In the 382 sonnets studied in this thesis he uses the abbaabba rime scheme in 156 or approximately forty-one per cent of the sonnets. Wordsworth seems to have liked the abbaacca rime scheme almost as well as the conventional form, for in the sonnets of 1802 he uses this form six times or in thirty per cent of the total. The percentage for the entire group of sonnets is approximately thirty-seven per cent or 143 times. The sonnets reveal a total of twenty-two miscellaneous rime schemes in the octaves.

His rime schemes are even more variable in the sestets. The Petrarchan form calls for a sestet riming cdecde with variations of three rimes instead of two and with the arrangements of the riming words altered. In the entire group of sonnets Wordsworth uses the cdecde sestet only twenty times. The sestet used most often is deedff (used thirty-five times). It should be stated, however,

more fair," "It is a beauteous evening, calm and free," "With how sad steps, O Moon, thou climb'st the sky."*

*Probably composed in 1802.

that the last two lines generally do not constitute a couplet in regard to meaning. In ninety of the sonnets he rimes the last two lines. The next highly popular rime schemes for the sestet are cdcdcd (used thirty-one times), dedede (used twenty-two times) and cddcdc (used twenty-two times).

Appendix A shows in some detail the various rime schemes which he employed in the sonnets of 1802.

An analysis of the two major classifications of rime in the sonnets of 1802 reveals that Wordsworth uses a total of 126 eye rimes⁴ as compared with 154 ear rimes,⁵ or forty-five per cent eye rimes and fifty-five per cent ear rimes. These percentages are very close to those of the entire group of sonnets, in which forty-seven per cent of the rimes are eye rimes and fifty-three per cent are ear rimes. The sonnet, "It is a beauteous evening, calm and free,"⁶ illustrates the distinction between ear and eye rime. In this sonnet the poet uses ear rime in the words "here" and "year,"⁷ whereas he employs visual or eye rime in the

⁴See Appendix C.

⁵See Appendix B.

⁶William Wordsworth, The Poetical Works of Wordsworth, ed. Thomas Hutchinson. Inasmuch as all quotations from the sonnets are from this edition, the facts concerning this volume will not be repeated hereafter. The sonnet will be indicated by its first line.

⁷"It is a beauteous evening, calm and free,"
ll. 9, 12.

words "Nun" and "sun."⁸ Many ear rimes, however, are also eye rimes, as in "fair," "wear," "bare," and "air."⁹ Of the four words just named, "fair" and "air" constitute an eye rime, the term "eye rime" simply indicating words that not only sound alike but look alike as well.

In the percentage of near rimes Wordsworth seems to be rather consistent throughout his sonnets. Approximately seven per cent of the rimes in the entire group are near rimes. In the sonnets of 1802 near rimes make up seven and one-half per cent of the total.¹⁰ Twice in the sonnets of 1802 Wordsworth uses a word ending in "ty" which would ordinarily have the sound of [ɪ] to rime with words employing the diphthong sound [aɪ]. Wordsworth rimes "Liberty" with "I," "sky," and "nigh,"¹¹ and rimes "Majesty" with "by," "lie," and "sky."¹² A study of all the sonnets reveals fifty-six instances of this type of near rime. He rimes words ending in "y" with the sound [ɪ] with words ending in the [i] sound thirty-eight times throughout the group.

⁸Ibid., ll. 2, 3.

⁹"Earth has not anything to show more fair,"
ll. 1, 4, 5, 8.

¹⁰See Appendixes E and F.

¹¹"Jones! as from Calais southward you and I,"
ll. 4, 1, 5, 8.

¹²"Earth has not anything to show more fair,"
ll. 3, 2, 6, 7.

Perhaps the primary reason for the utilization of near rimes lies in the paucity of rimes in the English language. Rather than do away with all resemblance in his riming words, a poet is likely to use the visual element, thus giving the words some measure of similarity. There is a human tendency to laud this clever act on the part of the poet who makes a successful solution of a difficult problem. One derives pleasure from such rime for that reason, or as medieval theorists expressed it, "Le beau c'est le difficile."

Care must be exercised to avoid mistaking true rime for near rime. The fact that American pronunciation differentiates between the vowel sounds in "thought" and "not"¹³ does not necessarily indicate an absence of true rime in Wordsworth's sonnet. Actually there was not and still is not any difference in the Englishman's pronunciation of the vowel sounds of those two words. He gives the vowels in both words the sound [ɔ]. According to the New English Dictionary the word "desert" was written "desart" by poets as late as the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Wordsworth uses the word in its present-day form, "desert," to rime with "depart," "art," and "heart."¹⁴ Saintsbury condones this practice when he says, "Any letter, or combination

¹³"It is a beauteous evening, calm and free,"
ll. 10, 14.

¹⁴"When I have borne in memory what has tamed,"
ll. 3, 2, 6, 7.

of letters, may, for riming purposes, take in one word the sound that it bears in another."¹⁵ Although Wordsworth uses the spelling, "desert," he harks back to "desart," the old spelling of the word, which he may logically rime with "depart." A hasty glance at the rimes "undoing," "pursuing," "ruin," and "renewing" would seem to indicate poor rime, but this is not true. The sound [ɪn] instead of [ɪŋ] was the usual pronunciation of "ing" far into the nineteenth century, according to H. C. Wyld, late professor of the English language at Oxford.¹⁶ At the time this sonnet was written, 1845, many Englishmen were, therefore, omitting the [g] sound from words ending in "ing," and were riming such words as "ruin" and "renewing" and not employing the more recent sound [ŋ].

If, as has been suggested, rime is the key note of a melodic phrase of vowel sounds, it is important to note the vowel sounds which Wordsworth used. Appendix H gives the frequency of these various sounds in the sonnets of 1802. The sonnet, "With how sad steps, O Moon, thou climb'st the sky," presents an example of the poet's ability to use sound as an aid to meaning. In the first eight lines of this poem, Wordsworth gives the reader a vivid picture of

¹⁵George Saintsbury, A History of English Prosody, III, 537.

¹⁶English Pronunciation Through the Centuries (London: Linguaphone Institute, N. D.), p. 28.

the moon slowly climbing into the sky, saddened because there are no stars to keep her company. He gives us a sense of this slow, reluctant climb in his use of the diphthong sound [aɪ], which is a glide from a central or back vowel to a front vowel. Physically, then, the reader actually experiences the sensation of climbing, as his tongue slowly rises from a position in the back part of his mouth to a high front position. There is also a rise in sound frequency. The other vowel sound used in the rimes in the first eight lines of this sonnet is another diphthong [eɪ], which employs less of a glide than the [aɪ] sound; but the glide is still upward, and the sense of climbing is retained. This chapter makes no attempt to discuss assonance or internal rime, but it is interesting to note that in the first eight lines of this sonnet, there are nineteen instances of Wordsworth's use of diphthong sounds which possess an upward glide, [aɪ], [eɪ], [aʊ], [aɜ̃].

In the final consonant sounds of the twenty sonnets under discussion, Wordsworth uses a total of seventy-one liquids and nasals, consonant sounds which tend to prolong the melody of the vowels. Although he uses ninety-five final stops in his rimed words, approximately fifty-eight per cent of these are immediately preceded by nasal or liquid sounds which serve to alleviate the sense of abruptness by lengthening the vowels. Stops serve as drum beats

in the rhythmical phrase and must not be overlooked, for they, too, share a part in the emotional appeal of rime.

A fascinating study, particularly in Wordsworth's poetry, is that of the derivations of the words which he employs in end-rimes. In giving his theory of poetry, Wordsworth states in his famous "Preface" to the second edition of Lyrical Ballads:

The principal object, then, proposed in these Poems was to choose incidents and situations from common life, and to relate or describe them, through-out, as far as was possible in a selection of language really used by men.

.
 My purpose was to imitate, and, as far as possible, to adopt the very language of men.¹⁷

Appendix I indicates just how far he succeeds in using the more common words of the English language, most of which are of Teutonic origin. In this group of twenty sonnets approximately seventy-two per cent of the rimed words give evidence of a Teutonic source. This results, obviously, in the primary use of monosyllabic words. Some of the many Teutonic words used in these sonnets are "west,"¹⁸ "womanhood,"¹⁹ "friend,"²⁰ and "tongue."²¹

¹⁷The Poetical Works of Wordsworth, ed. Thomas Hutchinson, pp. 935, 936.

¹⁸"Fair Star of evening, Splendour of the west," l. 1.

¹⁹"I grieved for Buonaparte, with a vain," l. 8.

²⁰"Great men have been among us; hands that penned,"
 l. 4.

²¹"It is not to be thought of that the Flood," l. 11.

Another interesting topic in this study is the frequency with which Wordsworth employs certain specific words as end-rimes.²² The fact that he uses the word "free"²³ five times in the twenty sonnets of 1802 and the word "men"²⁴ four times does not necessarily indicate that he suffered a lack of words suitable for riming purposes. On the contrary, it is perhaps significant of his thinking during that year. In the year 1802 Wordsworth was a disillusioned man, not deprived of his love of humanity, but saddened by the willingness of the French people to return so easily to their subserviency. Speaking to the French people of whose cause he had been such an ardent supporter, the poet says:

When truth, when sense, when liberty were flown,
 What hardship had it been to wait an hour?
 Shame on you, feeble Heads, to slavery prone!²⁵

It is no wonder, then, that Wordsworth, thinking on such problems, repeats again and again the words "free" and

²²See Appendix G.

²³"It is a beauteous evening, calm and free,"
 l. 1; "Here, on our native soil, we breathe once more,"
 l. 10; "Inland, within a hollow vale, I stood," l. 14;
 "Once did She hold the gorgeous east in fee," l. 5; "Milton!
 thou shouldst be living at this hour," l. 11.

²⁴"Toussaint, the most unhappy man of men," l. 1;
 "Milton! thou shouldst be living at this hour," l. 6;
 "When I have borne in memory what has tamed," l. 10; "Great
 men have been among us; hands that penned," l. 14.

²⁵"Is it a reed that's shaken by the wind," ll. 12-14.

"men." They seem like echoes of a faith which has been badly shaken.

From this brief study of the end-rimes in the sonnets of 1802 we recognize the fact that Wordsworth in his reliance upon simple Teutonic words, in his skill in the use of end-rimes, and in his ability to build sensuous feeling through the use of assonance, enriched and enlarged the meaning of the sonnets.

CHAPTER III

IMAGERY

In studying the imagery to be found in Wordsworth's sonnets, we shall look at the images not as isolated words or pictures, or as isolated emotions evoked by those pictures, but rather evaluate them as to how much and in what ways they contribute to the intention of the poet in the particular sonnet involved. To Wordsworth, each poem had a purpose, and by his own statement he tried to avoid using any words which did not lead to and sustain that purpose:

. . . . for, if the Poet's subject be judiciously chosen, it will naturally, and upon fit occasion, lead him to passions the language of which, if selected truly and judiciously, must necessarily be dignified and variegated, and alive with metaphors and figures. I forbear to speak of an incongruity which would shock the intelligent Reader, should the Poet interweave any foreign splendour of his own with that which the passion naturally suggest [sic]: it is sufficient to say that such addition is unnecessary. And, surely, it is more probable that those passages, which with propriety abound with metaphors and figures, will have their due effect, if, upon other occasions where the passions are of a milder character, the style also be subdued and temperate.¹

Although there are many instances in which Wordsworth made excellent use of imagery, I believe that his greatness as a poet lies more in the ideas which he was presenting than

¹The Poetical Works of Wordsworth, ed. Thomas Hutchinson, p. 937.

in the images which sought to vivify those ideas. Fully aware that we mar the total impression of a poem by separating the idea from the experience, I shall do so here only in order to obtain a more detailed analysis of the imagery.

According to Professor Fred B. Millett there are six basic types of imagery: sight, sound, touch, kinesthetic, smell, and taste.² Mr. Millet subdivides the sight imagery into several parts such as sight-color, sight-size, etc. Although I shall use Mr. Millet's method of analysis in this chapter, I shall not do so in such a detailed manner but shall confine my discussion to the broad divisions of the types of images mentioned above.

Taking a general view of the sonnets, I believe that even the most casual reader would notice a predominance of the visual, the auditory, and the kinesthetic types of imagery, although Wordsworth makes a moderate use of the tactual, as well. As for the images of smell and taste in these sonnets, we could almost say that they were non-existent. Although there are such images, they appear infrequently and seldom appeal directly to the senses of smell or taste. Often we find that their appeal is primarily visual. Perhaps it would be well to point out before we begin the analysis that a word may be classed as an image of more than one type.

²Reading Poetry (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1950), p. 50.

An example of this might be the word "flower" which could be both visual and olfactory, and at the same time might even be classed as tactual if it were referred to as brushing against your cheek, for instance.

The most noticeable use of visual imagery in the sonnets lies in the use of words indicating light. Approximately sixty per cent of the sonnets have some reference to the idea of light, many of them using the word "light" itself. Other frequently used words indicating light are "gleam," "shine," "bright," "sun," "moon," "star," and "flame." Mr. Lionel Trilling, in discussing the poet's "Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood," makes some remarks about these references to light which Wordsworth made in many of his poems:

To be sure, he writes very often about gleams. The word "gleam" is a favorite one with him, and a glance at the Lane Cooper concordance will confirm our impression that Wordsworth, whenever he has a moment of insight or happiness, talks about it in the language of light.³

In the sonnet, "I watch, and long have watched, with calm regret," there are numerous light images which it would perhaps be well to analyze in their relation to the meaning of the poem. Since we are regarding the poem as a unit, it will be impossible not to point out the contributions made by other types of images, although these

³The Liberal Imagination (New York: The Viking Press, 1950), p. 136.

other images will be discussed more fully later. Note particularly the light images in the following sonnet:

I watch, and long have watched, with calm regret
 Yon slowly-sinking star--immortal Sire
 (So might he seem) of all the glittering quire!
 Blue ether still surrounds him--yet--and yet;
 But now the horizon's rocky parapet
 Is reached, where, forfeiting his bright attire,
 He burns--transmuted to a dusky fire--
 Then pays submissively the appointed debt
 To the flying moments, and is seen no more.
 Angels and gods! We struggle with our fate,
 While health, power, glory, from their height decline,
 Depressed; and then extinguished; and our state,
 In this, how different, lost Star, from thine,
 That no to-morrow shall our beams restore!

Obviously the light images stand out above all the others. In this one sonnet there are at least seven light images: "star," "glittering," "bright," "burns," "fire," "Star," and "beams." The mere abundance of these images, however, does not necessarily indicate their effectiveness.

Let us examine the poem and try to establish the degree to which the poet was successful in making these images contribute to his purpose. To this end, let us first determine the purpose of the poem and then decide to what extent the images add to or detract from that purpose. Briefly, the theme of the poem involves a comparison of the life of man with the life of the star. Wordsworth seems to envy the star's calm acceptance of its fate in contrast to man's frantic efforts to hold on to what he has. The poet's envy is carried further in the last two lines in

which he regrets the fact that man, unlike the star, cannot regain or renew his "health, power, glory" with the coming of another day. The purpose is inherent in the theme: to show how man struggles vainly to keep his possessions, whereas it might be better if he could, like the star, accept his fate with submission.

Now, let us take a line by line analysis of the poem, with particular regard to the visual imagery involving light. In the first line we have the visual image of the poet standing watching regretfully. What is he watching? The answer is "Yon slowly-sinking star," a visual yet kinesthetic image showing the calm and peace with which the star is departing from sight. Naturally, to watch the star, the poet looks up, but I think that this looking up is emotional as well as physical in that the poet is looking up in admiration and is aspiring to be like the star. This one star which the poet admires seems even greater than all the "glittering quire." The picture is of all the stars shining in their brightness, but this one is the father of them all, the "Sire." Then we have the strong visual image of the star's reaching "the horizon's rocky parapet," a protective wall overlooking eternity, from which we can imagine the star on the brink for a moment

. . . . forfeiting his bright attire,
He burns--transmuted to a dusky fire.

Note that the brightness here becomes duller before the star disappears from view, just as man's powers and health dull before death; yet the star "pays submissively the appointed debt." Here is a powerful kinesthetic image, "submissively," not powerful in the sense of tension, but in that of relaxation. Two lines down we see man giving up the same dear possessions. Submissively? No! The poet says, "We struggle with our fate," and the reader finds it impossible to avoid the impact of the word "struggle" contrasting so sharply with the submission of the star. In line twelve Wordsworth uses the word "extinguished" in regard to man's loss of "health, power, glory." Man does not, like the star, voluntarily cast off any bright attire which he may have had, but struggling to keep it loses it shamefully in that it slowly, unwillingly declines and is then extinguished, merely smothered out with no chance of revival.

Proceeding to auditory images, we find Wordsworth exceptionally aware of the sounds about him. Especially is this noticeable in his many references to birds, and from the variety of birds mentioned in the sonnets we must conclude that the poet was familiar with many types of birds, by their appearance, or their song, or by both. Considering the fact that in his visual imagery Wordsworth deals little with details, I think it noteworthy that he mentions birds specifically by name. One of these is the thrush, and from

the following quotation, as well as others, the reader realizes the intense pleasure which is usually the result of a calm which Wordsworth derives from listening to the singing of birds:

Exulting Warbler! eased a fretted brain,
And in a moment charmed my cares to rest.⁴

Another bird mentioned is the swan, of whose singing the poet says:

A most melodious requiem, a supreme
And perfect harmony of notes, achieved
By a fair Swan on drowsy billows heaved,
O'er which her pinions shed a silver gleam.⁵

In the melody of the swan Wordsworth gains that peace which means so much to him. The phrase, "melodious requiem," contributes to this sensation, and the kinesthetic image, "drowsy," adds to the effect. As Shelley was inspired by the music of the nightingale, so, too, was Wordsworth thrilled:

Groves that inspire the Nightingale to trill
And modulate, with subtle reach of skill
Elsewhere unmatched, her ever-varying lay.⁶

Wordsworth was especially fond of the voice of the cuckoo:

Not the whole warbling grove in concert heard
When sunshine follows shower, the breast can thrill

⁴"Hark! 'tis the Thrush, undaunted, undeprest,"
ll. 7-8.

⁵"I heard (alas! 'twas only in a dream)," ll. 5-8.

⁶"Fame tells of groves--from England far away,"
ll. 2-4.

Like the first summons, Cuckoo! of thy bill,
With its twin notes inseparably paired.⁷

De Selincourt's notes on Wordsworth's "The Cuckoo at Laverna" give us a better insight into the poet's love of the singing of birds. On this visit to Laverna, a convent finished by St. Francis of Assisi, Wordsworth was vexed that his companion, Robinson, heard the singing of the cuckoo before he did. Robinson says:

I recollect perfectly well that I heard the cuckoo at Laverna twice before he heard it; and that it absolutely fretted him that my ear was first favoured; and that he exclaimed with delight, "I hear it! I hear it!" It was at Laverna too, that he led me to expect that he had found a subject on which he would write; and that was a love which birds bore to St. Francis.⁸

Miss Batho contends that Wordsworth "seems to be the first Englishman--we might say with little exaggeration, the first modern European--to understand St. Francis, and he got his understanding not from books but from less than a full day's visit, on May 25, 1837, on the way to Perugia."⁹ At that time Wordsworth was sixty-seven years of age, and his failure to hear the cuckoo immediately brought to him a feeling of sadness which he described in the following passage:

⁷"Not the whole warbling grove in concert heard,"
ll. 1-4.

⁸William Wordsworth, The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth, ed. E. de Selincourt and Helen Darbishire (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1946), III, 496.

⁹Edith C. Batho, The Later Wordsworth (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1933), p. 297.

Among a thousand delightful feelings connected in my mind with the voice of the Cuckoo, there is a personal one which is rather melancholy. I was first convinced that age had dulled my hearing, by not being able to catch the sound at the same distance as the younger companions of my walks; and of this failure I had a proof upon the occasion that suggested these verses. I did not hear the sound till Mr. Robinson had twice or thrice directed my attention to it.¹⁰

The sonnet, "Not the whole warbling grove in concert heard," was published in 1827. The exact date of its composition is unknown, but we reason that it was at least ten years before "The Cuckoo at Laverna." It is reasonable to assume that the poet's auditory powers were then in excellent condition.

Some of the other birds mentioned by Wordsworth are the dove,¹¹ the wren,¹² the linnet,¹³ the lark,¹⁴ and the eagle.¹⁵ Note the element of contrast in the following reference to the eagle, whom Wordsworth refers to as "the imperial Bird of Rome":

Aloft, the imperial Bird of Rome invokes
Departed ages, shedding where he flew

¹⁰The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth, ed. E. de Selincourt and Helen Darbishire, III, 495.

¹¹"Wait, prithee, wait!" this answer Lesbia threw."

¹²"Change me, some God, into that breathing rose."

¹³"The Lovers took within this ancient grove."

¹⁴"Say, ye far-travelled clouds, far-seeing hills."

¹⁵"A dark plume fetch me from yon blasted yew,"

11. 3-10.

Loose fragments of wild wailing, that bestrew
 The clouds and thrill the chambers of the rocks;
 And into silence hush the timorous flocks,
 That, calmly couching while the nightly dew
 Moistened each fleece, beneath the twinkling stars
 Slept amid that lone Camp on Hardknot's height.¹⁶

His blending of the visual and the auditory is superb in the image of the bird shedding loose fragments of his wailing which split the clouds apart, thrill the rocks in their resting places, and silence the nervous sheep below. The image of the eagle's wailing being shed into loose fragments catches the attention of the reader, first, because of its strangeness, but later because the reader is suddenly aware of its aptness and feels that the imagery can be no better.

Musical instruments, too, are often mentioned by Wordsworth in his auditory imagery. In the poem, "Scorn not the Sonnet; Critic, you have frowned," the sonnet is compared to three musical instruments: the lute, the pipe, and the trumpet;¹⁷

. . . . the melody
 Of this small lute gave ease to Petrarch's wound;
 A thousand times this pipe did Tasso sound;

 and when a damp
 Fell round the path of Milton, in his hand
 The Thing became a trumpet; whence he blew
 Soul-animating strains--alas, too few!

¹⁶Ibid., ll. 3-10.

¹⁷"Scorn not the Sonnet; Critic, you have frowned," ll. 3-5, 11-14.

In the imagery here Wordsworth builds from the soft, rather light tonal qualities of the lute to the louder sounds of the pipe, climaxing then with the penetrating clarion voice of the trumpet to indicate the power of the sonnet issuing from the pen of Milton. Other musical instruments spoken of in the sonnets are the harp,¹⁸ the horn,¹⁹ bells,²⁰ pibroch,²¹ drums,²² and the flute. Of the flute the poet says:

O Friend! thy flute has breathed a harmony
Softly resounded through this rocky glade;
Yet sacred to me this Mountain's head,
Whence I have risen, uplifted on the breeze
Of harmony, above all earthly care.²³

In those lines the poet reveals again the soothing effect which music always gives him, whether it be of birds or of man-made instruments.

One of the most frequent auditory images in the sonnets is that of the sound of the wind, and when the wind is given the attributes of a musical instrument, the imagery

18"O for the help of Angels to complete."

19"The world is too much with us; late and soon."

20"When human touch (as monkish books attest)."

21"The pibroch's note, discountenanced or mute."

22"Shout, for a mighty Victory is won."

23"The fairest, brightest, hues of ether fade,"

ll. 3-4, 12-14.

is particularly effective:

The northern Wind, to call thee to the chase,
Must blow to-night his bugle horn. . . .²⁴

The lines from the following sonnet composed during a storm carry the imagery further:

The wind is now thy organist;--a clank
(We know not whence) ministers for a bell
To mark some change of service. As the swell
Of music reached its height, and even when sank
The notes, in prelude, ROSLIN! to a blank
Of silence, how it thrilled thy sumptuous roof,
Pillars, and arches. . . .²⁵

There, too, we note again the element of contrast as the music swells in volume and then drops into nothingness, and both the music of the wind and the silence which follows thrill the poet.

In one of the most striking auditory and visual images, it seems to me that Wordsworth fails to sustain the high quality of the imagery and leaves the reader with a sense of flatness and anti-climax:

Days passed--and Monte Calvo would not clear
His head from mist; and, as the wind sobbed through
Albano's dripping Ilex avenue,
My dull forebodings in a Peasant's ear
Found casual vent. She said, "Be of good cheer." . . .²⁶

²⁴"With how sad steps, O Moon, thou climb'st the sky," ll. 7-8.

²⁵"The wind is now thy organist;--a clank," ll. 1-7.

²⁶"Days passed--and Monte Calvo would not clear," ll. 1-5.

Nowhere could the imagery be more vivid than in those first three lines. The reader sees the mountain, almost as a person, shaking its head to free it from the surrounding mist, and then hears the wind, not rustling or howling, but "sobbing," a pathetic word, through "Albano's dripping Ilex avenue." The reader sees the tears of the sobbing wind, not mere rain or mist, as it lies there. But then the poet disappoints us as he relapses into commonplace wording.

In the auditory images, perhaps better than in any other, we see the poet's love of contrast, which we have already mentioned briefly. Note his excellent use of this device in the following:

Abruptly paused the strife;--the field throughout
 Resting upon his arms each warrior stood,
 Checked in the very act and deed of blood,
 With breath suspended, like a listening scout.
 O Silence! thou wert mother of a shout
 That through the texture of yon azure dome
 Cleaves its glad way, a cry of harvest home
 Uttered to Heaven in ecstasy devout.²⁷

In the first four lines, Wordsworth, by means of visual and kinesthetic imagery, creates a sense of intense quietness, but a quietness portending tumult, which the poet portrays with the words "checked," "breath suspended," and "listening." Then comes the marvellous line, "O Silence! thou wert mother of a shout," presenting to the eye and to the ear the relief

²⁷"Abruptly paused the strife;--the field throughout,"
 ll. 1-8.

that comes as the tension is released in sound. The kinesthetic imagery here is equally effective in the word "cleaves," a word indicating a forceful piercing of the sky, which the poet refers to as "yon azure dome."

Another example of the use of contrast comes in these lines in which Wordsworth is commenting upon a column once intended as a monument to Napoleon but now cast by the wayside in the Simplon Pass:

The Soul transported sees, from hint of thine,
 Crimes which the great Avenger's hand provoke,
 Hears combats whistling o'er the ensanguined heath:
 What groans! what shrieks! what quietness in death!²⁸

The auditory images swell in volume with the uses of "whistling," "groans," and then to piercing "shrieks." Then, there is an abrupt change as the poet drops the reader suddenly from the unbearable noise connected with death on the battlefield, and turns with sharp contrast to the phrase, "what quietness in death!"

Kinesthetic imagery in the sonnets chiefly involves words of relaxation, such as "calm," "rest," "repose," "couched," "pensive," "peace," and "glide." The following sonnet is a good illustration of the poet's use of imagery leading to a feeling of peace, a sense of serenity and calm:

²⁸"Ambition--following down this far-famed slope,"
 ll. 11-14.

Calm is all nature as a resting wheel.
 The kine are couched upon the dewy grass;
 The horse alone, seen dimly as I pass,
 Is cropping audibly his later meal:
 Dark is the ground; a slumber seems to steal
 O'er vale, and mountain, and the starless sky.
 Now, in this blank of things, a harmony,
 Home-felt, and home-created, comes to heal
 That grief for which the senses still supply
 Fresh food; for only then, when memory
 Is hushed, am I at rest. My Friends! restrain
 Those busy cares that would allay my pain;
 Oh! leave me to myself, nor let me feel
 The officious touch that makes me droop again.

The simile in the first line is apt and unusual in the comparison of nature's calm to an unmoving wheel. "Calm" and "resting" are both images of relaxation, and in the next line we find a third, "couched," a favorite word with Wordsworth. In the next line there is the element of contrast in one moving and noisy object, the horse. To bring out this contrast the poet uses just one word, "alone." Visual imagery then is employed in the word "dark" which is associated with sleep and rest, and this idea is continued with the word "slumber." This "slumber seems to steal"; and even though movement is involved, the movement is quiet, even stealthy, in its quietness. Then, with the phrase "blank of things" the poet sustains this feeling of perfect relaxation and adds to it with such words as "harmony," "heal," "hushed," and "rest."

The poet's desire for calm and peace is revealed in these lines in which he compares the soul of man with the birds of the air and the fish of the sea:

. . . . Nor, while the limbs repose,
 Will we forget that, as the fowl can keep
 Absolute stillness, poised aloft in air,
 And fishes front, unmoved the torrent's sweep,--
 So may the Soul, through powers that Faith bestows,
 Win rest, and ease, and peace, with bliss that Angels
 share.²⁹

In those few lines we find seven kinesthetic images of calm:
 "repose," "stillness," "poised," "unmoved," "rest," "ease,"
 and "peace."

In the following lines from still another sonnet
 the reader observes the poet's love of tranquillity as
 contrasted with a more exciting but passing type of life:

Peace let us seek,--to steadfast things attune
 Calm expectations, leaving to the gay
 And volatile their love of transient bowers,
 The house that cannot pass away be ours.³⁰

This attitude on the part of Wordsworth makes him the type
 of poet who appeals chiefly to the mature reader who is more
 interested in the lasting qualities of the spirit than in
 the gaiety and glory of the physical world.

"Glide" is a favorite word with the poet. Let us
 note in what ways or in what connections he uses it. As
 we should expect, Wordsworth uses "glide" to describe the
 movements of the River Duddon:

²⁹"Doubling and doubling with laborious walk,"
 ll. 9-14.

³⁰"The most alluring clouds that mount the sky,"
 ll. 11-14.

Majestic Duddon, over smooth flat sands
 Gliding in silence with unfettered sweep!³¹

Every image in these two lines seems to me to contribute to the idea of calm, even beginning with the word "majestic," which implies a calm dignity. The tactual imagery "smooth flat sands" also adds to the same impression, in that the image is opposed to roughness which is associated with troubled times. Then, "gliding in silence," not rushing along in noisy torrents, contributes to the general atmosphere of peace, which is strengthened by the last phrase, "unfettered sweep," indicating absolute freedom. We find "glide" used not only in connection with a body of water but also in more unexpected ways:

Obscure not yet these silent avenues
 Of stateliest architecture, where the Forms
 Of nun-like females, with soft motion, glide!³²

In the realm of fancy Wordsworth makes use of the same kinesthetic image:

What wonder if at midnight, by the side
 Of Sanguinetto or broad Thrasymene,
 The clang of arms is heard, and phantoms glide,
 Unhappy ghosts in troops by moonlight seen.³³

In the following lines Wordsworth uses "glide" in reference to the moon:

³¹"Not hurled precipitous from steep to steep,"
 ll. 7-8.

³²"Bruges I saw attired with golden light," ll. 12-14.

³³"For action born, existing to be tried," ll. 5-8.

. . . . till among the scattered clouds
 One with its kindling edge declares that soon
 Will reappear before the uplifted eye
 A Form as bright, as beautiful a moon,
 To glide in open prospect through clear sky.³⁴

There are many other instances of the poet's use of "glide," but these, I think, are sufficient to show variety in its use in the sonnets.

The fact that Wordsworth seems to prefer kinesthetic images of calm does not mean that he, at times, does not produce some powerful images involving tension. "Many psychologists believe that all so-called images of movement are really suppressed or incipient actual movements."³⁵ I think the reader would be dull, indeed, if he did not experience some contraction of the muscles in reading some of these images which I shall present to you:

From the fierce aspect of this River, throwing
 His giant body o'er the steep rock's brink,
 Back in astonishment and fear we shrink:
 But, gradually a calmer look bestowing,
 Flowers we espy beside the torrent growing.³⁶

Here again we see the device of contrast employed as Wordsworth turns from the images "throwing" and "shrink" to "calmer" and the visual image, "flowers," indicating meekness and quiet.

³⁴"Who but is pleased to watch the moon on high,"
 ll. 4-8.

³⁵June E. Downey, Creative Imagination (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1929), p. 13.

³⁶"From the fierce aspect of this River, throwing,"
 ll. 1-5.

"Shrink," incidentally, is a word which the poet uses frequently throughout the sonnets. Here is another quotation, utilizing strong kinesthetic and visual imagery:

While trees, dim seen, in frenzied numbers, tear
 The lingering remnant of their yellow hair.
 And shivering wolves, surprised with darkness, howl
 As if the sun were not. . . .³⁷

"Frenzied," "tear," and "shivering" put the reader into that tension of fear of which the poet is writing. An examination of the remainder of the sonnet reveals once again a contrast as the poem ends upon a note of tranquillity.

The image of water is often used by Wordsworth, not only in the sonnets to the River Duddon but in many others as well. In a sonnet dedicated to liberty and order, he speaks of world conditions in which passion prevails over good sense and moderation:

And nations sink; or, struggling to be free,
 Are doomed to flounder on, like wounded whales
 Tossed on the bosom of a stormy sea.³⁸

The kinesthetic imagery in this passage is exceptionally effective, especially in the use of "struggling," a word used often, and in "flounder," "wounded," and "tossed." Perhaps, "wounded" is not always to be classed as a kinesthetic image, yet in these lines it implies a writhing from

³⁷"One who was suffering tumult in his soul,"
 ll. 6-9.

³⁸"As leaves are to the tree whereon they grow,"
 ll. 12-14.

the wound, the image of which is certainly strongly kinesthetic. The phrase, "bosom of a stormy sea," adds to that writhing effect in its implication of heaving. Note the unusual kinesthetic imagery in the following quotation in which Wordsworth is describing a ship:

A goodly Vessel did I then espy
Come like a giant from a haven broad;
And lustily along the bay she strode,
Her tackling rich, and of apparel high.³⁹

Here, the use of the word "strode" in connection with the movement of a ship is such an unexpected image that I think it is all the more effective, raising in the reader's mind the idea of boldness which the ship seems to possess. The kinesthetic imagery in the following quotation is worthy of notice:

Not, like his great Compeers, indignantly
Doth DANUBE spring to life! The wandering Stream
(Who loves the Cross, yet to the Crescent's gleam
Unfolds a willing breast) with infant glee
Slips from his prison walls: and Fancy, free
To follow in his track of silver light,
Mounts on rapt wing. . . .⁴⁰

There he speaks of the Danube River as a playful baby, scampering away from its confinement. Wordsworth is equally effective in his imagery regarding a little rill:

. . . . It quivers down the hill,
Furrowing its shallow way with dubious will.⁴¹

³⁹"With Ships the sea was sprinkled far and nigh," ll. 5-8.

⁴⁰"Not, like his great Compeers, indignantly," ll. 1-7.

⁴¹"There is a little unpretending Rill," ll. 4-5.

"Crouch" and "cleave" are strong kinesthetic images frequently used by the poet. The first two lines of "When haughty expectations prostrate lie" derive a vividness from the image "crouches" which would otherwise be lacking:

When haughty expectations prostrate lie,
And grandeur crouches like a guilty thing.

The image "cleave" gives added strength to the sonnet on the subjugation of Switzerland in which Wordsworth urges the people to cling to the voices of liberty which remain to them:

Then cleave, O cleave to that which still is left;
For, high-souled Maid, what sorrow would it be
That Mountain floods should thunder as before,
And Ocean bellow from his rocky shore,
And neither awful Voice be heard by thee!⁴²

Notice the repetition of "cleave," but separated by the word "O," a word poignant in its desire when placed with "cleave," and giving the image of an agonizing imploring.

Wordsworth, along with all mankind throughout the ages, seems to have had the desire to fly as do the birds. This is evident not only in some definite expressions of this aspiration but also in the frequent use of such words as "mount," "soar," and "rise." In the following quotation there is the direct statement of the poet's longing to fly:

Mount, tuneful Bird, and join the immortal quires!
She soared--and I awoke, struggling in vain to follow.⁴³

⁴²"Two Voices are there; one if of the sea,"
ll. 10-14.

⁴³"I heard (alas! 'twas only in a dream)," ll. 13-14.

In these two lines what reader is there who does not feel the tension of his muscles as he, too, finds himself "struggling" with the poet in that impossible but ever desirable attainment?

In my opinion Wordsworth's tactual imagery fails to attain the effectiveness of the visual, the auditory, and the kinesthetic. The poet frequently uses the word "touch" but scarcely ever dwells upon the sensation. One of the few instances in which he does so involves two lovers at the River Duddon, with the young man assisting his sweetheart in leaping over part of the water by holding out his hands to hers:

. . . . the thrilling touch
Both feel,⁴⁴

When Wordsworth visited in Florence, he sat in a chair which had once been occupied by Dante. His sonnet upon that subject seems to me to offer ample opportunity for tactual imagery, but Wordsworth chooses to ignore that possibility. He gazes for a long time at the chair, thinking about the immortal Dante, and then sits down with no other comment than:

Bold with the thought, in reverence I sate down,
And, for a moment, filled that empty Throne.⁴⁵

Often Wordsworth uses tactual images involving heat and cold,

⁴⁴"Not so that Pair whose youthful spirits dance,"
ll. 9-10.

⁴⁵"Under the shadow of a stately Pile," ll. 13-14.

but seldom dwells on them. Here is an example, more effective for its visual than its tactual imagery:

Not seldom, when with heat the valleys faint,
Thy handmaid Frost with spangled tissue quaint
Thy cradle decks⁴⁶

In the following quotation there is excellent tactual imagery, but Wordsworth, by his own confession, only wrote this sonnet to prove that he could write that type and therefore attached no great importance to it:⁴⁷

Speak--though this soft warm heart, once free to hold
A thousand tender pleasures, thine and mine,
Be left more desolate, more dreary cold
Than a forsaken bird's nest filled with snow
'Mid its own bush of leafless eglantine.⁴⁸

In his description of a wild duck's nest Wordsworth indicates an awareness of the tactual:

. . . . a hollow crown
Of golden leaves inlaid with silver down,
Fine as the mother's softest plumes allow.⁴⁹

In the words "down," "fine," and "softest plumes" the poet presents tactual images. An examination of the sonnets shows that Wordsworth often uses the word "soft" or some form of it, but not always to the degree of effectiveness which we see here.

⁴⁶"Child of the clouds! remote from every taint,"
ll. 4-6.

⁴⁷Notes in The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth,
ed. E. de Selincourt and Helen Darbishire, III, 435-436.

⁴⁸"Why art thou silent! Is thy love a plant,"
ll. 9-14.

⁴⁹"The imperial Consort of the Fairy-king," ll. 10-12.

The following quotation is, I think, one of the most beautiful examples of Wordsworth's use of tactual imagery:

What hope, what joy can sunshine bring to thee,
Or the soft breezes from the Atlantic sea,
The dews of morn, or April's tender shower?
Stroke merciful and welcome would that be
Which should extend thy branches on the ground.⁵⁰

Note the elements of nature which are viewed from the tactual aspect: "sunshine," in its warmth; "soft breezes," in their coolness; and the "dews of morn, or April's tender shower," with their pleasant moisture. In this sonnet and in many others Wordsworth uses tactual images involving soft breezes or perhaps lusty gales. In the following quotation he uses tactual images of the heat of the sun, the roughness of the wind, and the feel of the moss:

Mark the concentrated hazels that enclose
Yon old grey Stone, protected from the ray
Of noontide suns:--and even the beams that ply
And glance, while wantonly the rough wind blows,
Are seldom free to touch the moss that grows
Upon that roof. . . .⁵¹

Note the contrast in the tactual imagery of this next quotation:

While not a leaf seems faded; while the fields,
With ripening harvest prodigally fair,
In brightest sunshine bask; this nipping air,
Sent from some distant clime where Winter wields
His icy scimitar, a foretaste yields
Of bitter change, and bids the flowers beware.⁵²

⁵⁰"Oak of Guernica! Tree of holier power," ll. 6-10.

⁵¹"Mark the concentrated hazels that enclose," ll. 1-6.

⁵²"While not a leaf seems faded; while the fields," ll. 1-6.

Frequently, Wordsworth uses the tactual image of a weight which is pressing down. In speaking of the joyous notes of the thrush in the evening as compared with the subdued notes of the following morning, he attributes a feeling of weight to the time of day, thus evoking an unusual and effective image:

'Tis He whose yester-evening's high disdain
 Beat back the roaring storm--but how subdued
 His day-break note, a sad vicissitude!
 Does the hour's drowsy weight his glee restrain?⁵³

Sometimes the imagery is deliberately unpleasant as in the following:

. . . . We have heard a strain
 Of triumph, how the labouring Danube bore
 A weight of hostile corpses: drenched with gore.⁵⁴

One other example should be sufficient to reveal Wordsworth's varied uses of the image of weight. The following is a particularly striking image:

And they could hear his ghostly song who trod
 Earth, till the flesh lay on him like a load.⁵⁵

As I pointed out in the first part of this chapter, Wordsworth's images of smell and taste are weak. Wordsworth often speaks of flowers but seldom if ever names them or speaks of their fragrance. There are, however, exceptions

⁵³"'Tis He whose yester-evening's high disdain,"
 ll. 1-4.

⁵⁴"The martial courage of a day is vain," ll. 5-7.

⁵⁵"Ye shadowy Beings, that have rights and claims,"
 ll. 6-7.

to this, particularly in the sonnet "Flowers,"⁵⁶ in which he mentions specifically "hawthorn bowers," "the strawberry of the wilderness," the "trembling eyebright," and the "thyme." In this sonnet, too, the poet uses the word "fragrance":

And caught the fragrance which the sundry flowers,
Fed by the stream with soft perpetual showers,
Plenteously yielded to the vagrant breeze.⁵⁷

Images showing the poet's awareness of the sense of smell come rarely and never occupy more than one or two lines of the poem, as in the following:

. . . . Soft airs, from shrub and flower,
Waft fragrant greeting to each silent grave.⁵⁸

These next lines show excellent visual and tactual imagery as well as olfactory:

. . . . Blue-eyed May
Shall soon behold this border thickly set
With bright jonquils, their odours lavishing
On the soft-west-wind and his frolic peers.⁵⁹

One more example almost exhausts any direct appeals to the olfactory sense:

". . . . while earth her morning incense breathes."⁶⁰

⁵⁶"Ere yet our course was graced with social trees."

⁵⁷Ibid., ll. 6-8.

⁵⁸"Where holy ground begins, unhallowed ends,"
ll. 9-10.

⁵⁹"Lone Flower, hemmed in with snows, and white as they," ll. 8-11.

⁶⁰"Pastor and Patriot!--at whose bidding rise," l. 11.

Perhaps Wordsworth did not have a sense of smell. If he did, there is little evidence within the imagery of the sonnets.

As for imagery involving taste, the reader is almost compelled to do without it entirely. Such images are infrequent; and when they do appear, they seldom make a direct appeal to that sense. When enjoying the sonnets, the reader will note that generally all which he is allowed to taste is water, and even that is not always pleasant:

Thy Art be Nature; the live current quaff,
And let the groveller sip his stagnant pool.⁶¹

In the following lines Wordsworth refers to hearing as drinking, in a synaesthetic image, a device not uncommon among poets:

Yet some with apprehensive ear shall drink
A dirge devoutly breathed o'er sorrows past.⁶²

The meat-lover will scarcely be satisfied with this next image:

. . . . where Adam Bell might deign
With Clym o' the Clough, were they alive again,
To kill for merry feast their venison.⁶³

The reader comes to the conclusion that Wordsworth either had no particular relish for his food, or did not think he should discuss such a mundane matter as food within the

61 "A Poet!--He hath put his heart to school," ll. 5-6.

62 "I dropped my pen; and listened to the Wind," ll. 9-10.

63 "The forest huge of ancient Caledon," ll. 6-8.

bounds of the sonnet. After him, Keats made more use of this realm of experience, but the rich sensations arrived at in the mouth found their literary interpreter in the twentieth century prose writer, Virginia Woolf.

From the evidence presented in this chapter we can see that Wordsworth often presents imagery of great vividness and force. He is at his best when dealing with the visual, the auditory, and the kinesthetic. His other imagery is weak, perhaps from lack of interest on his part. With Wordsworth thought predominates, and undoubtedly he feels best able to convey his ideas in the realm of the visual, the auditory, and the kinesthetic. To say that the other types of images are lacking in the sonnets does not necessarily imply that the critic believes this lack a defect in Wordsworth's poetic genius. With Wordsworth the purpose of the poem is all-important, and it is in this purposive realm that the poet achieves true greatness.

CHAPTER IV

IDEA

In presenting the ideas expressed in the sonnets I shall make no attempt to analyze fully the philosophy of Wordsworth, but there is one aspect of his philosophy which so pervades the majority of the sonnets that it would be wise to give our attention to it at the outset of this discussion. I refer to Stoicism, and in giving Wordsworth's views in this philosophy, I shall quote extensively from Miss Jane Worthington, who in her book, Wordsworth's Reading of Roman Prose,¹ makes a thorough and comprehensive study of this subject.

According to Miss Worthington, Wordsworth adopted the Stoic system of ethics not because he had read the Roman Stoics but rather because the Stoics "taught a philosophy like his own. He was justified in adopting portions of their philosophy because each portion could be perfectly integrated with his own total philosophy."² Stoicism, to which Wordsworth subscribed, may be divided according to Miss Worthington, into three parts--nature, reason, and

¹(New Haven: Yale University Press, 1946).

²Ibid., p. 46.

ethics³--each of which must be considered separately although all three are basically intertwined.

Summarizing the poet's beliefs in regard to nature, Miss Worthington states:

. . . . Wordsworth and the Stoics both believed that the ultimate reality was a unity embracing everything that is. Both conceived this unity as possessing an active principle, which may be identified with God. As the active principle in the universe, God orders the life of everything and, therefore, makes all things good.⁴

As for reason, Miss Worthington says that Wordsworth had no logical philosophy of reason, but whatever he did believe on the subject agreed basically with the teachings of the Stoic philosophers.⁵

For one thing, Wordsworth believed that the senses provide accurate knowledge. . . . Like the Stoics he also believed that the mind of man possesses certain innate ideas. Wordsworth held that man possesses these innate ideas by virtue of the divinity of the human mind. . . .

.
 In pursuing the implications of a belief in transcendental knowledge, Wordsworth reached conclusions similar to those of the Stoics. First, the senses are subservient to the mind. . . . Another conclusion based upon his faith in innate ideas was that the common consent of mankind is evidence of true knowledge. . . . A third conclusion is that the mind of man, sharing divinity with God, enjoys a creative power of its own. In developing this idea Wordsworth reached a whole new conception of the imagination

³Ibid., p. 45.

⁴Ibid., p. 52.

⁵Ibid., p. 55.

and its functions and went far beyond anything in Stoic logic.⁶

The ethical aspect of Stoicism is perhaps of most vital importance in a consideration of Wordsworth's poetry. For his ethical philosophy as compared with that of the Stoics we again quote Miss Worthington:

The ethics of Stoicism is concentrated in the writings of Wordsworth published between 1807 and 1815.

. . . . A heaping up of parallel passages for this poem ["The Character of the Happy Warrior"], or for others of 1807, shows only that Wordsworth has adopted in full the ethical teaching of the Stoics. Virtue is now for him the only good; it is attained by a life according to the laws of nature, laws which reason alone discovers; it is rewarded with peace, security, and constancy. Everything that is a man's own is controlled by his reason; anything not his own is outside him and cannot affect the permanence of his inner tranquillity. In fact, the greater the adversity, the stronger and more consistent becomes the moral character. With such a faith Wordsworth can no longer regard the powers of external nature as the sole dependable sources for man's own happiness and power. Wordsworth no longer limits man's virtues to those fostered by the external forms of nature. reason is the ruling principle of man. In the light of reason man is prepared to face whatever happens.

. . . . As Wordsworth's desire for permanence becomes more and more urgent, he comes to cherish duty mainly for its external nature. The laws are always with us, and by these laws "Duty exists," but nothing else--no possessions, opinions, passions.

Again Wordsworth subscribes to the strict Stoic interpretation of duty as an obedience to the laws of nature. In obeying these laws man attains a self-consistency, a kind of self-permanence.⁷

⁶Ibid., pp. 55, 56.

⁷Ibid., pp. 59, 66-67, 69.

Miss Worthington refers briefly to the Stoic philosophy that is evident in the "Sonnets Dedicated to Liberty," for her primary emphasis is upon the longer poems. I shall be able, therefore, to add to what she has presented since my findings demonstrate the presence of Stoicism in the majority of the sonnets, particularly those of nature.

Nature, of which Wordsworth writes frequently, reveals a unity in all things brought about by a principle, which is God, acting through all things. In the sonnet composed in Roslin Chapel during a storm, he voices his belief in this unseen principle and in the unity of all things:

. . . . From what bank
 Came those live herbs? By what hand were they sown
 Where dew falls not, where rain-drops seem unknown?
 Yet in the Temple they a friendly niche
 Share with their sculptured fellows, that, green-grown,
 Copy their beauty more and more, and preach,
 Though mute, of all things blending into one.⁸

In speaking of the River Duddon as it leaves its milder paths to plunge its way into a wilderness, he refers to this activating principle as a spirit:

Thee hath some awful Spirit impelled to leave,
 Utterly to desert, the haunts of men.⁹

Again he uses the term "spirit" in relation to a natural

⁸"The wind is now thy organist;--a clank," ll. 8-14.

⁹"O mountain Stream! the Shepherd and his Cot," ll. 9-10.

object as he speaks of the planet Venus drawing nearer to earth:

What strong allurements draws, what spirit guides,
Thee, Vesper! brightening still, as if the nearer
Thou com'st to man's abode the spot grew dearer
Night after night?¹⁰

Although Wordsworth is chiefly appreciative of the natural scenery to be found in the mountains, by streams, or in other places of solitude, his immortal sonnet composed on Westminster Bridge pays tribute to the city of London, and we feel an indefinable spirit, this time passive, as it lies at rest throughout the vast city when the day begins to dawn:

This City now doth, like a garment wear
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendour, valley, rock, or hill;
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
The river glideth at his own sweet will:
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still!¹¹

Wordsworth often speaks of the soothing, calming influence which nature exerts over him. Thus he adopted the Stoic philosophy that in a well-ordered nature man may feel that he, too, is a part of the infinite scheme of things, and that in man, as well as in nature, there is order from which proceeds harmony and peace:

¹⁰"What strong allurements draws, what spirit guides,"
ll. 1-4.

¹¹"Earth has not anything to show more fair,"
ll. 4-14.

There's not a nook within this solemn Pass
 But were an apt confessional for One
 Taught by his summer spent, his autumn gone,
 That Life is but a tale of morning grass
 Withered at eve. From scenes of art which chase
 That thought away, turn, and with watchful eyes
 Feed it 'mid Nature's old felicities,
 Rocks, rivers, and smooth lakes more clear than glass
 Untouched, unbreathed upon.¹²

In nature he recognizes elements of an enduring quality
 and gains assurance in the strength and permanency of his
 own well-being:

. . . . To the solid ground
 Of nature trusts the Mind that builds for aye;
 Convinced that there, there only, she can lay
 Secure foundations.¹³

Fancy, given free play, finds in nature transient beauties
 such as the infinite variety of forms which Wordsworth
 distinguishes in the clouds at sunset. But he turns from
 those to objects that are more enduring:

Grove, isle, with every shape of sky-built dome,
 Though clad in colours beautiful and pure,
 Find in the heart of man no natural home;
 The immortal Mind craves objects that endure:
 These cleave to it; from these it cannot roam,
 Nor they from it: their fellowship is secure.¹⁴

Wordsworth finds that seeing external nature is not essential
 to contentment and calm, but that such visual experience

¹²"There's not a nook within this solemn Pass,"
 ll. 1-9.

¹³"A volant Tribe of Bards on earth are found,"
 ll. 5-8.

¹⁴"Those words were uttered as in pensive mood,"
 ll. 9-14.

as this may be replaced by reason, which, according to Stoic philosophy, is master of the senses. Then, he goes a step farther than the Stoics in that he places "love," a Christian attribute, on an equal footing with reason. Miss Worthington points out this fact in her analysis of "The White Doe of Rylstone."¹⁵ The sonnets, too, give proof of this infusion of the element of Christianity with the Stoic beliefs:

Most sweet it is with unuplifted eyes
 To pace the ground, if path be there or none,
 While a fair region round the traveller lies
 Which he forbears again to look upon;
 Pleased rather with some soft ideal scene,
 The work of Fancy, or some happy tone
 Of meditation, slipping in between
 The beauty coming and the beauty gone.
 If Thought and Love desert us, from that day
 Let us break off all commerce with the Muse:
 With Thought and Love companions of our way,
 Whate'er the senses take or may refuse,
 The Mind's internal heaven shall shed her dews
 Of inspiration on the humblest lay.

In the sonnet to the River Duddon beginning "I thought of Thee, my partner and my guide," Wordsworth attests the fact that although he may die, all nature continues as before and the spirit moving in all things never dies. He feels that although he personally will vanish, he will still be, through his work, a part of this unity of nature, which is the ultimate reality:

¹⁵Jane Worthington, op. cit., p. 70.

For backward, Duddon! as I cast my eyes,
 I see what was, and is, and will abide;
 Still glides the Stream, and shall forever glide;
 The Form remains, the Function never dies;
 While we, the brave, the mighty, and the wise,
 We Men, who in our morn of youth defied
 The elements, must vanish;--be it so!
 Enough, if something from our hands have power
 To live, and act, and serve the future hour;
 And if, as toward the silent tomb we go,
 Through love, through hope, and faith's transcendent
 dower,
 We feel that we are greater than we know.¹⁶

Perhaps one reason for the sense of calm afforded by nature lies in the feeling of courage which Wordsworth derives from the external world:

. . . . Nor, while the limbs repose,
 Will we forget that, as the fowl can keep
 Absolute stillness, poised aloft in air,
 And fishes front, unmoved, the torrent's sweep,--
 So may the Soul, through powers that Faith bestows,
 Win rest, and ease, and peace, with bliss that Angels
 share.¹⁷

His courage to meet every day as it comes, being satisfied with present knowledge in the assurance that every event moves forward in an orderly fashion for the ultimate good is in accord with the Stoic philosophy:

O bounteous Heaven! signs true as dove and bough
 Brought to the ark are coming evermore,
 Given though we seek them not, but, while we plough
 This sea of life without a visible shore,
 Do neither promise ask nor grace implore
 In what alone is ours, the living Now.¹⁸

16 "I thought of Thee, my partner and my guide,"
 ll. 3-14.

17 "Doubling and doubling with laborious walk," ll. 9-14.

18 "Near Anio's stream I spied a gentle Dove," ll. 9-14.

Wordsworth implores us to be grateful for everything that brings us pleasure, no matter what its source:

Not loth to thank each moment for its boon
Of pure delight, come whensoever it may,
Peace let us seek,--to steadfast things attune
Calm expectations, leaving to the gay
And volatile their love of transient bowers,
The house that cannot pass away be ours.¹⁹

Thus throughout these sonnets of nature runs this Stoic philosophy, as a golden thread weaving a theme of peace, permanency and courage in a world in which all things are one and God is immanent.

Wordsworth's inherent love of nature includes a love of men, a love which the French Revolution in its earlier stages inspired; and which caused a shifting of the poet's primary interest from the beauties of nature to man's struggle for liberty:

. . . . the Revolution came as a trumpet-call to battle, which he answered by forsaking the placid contemplation of Nature for the dust and noise of political strife. Hitherto indifferent to the prosaic studies of history and politics, now revolutionary zeal stimulated what was to be a permanent interest in these matters.²⁰

There is no need here to delve into the details of Wordsworth's stay in France (1791-1792), his revolutionary ideas fostered and encouraged by Michel Beaupuy, his affair

¹⁹"The most alluring clouds that mount the sky,"
ll. 9-14.

²⁰Alfred Cobban, Edmund Burke and the Revolt Against the Eighteenth Century (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1929), p. 139.

with Annette Vallon, and his return to England in December, 1792. It is sufficient to say that Wordsworth's sympathy lay with the French people in their struggle for liberty, and it was no small shock when only two short months after his return to England, Pitt's government declared war against France:

. . . . In the ensuing conflict of loyalties, driven to choose between his country and liberty, the higher claim seemed the more abstract one, though Wordsworth and his friends never forgave Pitt for leading the country into courses which necessitated such a choice. . . . An amazing volume of invective against Pitt could be collected from the works and letters of the Lake Poets. For the time being they solved their political problem by ruthlessly abandoning all patriotic sentiments and striving to think of themselves only as citizens of the world; and so long as the cause of liberty might be supposed to be identified with the progress of the revolutionary armies, this position, while uncomfortable, was fairly tenable.

The tragedy came when France in its turn alienated their sympathies. While the glamour of republicanism lasted English democrats remained oblivious to the heinous offences against political morality which the French armies were continually committing and to the growing imperialism of the heads of the French government. Sooner or later they were bound to be disillusioned, and as it happened the critical event proved to be the invasion of Switzerland and the subversion of its republican institutions by French armies in the autumn of 1798. . . . Only then, says Wordsworth, in his tract on the Convention of Cintra, did the war begin "to be regarded by the body of the people as indeed both just and necessary." He was thinking rather of his own frame of mind, because the war cannot be said to have become popular in England until after its renewal in 1803.²¹

Wordsworth then suffered a grave disillusionment in which

²¹Ibid., pp. 140, 141.

he wrote many of his "Poems Dedicated to National Independence and Liberty," including some of his most beautiful sonnets. In the following lines written in August, 1802, in France, he contrasts his present disillusionment with the joy of July 14, 1790, when the Bastille fell and hope for liberty ran high:

And now, sole register that these things were,
Two solitary greetings have I heard,
"Good morrow, Citizen!" a hollow word,
As if a dead man spake it! Yet despair
Touches me not, though pensive as a bird
Whose vernal coverts winter hath laid bare.²²

Perhaps Wordsworth is not despairing; yet at the same time, his disillusionment is apparent when he refers to:

. . . . Citizen!" a hollow word,
As if a dead man spake it!

Wordsworth seems to be striving for the Stoical outlook, but he fails to be convincing.

In another sonnet written in France only a few days later we find Wordsworth asserting that the happy man is he who, within himself, is sufficient to meet any adversity. In short, the happy man is the Stoic. If Wordsworth has achieved this Stoic acceptance of adversity, he does not specifically say so or even imply it, and the reader doubts the poet's having yet assimilated that philosophy as his own:

²²"Jones! as from Calais southward you and I,"
ll. 9-14.

. . . . Far other show
 My youth here witnessed, in a prouder time;
 The senselessness of joy was then sublime!
 Happy is he, who, caring not for Pope,
 Consul, or King, can sound himself to know
 The destiny of Man, and live in hope.²³

Probably in this same month, August, 1802, Wordsworth wrote a sonnet to Toussaint L'Ouverture. In the following lines from that sonnet he reaffirms his Stoic belief in the activating principle of all nature and speaks with assurance of the superior power of man's mind:

. . . . Thou hast left behind
 Powers that will work for thee; air, earth, and skies;
 There's not a breathing of the common wind
 That will forget thee; thou hast great allies;
 Thy friends are exultations, agonies,
 And love, and man's unconquerable mind.²⁴

But by October, 1803, he seems to have forgotten the powers of nature and "man's unconquerable mind." Disillusionment overwhelms him, almost bringing him to doubt the existence of God:

When, looking on the present face of things,
 I see one man, of men the meanest too!
 Raised up to sway the world, to do, undo,
 With mighty Nations for his underlings,
 The great events with which old story rings
 Seem vain and hollow; I find nothing great:
 Nothing is left which I can venerate;
 So that a doubt almost within me springs
 Of Providence, such emptiness at length
 Seems at the heart of all things. But, great God!

²³"Festivals have I seen that were not names,"
 11. 9-14.

²⁴"Toussaint, the most unhappy man of men," 11. 9-14.

I measure back the steps which I have trod;
 And tremble, seeing whence proceeds the strength
 Of such poor Instruments, with thoughts sublime
 I tremble at the sorrow of the time.

Something was needed to replace his revolutionary ideals or at least to give him some faith to which he could subscribe which would still uphold the ideals of liberty without the accompanying violence. Cobban holds that this need was supplied by a belief in nationalism which was brought about in the beginning by the revolt of the Spanish people in 1808 when France imposed a French king on Spain.²⁵ I disagree with Cobban in his statement that Wordsworth's theory of nationality did not become definite until after the Spanish uprising of 1808. It was then, of course, that Wordsworth stated his views in prose in the tract on the Convention of Cintra, but in 1807 he expressed undeniable nationalistic beliefs in a sonnet of prophecy regarding the mighty deeds which he expected the German nation to perform. In this sonnet he speaks bitterly of the German groups who had allied themselves with Napoleon and gives highest praise to the Germans who were preserving the integrity of their nation:

High deeds, O Germans, are to come from you!
 Thus in your books the record shall be found,
 "A watchword was pronounced, a potent sound--
 ARMINIUS!--all the people quaked like dew
 Stirred by the breeze; they rose, a Nation, true

²⁵Alfred Cobban, op. cit., p. 143.

True to herself--the mighty Germany,
 She of the Danube and the Northern Sea,
 She rose, and off at once the yoke she threw.
 All power was given her in the dreadful trance;
 Those new-born Kings she withered like a flame."
 --Woe to them all! but heaviest woe and shame
 To that Bavarian who could first advance
 His banner in accursed league with France,
 First open traitor to the German name!

The patriotic feelings of Wordsworth toward his own country were revived, according to Cobban, in his adoption of nationalistic beliefs in the rights and liberties of all nations:

. . . . Wordsworth experienced the fact of nationality as a process in his own mind and confirmed it by observation of the tendencies of the world around. His patriotism was so much more than mere patriotism because the alienation of his feelings from England during the early years of the Revolutionary War meant that it appeared, not in the slow normal growth of maturing political sentiment, but as a late and conscious product of his own mind.²⁶

Cobban contends that Wordsworth's patriotism stemmed from his deep love of his own part of England where there were many independent small farm owners, tilling the ground their ancestors had labored over hundreds of years before. Proud of the traditions and personal independence of the English people, Wordsworth realizes that their individuality is made more complete when it is absorbed into a deep love of the nation as a whole. He becomes convinced that

. . . . a man cannot live to himself, that his individuality is never more fully expressed than when he

²⁶Ibid., pp. 145-146.

takes unto himself national and traditional feeling, until ultimately each separate soul is an epitome of humanity. This is not a denial of individuality, but its true fulfillment: far from being incompatible with the independence of the individual man or nation, it is only to be realized in a condition of such independence. And where the nation is not free the individual members of it are not free, since national independence is "the underground root of the tree of liberty," which without it cannot flourish.²⁷

In his sonnets Wordsworth expresses the love which he had for his country, a love which was inherent in him, and which his early disillusionment with his country could not erase. On the thirtieth of August, 1802, on the day of landing after his visit to France, he writes:

Here, on our native soil, we breathe once more.
 The cock that crows, the smoke that curls, that sound
 Of bells;--those boys who in yon meadow-ground
 In white-sleeved shirts are playing; and the roar
 Of the waves breaking on the chalky shore;--
 All, all are English. Oft have I looked round
 With joy in Kent's green vales; but never found
 Myself so satisfied in heart before.
 Europe is yet in bonds; but let that pass
 Thought for another moment. Thou art free,
 My Country! and 'tis joy enough and pride
 For one hour's perfect bliss, to tread the grass
 Of England once again, and hear and see,
 With such a dear Companion at my side.

Broadening these patriotic feelings, he understands and sympathizes with the patriotism of all peoples. In the following sonnet written in 1809, he speaks of the patriotic feelings of the Tyrolese. His belief in nationalism is apparent here as he praises the people in their struggle

²⁷Ibid., p. 148.

for self-preservation. His Stoicism reappears as we hear him state that all nature supports this people as they go forth in the cause of virtue, held by the Stoics to be the highest good:

The Land we from our fathers had in trust,
 And to our children will transmit, or die;
 This is our maxim, this our piety;
 And God and Nature say that it is just.
 That which we would perform in arms--we must!
 We read the dictate in the infant's eye;
 In the wife's smile; and in the placid sky;
 And, at our feet, amid the silent dust
 Of them that were before us.--Sing aloud
 Old songs, the precious music of the heart!
 Give, herds and flocks, your voices to the wind!
 While we go forth, a self-devoted crowd,
 With weapons grasped in fearless hands, to assert
 Our virtue, and to vindicate mankind.

In another sonnet written in 1802 or 1803 he says it is impossible that British freedom should perish, for this freedom has been a vital part of British life far back into the past. He maintains that such a freedom, upheld by history and tradition, never could die:

. . . . In our halls is hung
 Armoury of the invincible Knights of old:
 We must be free or die, who speak the tongue
 That Shakespeare spake; the faith and morals hold
 Which Milton held.--In every thing we are sprung
 Of Earth's first blood, have titles manifold.²⁸

Wordsworth recalls his earlier doubts about his country, doubts which perhaps he held in the early days of England's fight against France. Looking back, he

²⁸"It is not to be thought of that the Flood,"
 ll. 9-14.

apologizes for those doubts and reasserts his deep love for his country:

. . . . some fears unnamed
 I had, my Country--am I to be blamed?
 Now, when I think of thee, and what thou art,
 Verily, in the bottom of my heart,
 Of those unfilial fears I am ashamed.
 For dearly must we prize thee; we who find
 In thee a bulwark for the cause of men;
 And I by my affection was beguiled:
 What wonder if a Poet now and then,
 Among the many movements of his mind,
 Felt for thee as a lover or a child!²⁹

Wordsworth's belief that in order for the individual to experience true freedom the nation, itself, must be free is illustrated by the following:

There is a bondage worse, far worse, to bear
 Than his who breathes, by roof, and floor, and wall,
 Pent in, a Tyrant's solitary Thrall:
 'Tis his who walks about in the open air,
 One of a Nation who, henceforth, must wear
 Their fetters in their souls. . . .³⁰

He feels that nothing can withstand a people, virtuously fighting on their own land for liberty:

Nor discipline nor valour can withstand
 The shock, nor quell the inevitable rout,
 When in some great extremity breaks out
 A people, on their own beloved Land
 Risen, like one man, to combat in the sight
 Of a just God for liberty and right.³¹

Certainly Wordsworth's belief in nationalism was

²⁹"When I have borne in memory what has tamed,"
 ll. 4-14.

³⁰"There is a bondage worse, far worse, to bear,"
 ll. 1-6.

³¹"What if our numbers barely could defy," ll. 9-14.

strengthened by the imposition of a French king upon the Spanish people and by their subsequent revolt, even though his nationalistic tendencies had shown themselves previously. Considering the condition of Spain, Wordsworth characteristically turns to nature, finding relief and courage in his Stoic belief in the harmony of a well-ordered nature:

Here, mighty Nature! in this school sublime
I weigh the hopes and fears of suffering Spain;
For her consult the auguries of time,
And through the human heart explore my way;
And look and listen--gathering, whence I may,
Triumph, and thoughts no bondage can restrain.³²

Peace came to Europe in 1815. The chief nations in the fight against France dominated the peace tables, although the smaller nations were represented, and although even conquered France was allowed to send representatives at the request of the wily Talleyrand. These countries, particularly England, Russia, Prussia, and Austria, redrew the map of Europe to conform as much as possible to the boundaries of 1789. Struggling peoples anxious for freedom were dismissed with a sweep of the pen, as nationalism and the theory of government with the consent of the governed were largely ignored. Noting these developments, Wordsworth was displeased, for he felt that the people, themselves, were responsible for the victories. Cobban states:

³²"Not 'mid the World's vain objects that enslave,"
ll. 9-14.

Wordsworth did not abandon his ideals at the end of the war; for believing as he did that its victorious issue was to be attributed to the strength of popular sentiment, and not to the efforts of kings and emperors, on this account he called for generous recognition of the rights of nations by rulers whom their subjects had saved from destruction.³³

Turning to a sonnet that probably was composed in 1816, we find Wordsworth expressing these sentiments:

Now, from Heaven-sanctioned victory, Peace is sprung;
In this firm hour Salvation lifts her horn.
Glory to arms! But, conscious that the nerve
Of popular reason, long mistrusted, freed
Your thrones, ye Powers, from duty fear to swerve!
Be just, be grateful; nor, the oppressor's creed
Reviving, heavier chastisement deserve
Than ever forced unpitied hearts to bleed.³⁴

Here, too, is the Stoic faith in the knowledge and innate ideas held by mankind.

As the years passed, however, Wordsworth became more and more conservative in his views, until many felt he had completely renounced his early beliefs in man and liberty.

But in the Tory reaction after the Peace liberal sentiments became obscured, and even Wordsworth and his friends began to look with favour on the Holy Alliance and to approve of foreign intervention against struggling nationalities. . . . To the disappointment of many Wordsworth turned more and more away from idealistic politics, until the erstwhile revolutionary was to be found exerting his public influence in defence of such institutions as capital punishment, slavery, and the legal immunity of cruelty to animals.³⁵

³³Alfred Cobban, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

³⁴"Emperors and Kings, how oft have temples rung,"
11. 7-14.

³⁵Alfred Cobban, *op. cit.*, p. 150.

Miss Batho refuses to believe that Wordsworth had lost his love of mankind and his desire for liberty, contending rather that he had come to a more practical outlook. He still advocated the freedom of man, only this time with different methods:

Wordsworth may be accused with some justice of having developed too mystical a faith in the ultimate triumph on earth of the doctrines which he had upheld in his youth, but he cannot fairly be accused, as he was accused by uncomprehending Liberal friends and enemies in his lifetime, of having "lost faith in humanity." He refused to subscribe to the sentimental creed which takes no account of the actual state of humanity; he refused to believe against all his experience that "the people," as long as they remained untrained and unthinking, were fit to rule themselves; but he was convinced that they were capable of being trained; and his fears were, not that anarchy or tyranny would ultimately triumph, but that impatience on the part of the lovers of freedom would delay the triumph of freedom longer than need be.³⁶

To support her views Miss Batho quotes the three sonnets regarding the Italian insurrections of 1837 in which Wordsworth expresses sympathy for the Italian cause, but at the same time urges patience and fortitude which will eventually make all things right. These three sonnets are from the group, "Sonnets Dedicated to Liberty and Order," a group which differs not only in quality from the sonnets in the "Poems Dedicated to National Independence and Liberty," the earlier sonnets being by far the more beautiful, but also differing in the ideas. These later sonnets

³⁶Edith C. Batho, op. cit., pp. 148-149.

reveal Wordsworth turned reactionary. In the sonnet, "Said Secrecy to Cowardice and Fraud," he rails against the adoption of the secret ballot. In the sonnet-volume of 1838 he appended a note, regarding this sonnet, which reads in part:

. . . . Having in this notice alluded only in general terms to the mischief which, in my opinion, the Ballot would bring along with it, without especially branding its immoral and anti-social tendency, (for which no political advantages, were they a thousand times greater than those presumed upon, could be a compensation) I have been impelled to subjoin a reprobation of it upon that score.³⁷

In that same year (1838) Wordsworth published another sonnet of protest against the ballot. Although this sonnet is not included in the "Sonnets Dedicated to Liberty and Order," it is well to consider it here:

Forth rushed from Envy sprung and Self-conceit,
 A Power misnamed the SPIRIT of REFORM,
 And through the astonished Island swept in storm,
 Threatening to lay all Orders at her feet
 That crossed her way. Now stoops she to entreat
 License to hide at intervals her head
 Where she may work, safe, undisquieted,
 In a close Box, covert for Justice meet.
 St. George of England! keep a watchful eye
 Fixed on the Suitor; frustrate her request--
 Stifle her hope; for, if the State comply,
 From such Pandorian gift may come a Pest
 Worse than the Dragon that bowed low his crest,
 Pierced by thy spear in glorious victory.

Looking back on such a sonnet we cannot help being amused at his grave fears and imagination which could conceive of the ballot as "a Pest Worse than the Dragon," but we

³⁷The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth, ed. E. de Selincourt and Helen Darbishire, IV, 431.

must endeavor to keep in mind the times in which Wordsworth lived. Even then, however, the poet was distinctly aligned with the conservative element and had come a long way from the time when he offered his services as a leader of the Girondins.

Nowhere in the sonnets does Wordsworth show so definitely his conservatism as in the following sonnet of 1838. Here, too, he strongly asserts those Stoic principles of an ordered existence in which all events lead to the betterment of man:

Blest Statesman He, whose Mind's unselfish will
 Leaves him at ease among grand thoughts: whose eye
 Sees that, apart from magnanimity,
 Wisdom exists not; nor the humbler skill
 Of Prudence, disentangling good and ill
 With patient care. What tho' assaults run high,
 They daunt not him who holds his ministry,
 Resolute, at all hazards, to fulfil
 Its duties;--prompt to move, but firm to wait,--
 Knowing, things rashly sought are rarely found;
 That, for the functions of an ancient State--
 Strong by her charters, free because imbound,
 Servant of Providence, not slave of Fate--
 Perilous is sweeping change, all chance unsound.

Thus, Wordsworth, the man who once was a strong, active advocate of the French Revolution, had come to hold this position: "Perilous is sweeping change, all chance unsound." In another sonnet he warns against giving aid in revolutionary causes, stating that even though good sometimes proceeds from tumult and pain, such is not the proper means of achieving it:

. . . . But woe for him
 Who thus deceived shall lend an eager hand
 To social havoc. Is not Conscience ours,
 And Truth, whose eye guilt only can make dim;
 And Will, whose office, by divine command,
 Is to control and check disordered Powers?³⁸

The United States did not escape the scathing pen of Wordsworth, who we are forced to admit was not only conservative but was also quite concerned with money. In the sonnet, "Men of the Western World! in fate's dark book," he accuses the Americans of dire crimes as the result of uncontrolled passions and urges them to turn to things of a more lasting nature. He addressed another sonnet to the Pennsylvanians³⁹ imploring them to return to a course of "simple honesty," reverently recalling the name of Penn and shuddering to think that "degenerate Men" have betrayed the principles upon which the state was founded. Certainly no one could find fault with such noble sentiments, but let us note what prompted them. Speaking of this sonnet, de Selincourt states:

Written at some date between 1841 and the end of Feb. 1845. W.'s [Wordsworth's] correspondence with Henry Reed shows that during all this period he was much troubled by the stoppage of payment of Pennsylvanian Bonds, in which both his brother Christopher and Miss Fenwick had large holdings. His fears (encouraged by a rumour "from a private quarter," which he reported

38"Who ponders National events shall find," ll. 9-14.

39"Days undefiled by luxury or sloth."

to Reed on Nov. 18, 1844) that the State of Pennsylvania would repudiate their obligations, proved groundless, for in Feb. 1845 payment was resumed⁴⁰

At the request of Reed, Wordsworth added the following note to the poems in the edition of 1850:

I am happy to add that the reproach addressed to the Pennsylvanians in the next sonnet is no longer applicable to them. I trust that those other States to which it may yet apply will soon follow the example now set them by Philadelphia, and redeem their credit with the world.⁴¹

The poet in his old age had come a long way from the attitudes of his youth and seems to be, himself, in that deplorable state of "getting and spending."⁴² If he had written this sonnet as a result of positive knowledge on the subject, it would have been more excusable. But to have resorted to verse in protest against a mere rumor is scarcely honorable, much less the proper subject for good poetry. He did, of course, retract his statements (as a result of two letters from Reed requesting that he do so⁴³), but he could not resist turning from Pennsylvania to any of the other American states which might be guilty of the same thing, warning them

⁴⁰Note by de Selincourt, The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth, IV, 432.

⁴¹Note by Wordsworth, Ibid., p. 432.

⁴²"The world is too much with us; late and soon,"
l. 2.

⁴³Note by de Selincourt, The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth, IV, 432.

to turn from their wicked ways. When Wordsworth wrote this sonnet he was past seventy years of age, and with old age had come a certain irascibility.

The last sonnet in this group of "Sonnets Dedicated to Liberty and Order" proves that Wordsworth still retains his love for his fellow man. Insofar as possible, he urges men should provide for man's rights by law, but where just laws are impossible, then each man, individually, should seek to insure equality in his own personal dealings:

Learn to be just, just through impartial law;
Far as ye may, erect and equalize;
And, what ye cannot reach by statute, draw
Each from his fountain of self-sacrifice!⁴⁴

As he grew older, Wordsworth may have lost much of his idealism and his faith in man's ability to govern himself; yet lines such as those just quoted give conclusive evidence of his love of humanity and his willingness to give of himself that others might have a greater degree of freedom. No matter how many laws are made to equalize all men, equality will never be an actuality until individuals practice equality in their everyday dealings. Wordsworth recognizes this fact, but perhaps relies too much upon the achievement of equality through this means, as he shies away from any "sweeping change."

⁴⁴"Feel for the wrongs to universal ken," ll. 11-14.

In 1839-40 Wordsworth wrote a series of fourteen "Sonnets Upon the Punishment of Death." To better understand the circumstances which evoked these sonnets, let us turn again to de Selincourt:

In 1836 a report by the Commissioners on Criminal Law had been laid before Parliament, with the result that in July 1837 Acts were passed which removed the death penalty from about 200 offences (for most of which it was already in practice obsolete), and left it applicable only to high treason, murder and attempted murder, rape, arson with danger to life, piracies, burglaries, and robberies when aggravated by cruelty and violence. But some members of the House, who had a considerable backing in the country, had conscientious objections to the infliction of the death penalty for any crime, and as an instalment towards total abolition brought in a Bill to remove it from all offences except treason and murder; as a compromise the crime of rape was further omitted from the list. "Thus," says Taylor [Sir Henry Taylor, who wrote a review of Wordsworth's Sonnets, 1838, in The Quarterly for Dec., 1841], "the broad question which is left for the country to look at, in respect to the punishment by death, is in effect its abolition. It is to this question that Mr. W.'s Sonnets refer; and the general drift of the sentiments which they express is that there is a deeper charity and a more enlarged view of religious obligations than that which would dictate such a measure in this country in the present state of society."⁴⁵

Whether or not Wordsworth was right in advocating the death penalty is of little concern at the present; what is puzzling is the fact that he chose the sonnet to express these views. Certainly, the sonnet is not limited to restricted types of subject matter; yet, at the same time, the reader cannot help but recoil in distaste that capital punishment should

⁴⁵Note by de Selincourt, The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth, IV, 433.

be made the theme of verse. In the last sonnet in this group Wordsworth makes apology for his use of the poetic medium and explains why he did so:

The formal World relaxes her cold chain
 For One who speaks in numbers; ampler scope
 His utterance finds; and, conscious of the gain,
 Imagination works with bolder hope
 The cause of grateful reason to sustain.⁴⁶

Whether his beliefs on the death penalty were more easily accepted because they were in verse is doubtful, but the fact remains that Wordsworth thought they would be and felt amply justified in using the sonnet to proclaim the benefits of the executioner's rope.

In one of these sonnets he gives his definition of a state, a definition which seems to indicate that the state is not a body controlled by the people, but a creation on some higher, abstract plane, having direct contact with the will of God:

What is a State? The wise behold in her
 A creature born of time, that keeps one eye
 Fixed on the statutes of Eternity,
 To which her judgments reverently defer.
 Speaking through Law's dispassionate voice the State
 Endues her conscience with external life
 And being, to preclude or quell the strife
 Of individual will, to elevate
 The grovelling mind, the erring to recall,
 And fortify the moral sense of all.⁴⁷

⁴⁶"The formal World relaxes her cold chain," ll. 1-5.

⁴⁷"Though to give timely warning and deter," ll. 5-14.

By rather far-fetched reasoning, Wordsworth, in another of these sonnets, maintains that mercy demands capital punishment, a statement which makes me wonder if perhaps the criminal should not be consulted as to how merciful he considers the death penalty:

Ah, think how one compelled for life to abide
 Locked in a dungeon needs must eat the heart
 Out of his own humanity, and part
 With every hope that mutual cares provide;
 And, should a less unnatural doom confide
 In life-long exile on a savage coast,
 Soon the relapsing penitent may boast
 Of yet more heinous guilt, with fiercer pride.
 Hence thoughtful Mercy, Mercy sage and pure,
 Sanctions the forfeiture that Law demands,
 Leaving the final issue in His hands
 Whose goodness knows no change, whose love is sure,
 Who sees, foresees; who cannot judge amiss,
 And wafts at will the contrite soul to bliss.

In the sonnet, "See the Condemned alone within his cell," the poet pictures the criminal, kneeling, confessing his crimes, and receiving salvation. Then, argues Wordsworth, death would be welcome, for if the criminal were allowed again to meet new temptations, he would probably commit other crimes and his salvation would be lost. Wordsworth does not take into consideration the fact that life-imprisonment could very well prevent those temptations from arising.

Even though he advocates the death penalty, Wordsworth has the optimistic hope that it will soon be unnecessary:

. . . . But hopeful signs abound;
 The social rights of man breathe purer air;
 Religion deepens her preventive care;
 Then, moved by needless fear of past abuse,

Strike not from Law's firm hand that awful rod,
 But leave it thence to drop for lack of use:
 Oh, speed the blessed hour, Almighty God!⁴⁸

A century has passed since Wordsworth's death, and capital punishment still prevails in the criminal courts. Perhaps, even yet, the poet's optimism will be justified.

Nature and politics are the two major themes to be found in Wordsworth's sonnets. Of the many miscellaneous subjects less frequently discussed, I shall deal briefly with four. The first of these is his attitude toward death, not as a method of punishment, but as an experience which all of us must face. Wordsworth does not seem to have been so much absorbed with this subject as other writers have been, but he does dwell on it in a few of the sonnets. In one of these he tells of seeing in his imagination a throne, shrouded by mists and vapours. At the foot of the throne were all types of people, moaning and fearful as they made obeisance to their king, Death. Then, in his imagination, he climbed the steps to the throne:

. . . . the mists before me gave
 Smooth way; and I beheld the face of one
 Sleeping alone within a mossy cave,
 With her face up to heaven; that seemed to have
 Pleasing remembrance of a thought foregone;
 A lovely Beauty in a summer grave!⁴⁹

48"Yes, though He well may tremble at the sound,"
 ll. 8-14.

49"Method I saw the footsteps of a throne,"
 ll. 9-14.

Who has looked on death more pleasantly than Wordsworth in these lines? The reader might point out that that was a purely imaginative picture and ask how the poet reacted when death was an actuality. Upon the death of his sister-in-law, Sara Hutchinson, Wordsworth wrote the following sonnet:

Even so for me a Vision sanctified
 The sway of Death; long ere mine eyes had seen
 Thy countenance--the still rapture of thy mien--
 When thou, dear Sister! wert become Death's Bride:
 No trace of pain or languor could abide
 That change:--age on thy brow was smoothed--thy cold
 Wan cheek at once was privileged to unfold
 A loveliness to living youth denied.
 Oh! if within me hope should e'er decline,
 The lamp of faith, lost Friend! too faintly burn;
 Then may that heaven-revealing smile of thine,
 The bright assurance, visibly return:
 And let my spirit in that power divine
 Rejoice, as, through that power, it ceased to mourn.

On the day after her death, de Selincourt informs us, Wordsworth wrote to Southey:

I saw her within an hour after her decease, in the silence and peace of death, with as heavenly an expression on her countenance as ever human creature had. Surely there is food for faith in these appearances; for myself, I can say that I have passed a wakeful night, more in joy than sorrow, with that blessed face before my eyes perpetually, as I lay in bed.⁵⁰

He spoke in a more sorrowful tone, however, when writing of the death of his three-year old daughter, Catherine. Revelling in the ecstasy of the sight of some beautiful

⁵⁰The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth, ed. E. de Selincourt and Helen Darbishire, III, 423.

part of nature, he turned to share his feelings with his daughter, forgetting momentarily that she had died. His sorrow at forgetting she was gone was exceeded only by his sorrow that he would never see her again:

. . . . I stood forlorn,
 Knowing my heart's best treasure was no more;
 That neither present time, nor years unborn
 Could to my sight that heavenly face restore.⁵¹

In 1833 Wordsworth stood in sight of the town of Cockermouth where he was born and where his father was buried. Serenely he spoke of death, trustfully and with a Stoic courage accepting death as one more event which must come to all in this ordered universe. Here, too, is the belief in repentance necessary for an after-life:

A point of life between my Parent's dust,
 And yours, my buried Little-ones! am I;
 And to those graves looking habitually
 In kindred quiet I repose my trust.
 Death to the innocent is more than just,
 And, to the sinner, mercifully bent;
 So may I hope, if truly I repent
 And meekly bear the ills which bear I must.⁵²

Wordsworth, along with the rest of mankind, experienced insomnia. In three sonnets on this subject he implores sleep to come to him. In one of these he makes a rather fanciful comparison of sleep to a fly:

. . . . O Sleep! thou art to me
 A Fly, that up and down himself doth shove

51"Surprised by joy--impatient as the Wind," ll. 11-14.

52"A point of life between my Parent's dust," ll. 1-8.

Upon a fretful rivulet, now above,
Now on the water vexed with mockery.⁵³

The image evoked by the word "shove" does not seem quite fitting, for it is difficult to picture a fly shoving himself up and down, but perhaps this was an acrobatic fly. In another sonnet his metaphor is more abstract and more beautiful:

Come, blessed barrier between day and day,
Dear mother of fresh thoughts and joyous health!⁵⁴

In the remaining sonnet of this group, harassed by lack of sleep, Wordsworth is in no mood for the tender names by which sleep has often been called:

. . . . Shall I alone,
I surely not a man ungently made,
Call thee worst Tyrant by which Flesh is crost?
Perverse, self-willed to own and to disown,
Mere slave of them who never for thee prayed,
Still last to come where thou art wanted most!⁵⁵

A theme running through all Wordsworth's poetry is praise of the poor and their simple pleasures. In a sonnet published in 1807 he tells the reader not to envy the humble cottage which he pictures, but to remember of what great value it is to the poor whom it takes so little to make happy:

53"O gentle Sleep! do they belong to thee," ll. 5-8.

54"A flock of sheep that leisurely pass by,"
ll. 13-14.

55"Fond words have oft been spoken to thee, Sleep,"
ll. 9-14.

. . . . Roof, window, door,
 The very flowers are sacred to the Poor,
 The roses to the porch which they entwine:
 Yea, all, that now enchants thee, from the day
 On which it should be touched, would melt away.⁵⁶

In a sonnet of 1831 he implores the more fortunate not to think themselves better than the poor among them but to realize that humility is a virtue to be cultivated, and that if nature loves the poor it behooves mankind to do so as well:

. . . . If rightly trained and bred,
 Humanity is humble, finds no spot
 Which her Heaven-guided feet refuse to tread.
 The walls are cracked, sunk is the flowery roof,
 Undressed the pathway leading to the door;
 But love, as Nature loves, the lonely Poor;
 Search, for their worth, some gentle heart wrong-proof,
 Meek, patient, kind, and, were its trials fewer,
 Belike less happy.--Stand no more aloof!⁵⁷

He devoted several sonnets to comments upon the art of writing poetry, but since in the first chapter I mentioned the two in which he discussed the sonnet,⁵⁸ I shall pass over them here and turn to another sonnet on the theme of poetry, in general. Wordsworth, disgusted with the formal, artificial type of poetry being written, expresses his sentiments in the following sonnet:

⁵⁶"Well may'st thou halt--and gaze with brightening eye," ll. 10-14.

⁵⁷"See what gay wild flowers deck this earth-built Cot," ll. 6-14.

⁵⁸"Scorn not the Sonnet; Critic, you have frowned," and "Nuns fret not at their convent's narrow room."

A Poet!--He hath put his heart to school,
 Nor dares to move unpropped upon the staff
 Which Art hath lodged within his hand--must laugh
 By precept only, and shed tears by rule.
 Thy Art be Nature; the live current quaff,
 And let the groveller sip his stagnant pool,
 In fear that else, when Critics grave and cool
 Have killed him, Scorn should write his epitaph.
 How does the Meadow-flower its bloom unfold?
 Because the lovely little flower is free
 Down to its root, and, in that freedom, bold;
 And so the grandeur of the Forest-tree
 Comes not by casting in a formal mould,
 But from its own divine vitality.

Any sincere reader of the sonnets will indeed feel that
 he has been with a true poet, whose art is nature: a poet
 who has quaffed the live current of his limitless store of
 calmness and courage, and has given to us, his readers, a
 feeling of sufficiency and permanency in this changing
 world.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

In presenting Wordsworth, the sonneteer, I have endeavored to criticize fairly, neither bending down in blind idolatry to his genius nor minutely searching for the flaws which are inevitably there. No analysis of his skill in the various elements which constitute the art of poetry would be complete without a general summation of his ability to write these elements in poetry.

As a prosodist, Wordsworth, though inconsistent, proved himself capable of making rime and rhythm enrich the meaning of the sonnets. His variance of the rime schemes, whenever and wherever he deemed necessary, his rather frequent use of near rime, and his recognition of the sensuous value of the physiological techniques involved in sounds resulted in sonnets in which the meaning was enhanced through the appeal not only to the mind and heart but to the senses as well. This appeal is perhaps broadened by his predominant use in end-rimes of the more common Teutonic words, words which often by their frequent repetition give us a clear indication of his thought.

In his use of imagery, particularly the visual, the auditory, and the kinesthetic, Wordsworth gave a force

and vitality to the idea, which could be supplied in no other way. Particularly is this true in his use of light imagery, referring to objects or ideals which he held in high esteem, in his use of the auditory images of the singing of birds or the melodies of musical instruments, and in his kinesthetic images of calm. Although in the kinesthetic realm these images of calm predominate, let us not forget that Wordsworth did not limit himself to such, but that he also produced effectively images of strong tension. When he contrasted the images of calm and tension, as he so often did, then the meaning received an added forcefulness. It is noteworthy that Wordsworth made little use of tactual imagery and even less of the imagery of taste and smell.

A survey of the subject matter of the sonnets has revealed that the majority are related to nature. In these sonnets of nature Wordsworth was not content with mere description, no matter how exquisite; his desire was to impart to his readers a feeling of his own deep love of nature, from which he gained a certain steady, courageous sufficiency to meet the needs of life. This love of nature was broad enough to include a love of humanity, a love which remained with him throughout his life, although in his political ideas he changed from extreme liberalism to extreme conservatism, as the result of the disillusionment of his youth. That disillusionment, which at one time

almost caused him to lose faith in God as well as man, might have overwhelmed him completely had he not turned to the Stoic philosophy which enabled him to meet all adversity with equanimity. This Stoic philosophy, running steadily through the sonnets of nature and those relating to liberty and independence, gave strength not only to the poet but to the lovers of his poetry in the succeeding generations.

Only a few of the 382 sonnets may be considered of exceptional excellence, but we must take account of those, and it does not behoove us to lament too loudly the others which are less perfect, for each has at least one redeeming feature. Although we recognize the faults, we admire the genius and take from the sonnets that which the poet no doubt intended: a sense of permanency and a faith in nature, in man, and in an immanent God.

APPENDIX A

RIME SCHEMES OF WORDSWORTH'S SONNETS COMPOSED IN 1802

Octave Rime--abbaabba Sestet Rime--cddece

"O Friend! I know not which way I must look"

"Milton! thou shouldst be living at this hour"

"Festivals have I seen that were not names"

Octave Rime--abbaabba

The three sonnets given above.

"Fair Star of evening, Splendour of the west"

"Here, on our native soil, we breathe once more"

"We had a female Passenger who came"

"When I have borne in memory what has tamed"

"Great men have been among us; hands that penned"

"Toussaint, the most unhappy man of men"

"Earth has not anything to show more fair"

"Is it a reed that's shaken by the wind"

Octave Rime--abbaacca

"It is a beauteous evening, calm and free"

"The Voice of song from distant lands shall call"

"Jones! as from Calais southward you and I"

"Inland, within a hollow vale, I stood"

"Once did She hold the gorgeous east in fee"

"It is not to be thought of that the Flood"

Miscellaneous Octave Rime

"I grieved for Buonaparte, with a vain"--abbaabab

"Dark and more dark the shades of evening fell"--abbababa

"With how sad steps, O Moon, thou climb'st the sky"--abababba

Sestet Rime--cddece

"O Friend! I know not which way I must look"

"Milton! thou shouldst be living at this hour"

"Festivals have I seen that were not names"

Sestet Rime--cdcddc

"Toussaint, the most unhappy man of men"

"With how sad steps, O Moon, thou climb'st the sky"

Sestet Rime--dedede

"Once did She hold the gorgeous east in fee"

"It is not to be thought of that the Flood"

Sestet Rime--cdcdcd

"Earth has not anything to show more fair"

"Is it a reed that's shaken by the wind"

Miscellaneous Sestet Rime

"Fair Star of evening, Splendour of the west"--cdcede

"I grieved for Buonaparte, with a vain"--cdcdcd

"Here, on our native soil, we breathe once more"--cdecde

"Dark and more dark the shades of evening fell"--cdeded

"We had a female Passenger who came"--cdedec

"It is a beauteous evening, calm and free"--defdfe

"The Voice of song from distant lands shall call"--dedeed

"Jones! as from Calais southward you and I"--dedeed

"Inland, within a hollow vale, I stood"--dedded

"When I have borne in memory what has tamed"--cdedce

"Great men have been among us; hands that penned"--cdceed

APPENDIX B

LIST OF EAR RIMES IN WORDSWORTH'S SONNETS OF 1802

"Fair Star of evening, Splendour of the west"

lies, sighs

fear, here

"I grieved for Buonaparte, with a vain"

knees, degrees, these

"Here, on our native soil, we breathe once more"

more, roar, shore, before

"Dark and more dark the shades of evening fell"

fell, tell, citadel, bell

hour, dower, power, tower

isle, while

eye, sky

"We had a female Passenger who came"

came, blame, aim, same

"It is a beauteous evening, calm and free"

free, tranquillity, Sea, everlastingly

here, year

thought, not

"The Voice of song from distant lands shall call"

call, all, fall, appal

Youth, Truth

done, begun, son

"Jones! as from Calais southward you and I"

I, Liberty, sky, nigh

Earth, mirth

were, despair, bare

heard, word, bird

"Inland, within a hollow vale, I stood"

fair, there

be, Deity, decree, free

roll, soul

"When I have borne in memory what has tamed"

depart, desert, art, heart

beguiled, child

"Great men have been among us; hands that penned"

penned, friend, comprehend, bend

none, Hamilton, on, shone

code, road

"Toussaint, the most unhappy man of men"

men, den, when, again

plough, now, thou, brow

"Earth has not anything to show more fair"

fair, wear, bare, air

by, Majesty, lie, sky

"Once did She hold the gorgeous east in fee"

fee, Liberty, free, Sea

worth, birth

fade, paid, Shade

"It is not to be thought of that the Flood"

sea, antiquity

hung, tongue, sprung

"Is it a reed that's shaken by the wind"

see, degree, knee, Majesty

power, shower, hour

sown, flown, prone

"O Friend! I know not which way I must look"

expense, innocence

cause, laws

"Milton! thou shouldst be living at this hour"

hour, bower, dower, power

fen, pen, men, again

apart, heart

sea, free

"Festivals have I seen that were not names"

names, proclaims, games, frames

"With how sad steps, O Moon, thou climb'st the sky"

sky, high, sigh, I

face, race, pace, chase

be, company, majesty

riven, heaven, given

APPENDIX C

LIST OF EYE RIMES IN WORDSWORTH'S SONNETS OF 1802

"Fair Star of evening, Splendour of the west"

west, rest, crest, drest

brink, sink, think, wink

spot, lot

"I grieved for Buonaparte, with a vain"

vain, gain, train, brain

mood, food, good, womanhood

talk, walk, stalk

"Here, on our native soil, we breathe once more"

sound, ground, round, found

pass, grass

free, see

pride, side

"Dark and more dark the shades of evening fell"

lay, away

"We had a female Passenger who came"

array, gay, away, lay

face, Race

fire, attire

mind, kind

"It is a beauteous evening, calm and free"

Nun, sun
 awake, make
 divine, shrine

"The Voice of song from distant lands shall call"

tend, end
 above, love, approve

"Jones! as from Calais southward you and I"

way, day

"Inland, within a hollow vale, I stood"

stood, neighbourhood, flood, good
 clear, near

"When I have borne in memory what has tamed"

tamed, unnamed, blamed, ashamed
 find, mind
 men, then

"Great men have been among us; hands that penned"

strange, change
 then, men

"Toussaint, the most unhappy man of men"

behind, wind, mind
 skies, allies, agonies

"Earth has not anything to show more fair"

steep, deep, asleep
 hill, will, still

"Once did She hold the gorgeous east in fee"

violate, Mate

decay, day, away

"It is not to be thought of that the Flood"

Flood, unwithstood, mood, good

bands, sands

old, hold, manifold

"Is it a reed that's shaken by the wind"

wind, blind, kind, mind

"O Friend! I know not which way I must look"

look, cook, brook, book

opprest, drest, unblest, best

adore, more

"Milton! thou shouldst be living at this hour"

way, lay

"Festivals have I seen that were not names"

day, sway, gay, way

show, know

time, sublime

Pope, hope

APPENDIX D

LIST OF EAR RIMES WHICH ARE ALSO EYE RIMES
IN WORDSWORTH'S SONNETS OF 1802

(The asterisk following a word indicates eye rime.)

"I grieved for Buonaparte, with a vain"

knees,* degrees,* these

"Here, on our native soil, we breathe once more"

more,* roar, shore,* before*

"Dark and more dark the shades of evening fell"

fell,* tell,* citadel, bell*

hour, dower,* power,* tower*

"We had a female Passenger who came"

came,* blame,* aim, same*

"It is a beauteous evening, calm and free"

free, tranquillity,* Sea, everlastingly*

"The Voice of song from distant lands shall call"

call,* all,* fall,* appal

"Jones! as from Calais southward you and I"

I, Liberty,* sky,* nigh

"Inland, within a hollow vale, I stood"

be, Deity, decree,* free*

"When I have borne in memory what has tamed"

depart,* desert, art,* heart

"Great men have been among us; hands that penned"

penned, friend, comprehend,* bend*

none,*-1 Hamilton,*-2 on,*-2 shone*-1

"Toussaint, the most unhappy man of men"

men,* den,* when,* again

plough, now,* thou, brow*

"Earth has not anything to show more fair"

fair,* wear, bare, air*

by,* Majesty,* lie, sky*

"Once did She hold the gorgeous east in fee"

fee,* Liberty, free,* Sea

fade,* paid, Shade*

"It is not to be thought of that the Flood"

hung,* tongue, sprung*

"Is it a reed that's shaken by the wind"

see,* degree,* knee,* Majesty

power,* shower,* hour

sown,* flown,* prone

"Milton! thou shouldst be living at this hour"

hour, bower,* dower,* power*

fen,* pen,* men,* again

"Festivals have I seen that were not names"

names,* proclaims, games,* frames*

"With how sad steps, O Moon, thou climb'st the sky"

sky, high,* sigh,* I
face,* race,* pace,* chase
be, company,* majesty*
riven,* heaven, given*

APPENDIX E

LIST OF EAR RIMES CONTAINING NEAR RIMES
IN WORDSWORTH'S SONNETS OF 1802

(The asterisk following a word indicates near rime.)

"It is a beauteous evening, calm and free"

free, tranquillity,* Sea, everlastingly*

"Jones! as from Calais southward you and I"

I, Liberty,* sky, nigh

were,* despair, bare

"Inland, within a hollow vale, I stood"

be, Deity,* decree, free

"When I have borne in memory what has tamed"

depart, desert,* art, heart

"Great men have been among us; hands that penned"

none, Hamilton, on,* shone*

"Earth has not anything to show more fair"

by, Majesty,* lie, sky

"Once did She hold the gorgeous east in fee"

fee, Liberty,* free, Sea

"It is not to be thought of that the Flood"

sea, antiquity*

"Is it a reed that's shaken by the wind"

see, degree, knee, Majesty*

"With how sad steps, O Moon, thou climb'st the sky"

be,* company, majesty

riven, heaven,* given

APPENDIX F

LIST OF EYE RIMES CONTAINING NEAR RIMES
IN WORDSWORTH'S SONNETS OF 1802

(The asterisk following a word indicates near rime.)

"I grieved for Buonaparte, with a vain"

mood, food, good,* womanhood*

"The Voice of song from distant lands shall call"

above, love, approve*

"Inland, within a hollow vale, I stood"

stood, neighbourhood, flood,* good

"Toussaint, the most unhappy man of men"

skies, allies, agonies*

"It is not to be thought of that the Flood"

Flood,* unwithstood, mood,* good

APPENDIX G

TABLE OF FREQUENCY OF RIMED WORDS IN WORDSWORTH'S
SONNETS OF 1802

Word used five times

free

Words used four times

men, mind, sea, sky

Words used three times

away, day, good, hour, lay, majesty, power, way

Words used two times

again, bare, be, dower, drest, face, fair, flood,

gay, heart, here, I, kind, Liberty, mood, more,

race (two meanings), see, then, wind

Words used one time each--195

APPENDIX H

SOUNDS USED IN WORDSWORTH'S SONNETS OF 1802*

Vowel Sounds

a - 10	i - 16	aɪ - 42
æ - 11	o - 20	au - 19
e - 46	ɔ - 11	ʒ - 7
ɛ - 35	u or ʊ - 17	
i - 31	ʌ - 15	

Final Sounds of Rimed Words

Consonant Sounds

Liquids	49
Nasals	39
Continuants	35
Stops	95

(Rimed words ending in stops immediately
preceded by nasal or liquid sounds--55)

Final Vowel Sounds	62
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*Symbols for vowel sounds are those used in the International Phonetic Alphabet.

APPENDIX I
 DERIVATIONS OF RIMED WORDS USED IN WORDSWORTH'S
 SONNETS OF 1802

Words of Non-Teutonic Origin	79
Romance Languages (chiefly Latin)	70
Greek	8
Celtic	1
Words of Teutonic Origin	201

Thus, only 28% of the rimed words are of non-Teutonic origin.

Words Derived from the Romance Languages

degrees, citadel, dower (2), power (3), tower, isle, tranquillity, appal, Liberty (2), despair, be (2), Deity, decree, roll, depart, desert, art, penned, comprehend, code, majesty (3), fade, paid, antiquity, degree, prone, expense, innocence, cause, pen, apart, proclaims, face (2), Race, pace, chase, company, crest, drest (2), vain, train, sound, round, pass, gay (2), attire, Nun, divine, shrine, tend, approve, clear, strange, violate, decay, cook, opprest, adore, sublime, aim.

Words Derived from the Greek

hour (3), blame, air, blamed, agonies, Pope

Word Derived from the Celtic

change

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