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# "Uncouth Shapes" and sublime human forms of Wordsworth's 'The Prelude' in the light of Berdyaev's personalistic philosophy of freedom

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“UNCOUTH SHAPES” AND SUBLIME HUMAN FORMS  
OF WORDSWORTH’S *THE PRELUDE* IN THE LIGHT OF BERDYAEV’S  
PERSONALISTIC PHILOSOPHY OF FREEDOM

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
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in

The Department of English

by

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## EPIGRAPH

Here might I pause, and bend in reverence  
To Nature, and the power of human minds,  
To men as they are men within themselves.  
How oft high service is performed within,  
When all the external man is rude in show,—  
Not like a temple rich with pomp and gold,  
But a mere mountain chapel, that protects  
Its simple worshippers from sun and shower.  
Of these, said I, shall be my song; of these,  
If future years mature me for the task,  
Will I record the praises, making verse  
Deal boldly with substantial things; in truth  
And sanctity of passion, speak of these,  
That justice may be done, obeisance paid  
Where it is due: thus haply shall I teach,  
Inspire, through unadulterated ears  
Pour rapture, tenderness, and hope,— my theme  
No other than the very heart of man,  
As found among the best of those who live,  
Not unexalted by religious faith,  
Nor uninformed by books, good books, though few,  
In Nature's presence: thence may I select  
Sorrow, that is not sorrow, but delight;  
And miserable love, that is not pain  
To hear of, for the glory that redounds  
Therefrom to human kind, and what we are.

(*The Prelude*, 1850, Book Thirteen, 224-49)

It begins to be clear, to me at least, why Wordsworth wears so well. There are in our world currents of thought that are central, and others that are merely tributaries, or wander off into the bogs and deserts of philosophy. That stream which first became defined in Kant's philosophy, and continued to flow however irregularly through the minds of Schelling, Coleridge, Kierkegaard, Hegel, Nietzsche, Husserl, Heidegger, divided by a watershed from the contrary stream to which we can attach the names of Locke, Condillac, Hartley, Bentham, Marx and Lenin — that first stream to which we give the fashionable name of Existentialism, but which is really the main tradition of philosophy itself — in that stream Wordsworth is confidently carried. Other poets of his time and since his time may give us keener thrills of pure aesthetic pleasure. Wordsworth can move us in that way, too, but his singular distinction is the centrality and traditional validity of his philosophical faith. We go to Wordsworth's poetry for something more lasting than pleasure, and for something more human than beauty. (Herbert Read, *The True Voice of Feeling: Studies in English Romantic Poetry*, p. 210-11)

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## ABSTRACT

In complementary response to socio-historicists who discuss the concept of “freedom” in William Wordsworth’s poetry as determined from without — be it by socio-historical conditions, gender, or imposed ideology — I draw from the theory of Nicholas Berdyaev, one of the prominent continental existentialists of the twentieth century, tracing the development of Wordsworth’s understanding of freedom towards “genuine liberty” as progressively determined from within. Thus focusing on *existentia* rather than *essentia*, I pay particular attention to shaping inner efforts and developing visions of the growing and conscious personality as they are described in *The Prelude*. Wordsworth hinges his ability to perceive — and make perceivable — the “external man” upon his own evolving understanding of inner freedom, claiming that his theme is “no other than the very heart of man.” In *The Prelude*, especially of 1850, I find a direct link between the degree of personal freedom gained by the poet and the perfection of the human gestalten he depicts, the connection detailed by this dissertation.

The dissertation offers the following chapters: (1) “Introduction. ‘To be young was very heaven:’ Two Thinkers Bred by Two Revolutions: Wordsworth and Berdyaev;” (2) “The Human Form and Human Independence in Wordsworth: A Link;” (3) “‘Man Ennobled Outwardly Before My Sight’;” (4) “‘Uncouth Shapes’ and Their Progress from Transgression to Transcendence;” (5) “Wordsworth’s Trans-Figuration on Mount Snowdon and ‘Genuine Liberty.’ Conclusions.”

My conclusion suggests that increasing degree of growing personal independence, gained by the developing poet and, possibly, by his reader, is manifested, on the level of imagery, by way of the perfecting of the human gestalten, from one Spot of Time to another, until the poet himself gets into a position to be seen as “an index of delight.” Also, agreeing with Herbert Read (p. 210 of *The True Voice of Feeling*), I see Wordsworth among the first existentialist poets, a position which my comparison with Berdyaev supports. Visually, in *The Prelude*, the perfect, sublime, human form signals a shift to and back from transcendence, which equals “genuine liberty.”

**INTRODUCTION: “TO BE YOUNG WAS VERY HEAVEN;”  
TWO THINKERS BRED BY TWO REVOLUTIONS: WORDSWORTH  
AND BERDYAEV**

William Wordsworth (1770-1850), surely never read any “true-blue” existentialist philosophers, because existentialism as a movement was formed only in the beginning of the twentieth century. An existentialist Nicholas Berdyaev (1874-1948), with his profound knowledge of German, French, and Russian letters, read those English writers who were well-known on the Continent at the turn of the nineteenth century. Wordsworth hardly was one of them. Nevertheless, each thinker, Wordsworth and Berdyaev, had his close experience with one of the most bloody revolutions of modern history: the French Revolution of 1791 and the Russian Revolution of 1917, respectively. The tragic aftermath of both revolutions somewhat cooled the revolutionary zeal of both champions of justice. Even though neither Wordsworth, nor Berdyaev, ever came to accept political and social oppression, in the eyes of the radicals they became known as conservatives, egotists, and almost traitors to revolutionary ideals. In their post-revolutionary personal writings, be it poetry or philosophical essays, the similarities also abound, even though Berdyaev’s name is not commonly evoked in connection with the bard of Rydal Mount.

There are, of course, similarities and ideological affinity between the French and Russian Revolutions. However, in this work, I have no intention to go into structural, point by point, comparison of the two events or of the biographies of the two thinkers: such a comparison would be fitting for a detailed and profound historical and biographical study, which is beyond the



scope of this work. From an existential standpoint, which sets the tone of the pages below, it is the times of crisis, which are brought about by all kinds of revolutions, that matter. When, during revolutions, the external structures crumble away, the seemingly stable balance of powers collapses, the just revolutionary theories are found impracticable and spinning out of control, men and women – and especially young men and women – start searching for stability elsewhere: in their own experience, minds and souls. To employ existentialist parlance, at a time of crisis, human beings, with sudden clarity, become aware of their concrete existence and begin to regard it as preceding essence. After that preference is established, the existential themes of anxiety, absurdity, nothingness, death, and alienation are usually opened up by existents.<sup>1</sup> All of these themes are bound up with the perceptions and feelings of the human subject, who strives to overcome alienation from the outer world. This dissertation looks at several existential themes in the works of two thinkers, a poet and a philosopher, who had their own very personal experience with the revolutionary time of crisis. Wordsworth not only visited France during that country's most turbulent time, but also weathered the ensuing war between France and England, while Annette Vallon, his French love, bore him a daughter on the other side of the then uncrossable Channel. Berdyaev also had suffered through the revolution. And the question, what is freedom and how to stay free, despite all immutable constraints imposed from without, was of vital importance for both Wordsworth and Berdyaev.<sup>2</sup>

Nicholas A. Berdyaev<sup>3</sup> was born in Kiev into an aristocratic family. Almost all of his ancestors were Russian military officers of high ranks, but he himself resigned from the army quite early and became active in the social life of Kiev aristocracy. Berdyaev read voraciously from a very early age, a habit which he kept till his last day. His father's library provided him with the works of Hegel, Schopenhauer, Voltaire, and Kant, whom he began reading when he was only fourteen years old. Like most of the aristocrats at the time he was fluent in French and German, to which he was exposed since early childhood. Beginning in 1894 he studied at the University of Kiev, majoring in natural sciences and then, in jurisprudence. Berdyaev, like many university students of that period, became a Marxist and participated in political activities. In 1898 he was arrested during a student demonstration, and was expelled from the University. He was released, but his consequent involvement with the illegal press was discovered and he was sentenced to three years of exile in the Vologda province of Central Russia.

In 1904 Berdyaev returned to Kiev, where he married Lydia Trusheff, his life-long love and companion. This same year the married couple moved to St. Petersburg, the center of intellectual, philosophical, literary, and revolutionary activity in Russia. Berdyaev became a frequenter of philosophic, religious, and political circles. During this period of his life Berdyaev completely moved away from the radical Marxists, who aimed towards an armed revolt against the czarist regime. His attention became drawn to spiritual development, rather than political struggle.

Although a revolutionary himself, Berdyaev could not accept the Bolshevik regime that was violently established in the country in 1917, because of its suppression of personal freedom. However, he was allowed to continue to lecture and write. For a brief time he was professor of philosophy at Moscow State University. For his philosophical views and criticism of the Bolsheviks, Berdyaev was arrested, and charged with treason, which resulted in his deportation from Russia in 1922. In Berlin he founded the Academy of Philosophy and Religion, which he moved to Paris in 1924. In Paris he also founded and edited the influential journal "Путь" ("The Way," 1925-1940). In France, he continued to teach, lecture, and write extensively. In 1947 Cambridge University conferred upon him the degree of doctor *honoris causa*. His work was partially interrupted by the Second World War and the Nazi occupation of France. He died on March 23, 1948, at his writing desk.<sup>4</sup>

N. A. Berdyaev was a prolific writer, both before his exile from Russia in 1922, and afterwards in the West until his death in 1948. The 1978 YMKA Press "Berdiaev Bibliographie" by Tamara Klepinine lists a total of 483 books and articles by Berdyaev, not including those "sans signature" or under a pseudonym. A significant portion of this body of works remains untranslated into English. But the Internet has made for dramatic changes: much that was inaccessible is gradually coming to light.

By Berdyaev's own estimation his most important books are *The Meaning of the Creative Act* (1916; translated 1955), *The Destiny of Man* (1931; translated 1937), *Solitude and Society* (1934; translated 1939), *Spirit*

*and Reality* (1937; translated 1939), and *Slavery and Freedom* (1939; translated 1944).

In this dissertation I use Robert French's 1944 translation of *Slavery and Freedom*, Berdyaev's essay on the personalistic philosophy of the existential type, as he himself calls it (p. 8). Even though Berdyaev's philosophic ideas were subject to change, and there are some differences between his earlier and later writings (that is why I choose to dwell on only one book of his, written in his more mature years), his main concern with freedom remained the same throughout. He himself talks about some inconsistencies of his thought in the 1939 introduction to *Slavery and Freedom*, playing on the contrasts of two Russian words of the same root, "измѣненіе" and "измѣна," meaning, respectively, such incongruent things as "modification" and "betrayal" (translated as "change" and "treason" by R. French). Berdyaev holds that since his young rebellious days his thought underwent only some changes and developments, "измѣненіе", rather than a total reversal, "измѣну."

Подлинное единство мысли, связанное съ единствомъ личности, есть единство экзистенціальное, а не логическое. Экзистенціальность же противорѣчива. Личность есть неизмѣнность въ измѣненіи. Это одно изъ существенныхъ опредѣленій личности. Измѣненія происходятъ въ одномъ и томъ же субъектѣ. Если субъектъ подмѣняется другимъ субъектомъ, то нѣтъ въ настоящемъ смыслѣ и измѣненія. Измѣненіе разрушаетъ личность, когда оно превращается въ измѣну. Философъ совершаетъ измѣну, если мѣняются основныя темы его философствованія, основныя [*sic.*] мотивы его мышленія, основоположная установка цѣнностей. Можетъ мѣняться взглядъ на то, гдѣ и какъ осуществляется свобода духа. Но

если любовь къ свободѣ замѣняется любовью къ рабству и насилию, то происходитъ измѣна. (Бердяевъ, стр. 10)

[True integrality of thought, which is bound up with integrality of personality, is an existential unity, not a logical. Existentiality indeed is a controversial conception. Personality is changelessness in change. That is one of the essential definitions of personality. Changes arise in one and the same subject. If one subject is replaced by another, there is then no change in the proper sense of the word.

Change destroys personality when it is transformed into treason. The philosopher is guilty of treason if the basic themes of his philosophical thinking are altered, the fundamental motifs of his thought, the groundwork of his scale of values. One can change one's view about where and how freedom of the spirit is realized. But if love of freedom is replaced by love of servitude and violence, then treason is the result.]<sup>5</sup>

Berdyaeв described his philosophical method as "intuitive and aphoristic rather than discursive and systematic." The foundation of his world view was his concept of the "Ungrund," the mysterious primordial freedom from which God emerges. This concept looks back to Boehme, even though for Berdyaeв, this Ungrund, or uncreated potentiality, is not a dark side of God; rather, out of the "Ungrund," God creates humans, spiritual beings whose freedom and capacity for creativity were of the utmost importance to Berdyaeв. He has been called the philosopher of freedom, for he was preoccupied with the liberation of personality from all that inhibits free creativity. This concern led him to struggle against an objectivized, "collectivized and mechanized society," envisioning a community in which religious, social, and political relations would enhance personal freedom. It is for this articulated philosophy of freedom I will use Berdyaeв to read and illuminate stages in Wordsworth's intellectual autobiography, *The Prelude*.

Interestingly, much of Berdyaev's thought about freedom and personality, as well as his gradual shift from radical revolutionism to what others labled as conservatism, seems to me very similar to Wordsworth's. More than that, Wordsworth too, could have — and tried — to explain and justify his “change” rather than “betrayal” in writing. One such writing is the much revised *Prelude* itself. As John Beer, who has traced closely Wordsworth's changing definition of liberty confirms:

Wordsworth's position might have been better understood if the account of his upbringing and youth in *The Prelude* had been available to his contemporaries. That poem is about many things; but one of its subjects, the gradual definition of the idea of liberty in Wordsworth's mind during his boyhood and youth, charts in more detail the development just described. The matter had not been in the forefront of Wordsworth's mind as he looked back on his earliest youth, and in the 1799 version there is little or no reference to it. But by 1805, he had added the famous opening in which he presented himself as a figure who sees a period of liberty opening before him and is deciding how best to employ it: “Now I am free, enfranchised and at large, / May fix my habitation where I will... With a heart / Joyous, nor scared at its own liberty, / I look about, and should the guide I chuse / Be nothing better than a wandering cloud / I cannot miss my way.” The discussion of liberty in *The Prelude* continues into the revisions, so that by 1850 the opening emphasizes it still more.<sup>6</sup>

Also, in the later, post-revolutionary, writings of both Wordsworth and Berdyaev, there is marked interest in idealistic ideas of Boehme and Kant.<sup>7</sup>

Taking into account such similarities between Wordsworth and one of the Russian post-revolutionary thinkers who arrived at existentialism, I will look at some existentialistic aspects of *The Prelude*. For my definitions, I use Berdyaev's explanation of existentialism, which, in his words, is opposed to ontologism, meaning that for existentialists, it is not *essentia* that is primary, but

*existentia*.<sup>8</sup> For Wordsworth, too, often human existence used to be of more consequence than its material attributes, which I will show in this dissertation. From this, for Berdyaev, the main assumption of personalism follows: “Personality [which exists] is more primary than being [*essentia* in his terminology].”<sup>9</sup> Similarly, in *The Prelude* of 1850, Wordsworth defines himself not as an essence, but as an existence: “I rose / As if on wings, and saw beneath me stretched / Vast prospect of the world which I *had been* / And *was*.”<sup>10</sup> Hence, Berdyaev defines personalism as a position when “communality” is initiated not by the society but by the person. In other words, it is not man who should obey society implicitly; rather it is society that should look up to the spiritual and individual values of most concrete men. It is not man who should be socialized by reducing himself to a materialistic dimension of just another replaceable tool; it is society that should strive to be humanized.<sup>11</sup> In Wordsworth’s text, especially by the end of the poem, there are enough verses supportive of such a personalistic position. “That idol proudly named / ‘The Wealth of Nations’” is not primary for him any more; instead, he starts looking at concrete people in a personalistic way and gains

A more judicious knowledge of the worth  
And dignity of individual man,  
No composition of the brain, but man  
Of whom we read, the man whom we behold  
With our own eyes.<sup>12</sup>

In this study of *The Prelude*, I will follow Wordsworth in his attempt to behold concrete human beings with his eyes. I will be looking mostly at the human form, rather than body (which is often defined by corporeality, age, sex, class,

or property). Contemporary criticism does a great job of explaining romantic bodies from the ontological perspective, that is focusing on the *essentia*: be it socio-historical approach or gender studies.<sup>13</sup> While, undoubtedly, gender, class, and national issues are vital to understanding literature and its reception, an existentialist response to Romanticism cannot but be complementary. In this study, I turn away from empiricism, because empiricism limits knowledge to sense perception. Such a change in perspective gives me an opportunity to define the human sublime from other than corporeal, economical, or psychoanalytical perspective. Thus, acknowledging numerous versions of the human sublime, such as the “androgynous sublime,” the “patriarchal sublime,”<sup>14</sup> Altieri’s “performative sublime,” Bloom’s parricidal struggle of the artist with his precursor, the grotesque human sublime,<sup>15</sup> the obscure, uncertain human sublime,<sup>16</sup> and others (which do not account for all human figures depicted in *The Prelude*, because Wordsworth is not normally seen as a poet who depicts sensual bodies), I read the poem in the light of yet another human sublime, which is informed by Kant’s views. As Eve Walsh Stoddard explains, there are key similarities (if not to say affinities) between Wordsworth and Kant:

Despite their differences in culture and mode of thought, Kant and Wordsworth face the same philosophical issues with equal passion. Both reject the materialistic and mechanistic paradigms of eighteenth-century empiricism, both seek an epistemology that recognizes the interdependence of the mind and the external world, and both seek a firm basis for morality.<sup>17</sup>



In Chapter Three of this dissertation, I reread Wordsworth's fragment on "The Sublime and the Beautiful," tracing how in Book VIII of *The Prelude* the natural sublime, with its three components — individual form, power, and duration — aids in understanding the human sublime. With the help of Berdyaev's personalistic existentialism, I am able to define one of the components of the human sublime, the human individual form, which allows me to notice many human forms in *The Prelude*, otherwise inconspicuous.

From this perspective, I would say that other kinds of the human sublime, which are informed by sense perception, are not really about the individual human form;<sup>18</sup> rather, they concern the second, complementary, component of Wordsworth's sublime, power. Thus, Aidan Day, in his "Gender and the Sublime," draws attention to Anne K. Mellor's account of "the typical male Romantic appropriation of the feminine," which has much to do with "the gender implications of romantic love." However, I think, it has nothing in common with the perfect human gestalt:

Given the central role played by passionate love in masculine Romanticism, where love is the means by which the poet attempts to rise on an almost Platonic ladder to the most transcendent and visionary of human experiences, and the explicit valorization of the beloved woman contained within this secular myth, we might expect a recognition of the erotic power and spiritual equality of the female to be essential to their poetry. But when we look closely at the gender implications of romantic love, we discover that rather than embracing the female as a valued other, the male lover usually effaces her into a narcissistic projection of his own self.<sup>19</sup>

While in Anne Mellor's summary above the gendered, female, figure is shading into silence and submission, in Sharon A. Weltman's insightful discussion of

Keats's Lamia,<sup>20</sup> this mythic phallic woman is in continual metamorphosis: "even while Lamia lives within a phallic 'prison house' (1.203), she uses her serpentine body to create traditionally feminine forms"<sup>21</sup> to seduce, to manipulate others, to rule. As with the Arab-Quixote of Book V of *The Prelude*, the gestalt of Lamia is not perfect. Her sublimity, however, is not in the perfect *form*, but in the *power* of her anatomy. Lamia's is a different kind of sublime, to which Wordsworth never resorts in *The Prelude*. In fact, Wordsworth's men and women look very similar when they experience the same passion. So, in his "tender scenes of London," the poet describes a man, a father with a child in his lap. The man's pose resembles the iconic feminine image of Mary holding Jesus. The body, anatomy, is not emphasized here. The Burkean distinction between terror (masculine) and beauty (feminine) does not seem very illuminating in this instance.

But foolishness and madness in parade,  
Though most at home in this their dear domain,  
Are scattered everywhere, no rarities,  
Even to the rudest novice of the Schools.  
Me, rather it employed, to note, and keep  
In memory, those individual sights  
Of courage, or integrity, or truth,  
Or tenderness, which there, set off by foil,  
Appeared more touching. One will I select;  
A Father — for he bore that sacred name —  
Him saw I, sitting in an open square,  
Upon a corner-stone of that low wall,  
Wherein were fixed the iron pales that fenced  
A spacious grass-plot; there, in silence, sate  
This One Man, with a sickly babe outstretched  
Upon his knee, whom he had thither brought  
For sunshine, and to breathe the fresher air.  
Of those who passed, and me who looked at him,  
He took no heed; but in his brawny arms  
(The Artificer was to the elbow bare,

And from his work this moment had been stolen)  
He held the child, and, bending over it,  
As if he were afraid both of the sun  
And of the air, which he had come to seek,  
Eyed the poor babe with love unutterable.<sup>22</sup>

To define the poet's asexual human sublime, I turn away from empiricism to existentialism, especially to its religious strand.

Intending to read Wordsworth through an existentialistic and personalistic lens, I am far from being in intellectual isolation. In several chapter-length studies, Wordsworth has already been compared in various contexts to some existentialist thinkers: Kierkegaard, Jaspers, Dostoevski, and Heidegger, to name a few.<sup>23</sup> Herbert Read, for instance, is very explicit about his understanding of Wordsworth as an existentialist poet:

In the preceding essay I tried to make out a case for regarding Coleridge as an early existentialist. The considerable identity which exists between Wordsworth's philosophical faith and that of Karl Jaspers now compels me to make a similar claim for Wordsworth. The identity is far more extensive than I can demonstrate here, but it is not so astonishing if we remember that the common source of all these varieties of existentialism is undoubtedly Kant, a source to which Wordsworth could have had access only through the intermediaries of Schelling and Coleridge. But Wordsworth was a philosophical poet, and not a poetical philosopher. This implies that his faith was based on intuitions rather than on processes of reasoning. No doubt he received some guidance from Coleridge: Coleridge may have defined for him the philosophical problem. But the solution came in such flashes as that which fell upon his vision when he reached the crest of Snowdon, and saw that 'universal spectacle', 'shaped' for his 'admiration and delight.'<sup>24</sup>

When Wordsworth is read through Berdyaev's personalistic philosophy of freedom, freedom and liberty are linked with the person's

existentia. The existent has a visible human image. And it is this human image that I look at in my dissertation.

In my next chapter, “Chapter 2. The Human Form and Human Independence in Wordsworth: A Link,” I show how the poet’s search for truth in the Crossing the Alps episode becomes his striving to transcend both his unfeeling objective reasoning and escapist subjectivism and thus to reach communication between existents. He singles out the peasant from the natural background and questions him with the result that the information he receives through true communication, however short it is, is conducive to transcendence. This chapter offers a close reading of the Alpine episode, with occasional reference to Wordsworth’s biographical data and criticism, rather than a theoretical explanation of the link.

Chapter Three, ‘Man Ennobled Outwardly Before My Sight,’” traces how, in Book VIII, the Wordsworthian human sublime evolves from, and supersedes, the natural sublime. This theoretical chapter also gives attention to different kinds of time — pastoral, historical, and existential — and depicts the sublime human form as perfectly gestaltic (as opposed to the comparatively poor gestalten of the “uncouth shapes”).

*A Dictionary of Philosophy* by Antony Flew defines Gestalt as follows:

An organized, coherent whole whose parts are determined by laws intrinsic to the whole rather than being randomly juxtaposed or associated. The concept gives its name to the 20th-century school of psychology founded by Max Wertheimer, Wolfgang Köhler, and Kurt Koffka.

Gestalt theory was originally set up on general principles in opposition to the prevailing psychological atomism of the empiricist tradition. But its most significant contributions have occurred in the field of psychology of perception, in virtue of a

number of classic experiments designed to show how the eye naturally tends to organize, for example, a series of lines or dots into coherent patterns. For Gestalt theory, seeing is essentially a phenomenological process in so far as what is ‘seen’ is what appears to the seer rather than what may actually be there.<sup>25</sup>

Pertinent to my discussion of gestalten in Wordsworth’s poetry is Lawrence J. Lujan’s definition of the term. Lujan, in his dissertation on the applications of structural principles derived from Gestalt psychology to an understanding of English romantic poetry and criticism (U. of California, Berkeley, 1977), breaks the ground for a detailed investigation into how the two philosophies, that of romanticism and of gestalt coexist. Even though he applies the theory to poetic forms and rhetoric rather than to the figures of human beings, the claim is that mediums in which gestalten can be perceived may be various.

The German word *Gestalt* basically means “form” or “shape”; it is often translated in English psychological texts as “configuration,” “structure,” or “pattern.” A gestalt may be defined as a configuration, structure, pattern, or system of phenomena, events, or experiences which is so integrated as to constitute a functional whole with specific properties which can neither be derived from the individual parts of the whole nor considered simply as the summation of these parts. . . . [A] gestalt is a segregated whole. “A form is characterized by being separated and standing out in relief. It is closed and structured.” A figure so deeply embedded in its background that it cannot function independently is not perceived as an object at all. (This is the principle of camouflage: the number 4 is not seen in the letter H.) It is only when a figure separates itself from its field so that it can function and be perceived in itself that a gestalt is formed. The first and simplest configuration is a figure on a ground.<sup>26</sup>

Berdyayev, whose philosophy I use, also prizes the gestaltic way of perception as most appropriate for transcendence in his personalism.

Образъ личности цѣлостный, онъ цѣлостно присутствуетъ во всѣхъ актахъ личности. Личность имѣетъ единственный,

неповторимый образъ, Gestalt. Такъ называемая Gestaltpsychologie, которая видитъ первичныя качественныя цѣлости, формы, болѣе благопріятна для персонализма, чѣмъ другія направленія психологіи. (22)

[The form of personality is integral, it is present as a whole in all the acts of personality, personality has a unique, an unrepeatable form, *Gestalt*. What is known as *Gestalt* psychology, which regards form as the primary qualitative value, is more acceptable to personalism than other systems of psychology.]<sup>27</sup>

Building on these definitions of gestalt, and putting to use N. P. Stallknecht's interpretation of Wordsworth's "transcendence" and J. B. Twitchell's study of the Romantic sublime, I argue that the definite outline of the human form serves as the sublime "horizon" or "threshold" to the infinity of the human spirit and to the transcendent.

Chapter Four, "'Uncouth Shapes' and Their Progress From Transgression to Transcendence," looks at the series of human figures in *The Prelude*, including the poet's sketchy self-portraits, and illustrates the movement of Books I-VIII from the bodily freedom and willfulness of the transgressing "uncouth" human figures to the perfect but abstract gestalten of the freemen, the Lake country's "spiry rock" shepherds; while Books IX-XIII proceed from the abstractness of revolutionary ideals (without gestaltic human sketches) to the gestaltic figures conjured up out of the abyss of social and personal history. In this chapter I heavily rely on Berdyaev's philosophy of freedom. I also indebted to John Beer's study on the concepts of liberty, freedom, and independence in Wordsworth. My own contribution is that I look systematically at the human gestalten in connection with the poet's evolving notion of independence. Also, I find that by the end of *The Prelude*,

Wordsworth shifts from the universal as general and abstract to the universal as concrete and personalistic.<sup>28</sup> The relevant definitions of the universal, the general, and the concrete are also given in that chapter.

My final chapter argues that the reader, who has been conditioned by Wordsworth through the poet's use of rhythmic sketching, can recognize in the figure of the poet on Mount Snowdon the same sublime human form Wordsworth discerned in the spiry rock shepherds of VIII. However, this perfect human gestalt is no abstraction any longer: it becomes concrete. Even though in the Snowdon passage Wordsworth dwells on his transcendent vision, which is beyond the sublime threshold, in the 1850 text, this vision is framed by the sublime human gestalten.

My conclusion suggests that a growing personal independence, gained by the developing poet and, possibly, by his reader, is manifested to the imaginative inner eye by way of the perfecting of the human gestalten, from one Spot of Time<sup>29</sup> to another, until the poet himself gets into a position to be seen as "an index of delight." Throughout *The Prelude* (especially of 1850), Wordsworth redefines his understanding of liberty till it approximates independence. He becomes resistant to all kinds of determinism from without, be it the determinism of matter or of abstract ideas. Finally, it is transcendence, a feeling communion with the outer world, initiated by the person, that equals "genuine liberty." Visually, in *The Prelude*, the perfect, sublime, human form serves as the horizon, the aperture to the transcendent, because it invites the on-looker to approach another existent<sup>30</sup> understandingly, to form a "bond of

brotherhood,” and to be enriched by his experience and vision of the world in an imaginative and transforming way.

## End Notes

1 T. Z. Lavine, *From Socrates to Sartre: The Philosophic Quest*, pp. 322-34.

2 Below I draw on several biographical studies and articles on Berdyaev, including “Philosopher of Freedom” by Dimitri Lisin, <http://molmed.umassmed.edu/~dal/mytexts/suff.html> (1995 / 2002); Fr. Alexander Men on Berdyaev, <http://home.earthlink.net/~amenpage/berdfrmn.htm>, 2002; R. M. Baird’s note “Nikolay Berdyeu [*sic.*] Memorial,” etc.

3 The English spellings of Nicholas Berdyaev’s both first and last names (in old Russian, Николай Бердяевъ, and in modern Russian, Николай Бердяев) are different and, as of today, not standardized. In addition to the one I am using, there are: Nikolai Alexandrovich Berdyaev (a transliteration); Nicolas Berdiaev (in much of his translations into English); Nikolaj Berdjajev (as used by M. H. Abrams in *Natural Supernaturalism*, 501n.17); Nicolas Berdyaev (as spelled in Th. McFarland’s *Romanticism and the Forms of Ruin*, 323, 336, 337n. and in D. Gutierrez’s *Subject-Object Relations in Wordsworth and Lawrence*, 113-15); Nicolas Berdiaeff (in Aldous Huxley’s epigraph to his 1932 novel, *Brave New World*; that epigraph is taken from the French version of Berdyaev’s *New Middle Ages: Meditation on the Destiny of Russia and Europe.*); etc.

4 In English, among the standard critical biographies of Berdyaev are Oliver Fielding Clarke, *Introduction to Berdyaev* (1950); Matthew Spinka, *Nicolas Berdyaev: Captive of Freedom* (1950); and Donald Alexander Lowrie, *Rebellious Prophet* (1960). In Russian, one of the most recent studies is Berdyaev’s intellectual biography by O. D. Volkogonova, *N. Berdyaev: Intellektual’naya Biografiya*.

5 *Slavery and Freedom*, p. 8.

6 John Beer, “Nature and Liberty,” p. 207.

7 Both Wordsworth and Berdyaev in their notion of transcendentalism were influenced by Jakob Boehme and his understanding of the unity of Nature. Duncan Wu suggests that Wordsworth read Boehme as early as in 1797-98. Wu adds in *Wordsworth’s Reading 1770-1779*: “W[ordsworth] may have learnt about Boehme from C[oleridge], who had known *Aurora* since childhood. The Rydal Mount library contained Ellistone’s translation of *De Signatura Rerum* (1651), and Edward Taylor’s commentary on Boehme” (p. 17). On Wordsworth and Boehme see also Stallknecht, *Strange Seas of*



*Thought* (1958), pp. 44-71, 73, 101-34; M. H. Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism* (1971, 1973), pp. 161-63; Will Christie, "Wordsworth and the Language of Nature," *TWS* 14: 1 (1983), 40-47; Peter Malekin, "Wordsworth and the Mind of Man," pp. 1-25 of *An Infinite Complexity: Essays in Romanticism*, Edinburgh: U. of Durham (1983).

As for Berdyaev, he himself used to acknowledge his debt to Boehme, as well as his own take on Boehme's thought, on the pages of his many works. Of particular interest also can be his introductory essay to Böhme, Jakob, *Six Theosophic Points, and Other Writings*, Ann Arbor: U. of Michigan Press, 1958.

Kant's influence on philosophy and literature beginning in the eighteenth century is well-documented. Berdyaev refers to Kant quite often. Wordsworth became familiar with Kant's writings by September 26, 1798, as Wu in *Wordsworth's Reading 1770-1779* attests:

'I asked him what he thought of Kant,' W[ordsworth] recorded of his last meeting with Klopstock, which took place on 26 Sept. 1798. Trott suggests that W[ordsworth] may have read F. A. Nitsch's defence of Kant, *Monthly Magazine* 2 (1796) 702-5; Nitsch's *A General and Introductory View of Professor Kant's Principles* (1796), or A. F. M. Willich's *Elements of the Critical Philosophy* (1798), a copy of which Willich presented to Cottle in 1798. Kant's *Project for a Perpetual Peace* was published 20 Feb. 1797. W[ordsworth] had the *Critique of Judgement* in mind while composing his *Guide to the Lakes*, 1811-12 (*Prose Works* ii 456-7). Significantly, C[oleridge]'s earliest marginalia on Kant may date from as early as 1800. (pp. 80-81)

8 *Slavery and Freedom*, pp. 73-81.

9 *Ibid.*, p. 75.

10 *The Prelude*, Book XIV, 381-84; italics mine.

11 *Slavery and Freedom*, p. 47.

12 *The Prelude*, Book XIII, 80-84.

13 See "References" for some such studies.

14 See Warren Stevenson for both.

15 See Andrew Wilton, "Sublime or Ridiculous?" and Ronald Paulson "Versions of a Human Sublime." Thomas Weiskel's *The Romantic Sublime* also has to do with the corporeal.

16 Lucy Newlyn in "Questionable Shape": The Aesthetics of Indeterminacy," treats of the Burkean sublimity of indeterminacy.

17 “Flashes of the Invisible World,” p. 32.

18 See Chapter Three of this dissertation for my discussion of some differences between “body” and “form.”

19 Mellor quoted in Day, *Ibid.*, p. 192.

20 “‘Swift Counterchange’: The Androgyny of Keat’s Lamia,” pp. 79-86 of *Ruskin’s Mythic Queen*.

21 *Ibid.*, p. 81.

22 *The Prelude*, Book VII, 594-618.

23 See Geoffrey H. Hartman, “Wordsworth before Heidegger,” pp. 194-206 of *The Unremarkable Wordsworth*; Stephen Prickett, “Wordsworth and Kierkegaard,” pp. 268-78 of *Romanticism and Religion*; Herbert Read on Wordsworth and Jaspers, pp. 208-10 of *The True Voice of Feeling*; Lionel Trilling, “The Fate of Pleasure: Wordsworth to Dostoevsky,” *Partisan Review* 30: 2 (Summer 1963), 167-91; Geoffrey H. Hartman on Wordsworth and Dostoevsky, in passing, in “Wordsworth, *The Borderers*, and ‘Intellectual Murder’,” *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 62: 4 (October 1963), 761-68.

24 Read, *The True Voice of Feeling: Studies in English Romantic Poetry*, p. 210.

25 Flew, p. 131.

26 Lujan, p. 11.

27 *Slavery and Freedom*, p. 23.

28 I use Berdyaev’s definition of personalism, which does not contradict other traditional philosophic meaning of the term, for which see T. Flewelling, pp. 323-41.

29 The “Spots of Time” are the high-lights of Wordsworth’s personal growth. They are “places in the inner and outer world, fused in a moment of vision” (E. L. Stelzig, *All Shades of Consciousness*, p. 157). Wordsworth himself applies the term only to two occasions, both found in Book XII of *The Prelude*: (1) to his being lost and found not far from the Penrith gibbet; and (2) to the much anticipated Christmas holidays during which, unexpectedly, his father died. Despite the unhappiness of those first experiences, the moments bring comfort and healing with each passing year:

There are in our existence spots of time,  
That with distinct pre-eminence retain

A renovating virtue, whence, depressed  
 By false opinion and contentious thought,  
 Or aught of heavier or more deadly weight,  
 In trivial occupations, and the round  
 Of ordinary intercourse, our minds  
 Are nourished and invisibly repaired;  
 A virtue, by which pleasure is enhanced,  
 That penetrates, enables us to mount,  
 When high, more high, and lifts us up when fallen.  
 This efficacious spirit chiefly lurks  
 Among those passages of life that give  
 Profoundest knowledge to what point, and how,  
 The mind is lord and master—outward sense  
 The obedient servant of her will. Such moments  
 Are scattered everywhere, taking their date  
 From our first childhood. (XII, 208-25)

There is no definitive list of the Spots of Time to which all the Wordsworthian scholars conform. John T. Ogden, in his 1975 article on “The Structure of Imaginative Experience in Wordsworth’s *Prelude*,” however, systematically lists more than twenty such passages, which are usually considered to be the spots of time by most scholars.

The evolving function of the spots of time is discussed, among others, by Eve Walsh Stoddard in “The Spots of Time: Wordsworth’s Semiology of the Self.” She shows how the spots of time of the 1799 text differ from the later versions, particularly of 1805. In 1799, these spots were used to purify “the elements of feeling and of thought” and were formulated in terms of the Burkean sublime (p. 10). In 1805 and later, the chief function of such moments is “to heal the mind” (p. 17), which is another kind of the sublime, approximating that of Kant.

Jonathan Bishop is interested in the structure of those passages, the imagery they involve. He traces how in spots of time the repeated action gets broken, bringing along with such a sudden interruption the realization of something new. As an instance of such an interruption he mentions — though does not explicate gestaltically — the separation of a solitary shape from the crowd.

We seem to have in the ‘spots’ a repeated action, something a crowd does, or the protagonist does over and over, an action with guilty overtones, expressive of power and pride, rising as it proceeds to a boundary, there to be checked and retaliated upon from without, by counter-motion, or by a voice or the appearance of a grim shape, whose arrival precipitates an oppressive catastrophe. Is this rehearsal too abstract? Objections will arise, for many a ‘spot’ mixes or omits elements of this story: the relation between the protagonist and the grim shape, for example, is very changeable, in some memories reducing to identity. And many of the early memories never rise to a distinct crisis; we hear of customary actions, repeated experiences which stay, as it were, in

the back of Wordsworth's mind, pleasant but indistinct. When something does happen, though, the event follows at a greater or lesser distance this curious pattern. ("Wordsworth and the 'Spots of Time,'" p. 140)

J. Bishop, who is interested in different kinds of time in *The Prelude*, describes the nature of the spots of time, defining them as moments separated from the flux of time, but not a frozenness or "thrombosis."

Allan Chavkin explains the spots of time as "heightened moments of illumination," in which "Wordsworth's secular imagination manifests its power" (p. 454). Chavkin calls Wordsworth's imagination "secular," because it does not change reality: "the secular imagination only half creates its world because it is firmly anchored in the world of the senses. It can color reality, but it cannot ignore, distort, or transcend reality" (pp. 454-55). Chavkin's understanding of "transcendence," then, is different from the religious Berdyaev, who does not equate transcendence with distortion and escapism, and does not think that transcendence and reality should oppose each other. Likewise, Chavkin differs from Newton Stallknecht's emphasis on the *undistorted* real world of Wordsworth's transcendence, despite all the poet's mysticism.

30 By "existent," I mean a personality, who makes efforts to grow mentally and spiritually. When the personality is destroyed (as it happens with Robespierre, or even with the hanged criminal of the gibbet episode), the human gestalt is poor or absent, but objectivization dominates the vision.

## **CHAPTER 2: THE HUMAN FORM AND HUMAN INDEPENDENCE IN WORDSWORTH: A LINK**

Whether an anti-romantic – as he was considered to be before the beginning of the twentieth century – or a central figure in British Romanticism,<sup>1</sup> Wordsworth has been especially acclaimed as a poet of nature and of landscape. Even though his landscapes are often informed by haunting human presence, the poet seems to distance himself from the human beings he portrays, making them part of landscape and significantly altering the appearances of the prototypes and the stories of their lives, as happened, for instance with the famous Leech-Gatherer figure, which Wordsworth created after re-reading of one of Dorothy's journal entries, which he modified considerably. Wordsworth's tendency to tamper with the images of real people and his apparent lack of interest in what they really said or did led some to parody his lines (Carroll's famous "I'll tell you everything I can" is one such mockery) and to seriously question Wordsworth's love for humankind, subordinating his interest in people to his feelings for nature.<sup>2</sup> Especially illuminating to that effect, though not always as sweepingly dismissive as is Carroll's parody, are comparative approaches, in which Wordsworth's use of human figures is weighed against those of Reynolds, Blake<sup>3</sup> or Coleridge. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, in particular, whose arrival at Racedown in the Summer of 1797, where William and Dorothy lived at the time, marked the beginning of a close creative exchange between the two poets, often provides a foil to Wordsworth in the context of their dialogue. Poetical experiments

with human figures and landscapes are no small part of that dialogue, and the differences between Coleridge's experiments and Wordsworth's have been eloquently discussed in criticism. For instance, in his article, "The Role of Humankind in the Poetry of Wordsworth and Coleridge" (1991), J. Robert Barth, S. J., argues that human figures in much of Wordsworth's poetry are "more part of the landscape than of the poet's world of humanity."<sup>4</sup> Barth suggests that "Wordsworth's depth of feeling for the natural world may at times have blinded him to the actual feelings of some of the human figures in his landscape;" while for Coleridge, contrastingly, "humankind is both distinct and separate from its natural setting. The focus is not Nature but humanity, and the primary relationship is not between humankind and Nature but between human persons."<sup>5</sup>

Wordsworth's preoccupation with nature has received a good deal of categorizing. As early as 1962, Geoffrey Hartman drew up an exhaustive classification of controversial critical approaches to understanding of the role Nature played in Wordsworth's poetry, which in the main remains current.<sup>6</sup> The spectrum ranges from those who see the poet as a worshipper of Nature, to those who find an opposition between the "images culled from Nature" and the poet's Imagination, which can transcend Nature. Analogously, the controversy around the position of humanity in Wordsworth's poetry can be distributed along a spectrum between two extremes: those who see humanity in Wordsworth as inconsiderately effaced by Nature and those who argue for the poet's unconditional love of humankind.<sup>7</sup>

In this study, my primary interest lies with the human figures, their enabling presence in Wordsworth's poetry, with the way this presence is manifested — or not — to the inner eye of the reader, and the effects of such manifestation. Indeed, many human images in Wordsworth's poetry, despite their close connection with landscape, are not lost in it, but stand out in the minds of many generations of readers and loom large, be it the girl with the pitcher struggling against the wind, Margaret ever searching the horizon with her eyes, the double-bent Leech Gatherer, the cheerless Michael sitting by his unfinished sheep-fold, the boy Wordsworth looking back at Black Crag from the stolen boat. Why do such figures sometimes stand out and, at other times, seem camouflaged, blending with the environment and its shadows, as happens with the discharged soldier? Are human figures mere pawns in the loco-descriptive game or guides to and interpreters of the landscape, which can lead beyond itself towards liberating the imagination? Are Wordsworth's figures readable and to what effect?

The problem of the readability of landscapes and signs within them, including human figures, was central to the minds of Wordsworth and Coleridge during the years of their most intense collaboration, before the appearance of *The Lyrical Ballads*. With many drafts continuously being rewritten and poems reread in each other's presence, each of the poets was honing his own technique: while Wordsworth was making a case for the possibility of reliance upon signs within landscape, provided that the on-looker, like the Pedlar, has a "worthy eye," Coleridge was exploring the inscrutability of landscapes and the perplexing influence of aliens, such as

Geraldine, who pass all understanding and irrevocably disrupt the literal. Thus Paul Magnuson, who in his book-length study, *Coleridge and Wordsworth: A Lyrical Dialogue* (1988), gives close attention to poetic exploration of the problem as it appears in “The Ruined Cottage” and “Christabel” (1797-1798), writes:

Coleridge’s response to both Margaret’s story and the Pedlar material, in the first part of ‘Christabel,’ took what must have seemed to Wordsworth a strange turn. ‘Christabel’ questions both the optimism of hope and the certainty of the meaning of signs within landscape that the Pedlar claims to be able to read. In the context of their poetic dialogue, Coleridge’s response argues that the divisions occasioned by wandering, once opened, and the necessity of interpretation and figuration, once established, allow no return to the secure certainty of the literal. The mariner returns to his own country only temporarily and continues to be the enigmatic wandering figure, just as, later, Leonard in ‘The Brothers’ remains unknown to the Priest of Ennerdale. Christabel is aware, at the end of the first part, of having been presented with the figure of Geraldine, an enigmatic figure. Both parts of the poem, the first implicitly and the second explicitly, question the Pedlar’s ability to read landscape with a worthy eye.<sup>8</sup>

The variants on the questions raised in the exchange above — whether unfamiliar landscapes can be understood or interpreted adequately; whether this understanding can be passed on from one human being to another and under what circumstances — surface in the poetry of both for years later. In *The Prelude* (or “the poem to Coleridge” as Wordsworth used to call it), in the “Crossing the Alps” episode, Wordsworth works his own example of the difficulties of reading landscape and some enigmatic human figures within it, when he and Robert Jones, themselves wanderers during the tour of the continent in August 1790, having no practical knowledge of the place and no timely signal from the locals they follow in the Simplon Pass, reach the highest



point of the Alpine Crossing unawares. The poet uses the incident to explore the discrepancies between his preconceptions about the landscape and its reality. At first, the travellers cannot read the signs within that landscape, including human beings, correctly and get themselves lost. At a halting place the young men get separated from their guides and, figuring that the relief of the crossing should be steeper (when actually the Simplon Pass has a level top), the boys continue to climb the nearby mountain. Consequently, they fail to overtake the muleteers, who are well on their way down. Their departure from the literalness of the landscape is mendable, however. Moreover, it is mendable with the help of a local peasant, who is not at odds with the landscape, and unlike Coleridge's characters, is capable of bringing back clarity to the confused travellers at a critical juncture. The importance of that eye-opening *human* exchange, however short it is, especially stands out, when, by comparison, we watch the development of Wordsworth's account of his tour in *The Prelude*, starting with his first mountaintop experience, that of Mont Blanc, which took place a few days prior to his Alpine crossing and in which no human figures appear in the focus.

Mont Blanc, the highest point in Europe, was the mount with the reputation. Horace-Bénédict de Saussure, who had climbed it three years before Wordsworth first saw it, and William Coxe, who praised its prospect in his *Sketches on the Natural, Civil, and Political State of Switzerland*, were among the major inspirations for Wordsworth when he set out to experience Mont Blanc's sublimity.<sup>9</sup> Wordsworth sincerely takes these authorities at their

word, anticipating a very special experience. According to Kenneth Johnston, Wordsworth “planned in his published account of the tour to place it [Mont Blanc] as the climax of the whole, as the superlative of the Sublime.”<sup>10</sup> Post factum, however, as *The Prelude* makes clear, that mountain turns out to be one of several letdowns of the tour, rather than its defining moment. And in his genuine disappointment, Wordsworth does not end up as an original either: his few lines are very much in unison with the numerous reactions of travellers unsatisfied with the not-sublime-enough appearance of Mont Blanc. The same William Coxe whose *Sketches* helped Wordsworth form the idea of how sublime this Mount was, on the very same pages of the *Sketches*, writes of Mont Blanc in a less than enthusiastic tone: “it ends abruptly, and loses itself amid the mountains that bound from the vale of Chamouny.”<sup>11</sup> Such were the words of the people who saw the Mount and on whose evidence Wordsworth was dependent. Contextually, Coxe’s indirect presence in the passage is undeniable. What *The Prelude* tells directly, however, is strikingly different: no human presence is emphasized in the lines, no human figure but “we” – Wordsworth and his kindred companion – is noticeable, as if on purpose.

That very day,  
From a bare ridge we also first beheld  
Unveiled the summit of Mont Blanc, and grieved  
To have a soulless image on the eye  
That had usurped upon a living thought  
That never more could be.<sup>12</sup>

The “soulless image” of the real Mont Blanc deadens “a living thought” completely. In this world of solitude, the only word that points to the vastness of the hoped-for experience is “usurped,” the word which in its changed

meaning would figure in the passage on Imagination later in the same Book VI. The result of this usurpation here is nothingness, a “never more,” quite the opposite of what the true imagination will inspire.

During his 1790 tour, precisely knowing his position in space and time, watching the 15,770-foot Mont Blanc from the same standpoint as Coxe, from the 5,006-foot Col de Balme, on the third anniversary of the day when Saussure climbed it, Wordsworth is not responding to the mountainscape the way he expected to. The objective knowledge of dates and places *per se*, however precise, does not assist in bridging the gulf between the preconceived image and reality.

The disappointed travellers, reluctant to give up their illusory preconceptions, turn away from Mont Blanc and descend into the “wondrous Vale of Chamouny” with its magnificent cataracts and rivers which, as *The Prelude* tells us, charmed the travellers back into thinking that they together with their expectations, can be “reconciled to realities.”<sup>13</sup> What follows, however, is not the description of the “realities” of the vale as Wordsworth saw them during his tour and reflected later in *Descriptive Sketches*, but an escape from the haunting “pale-blue hands” and “dead muttering lips” of the beggars he met in the vale to the quasi-pastoral fictional world reminiscent of Coxe’s *Sketches* again.<sup>14</sup> In the conflict between the literal and the figurative, the poet, in his “unripe state / Of intellect and heart,” chooses between the two and prefers the latter, willingly pulling over his unsatisfied sight the wool of the fictional world, in which the Winter “like a well-tamed lion walks” and

the maidens “spreading the haycock in the sun” are as predictable and non-threatening to the expectations as pastoral shepherdesses. Thus wandering among the sublime solitudes, while thinking themselves in the fictitious gardens of the allegorical lady Sorrow, the young poet of *The Prelude* and Robert Jones, his “brother pilgrim,” try to allay their thirst for both pensiveness and sweetness:

Nor. . . could we fail to abound  
In dreams and fictions, pensively composed:  
Dejection taken up for pleasure’s sake,  
And gilded sympathies, the willow wreath,  
And sober posies of funeral flowers,  
Gathered among those solitudes sublime  
From formal gardens of the lady Sorrow,  
Did sweeten many a meditative hour.<sup>15</sup>

But the “gilded sympathies” of this half-imaginary landscape are not the reconciliation with realities Wordsworth was looking for. He still feels an unquenched “under-thirst” for sensations of a different kind, not fanciful, but fully imaginative, even though at this point of his journey he has no name for imagination<sup>16</sup> yet. It is Basil Willey who can provide the definition for the fancy-Imagination distinction:

Just as a “known and familiar landscape” may be transmuted by moonlight or “accidents of light and shade,” so, owing to the bond between nature and the soul of man, this dead world may be brought to life by the modifying colours of the “imagination.” Of the *imagination*, for this is the faculty which works the required magic without producing what is now felt to be “fictitious.” Where there is consciousness of fiction, it is the *fancy* that has been at work.<sup>17</sup>

The Vale of Chamouny is left behind, and Wordsworth has to depart from Coxe’s *Sketches* and from the route the book offers<sup>18</sup> for a very practical

reason: to get to the Italian Lake District sooner, he decides to cross the Alps by way of the quick and easy Simplon Pass, the road not taken by Coxe, who was more interested in dramatic prospects, for which the Simplon Pass is not specifically famous. At large, on his own, without the directions of Coxe, Wordsworth still keeps up the fanciful mood of the “wondrous vale” and expects “the crossing of the Alps” not only to sound impressive but be so.

Having met a band of real muleteers travelling that road presumably not for the first time, Wordsworth and Jones followed them as they would their guides up a hill till the band stopped for a halt. The appearance of the muleteers is the first emergence of the real human beings in Wordsworth’s mountaintop experience in *The Prelude*. However, those figures are not granted much attention. Where precisely those guides were supposed to lead the way – to the foot of the mountain on the Italian side or just to the top of the crossing – is a matter of conjecture. Later in the poem, in a flashback, we learn that admiring the top of the crossing was the objective of the English landscape wanderers. Whether there was an understanding between Wordsworth and the muleteers that the latter would show the exact place of the top, remains unsaid, as remains unsaid much about the muleteers, their tongue and their looks, because for the young English wanderers, muleteers are not interesting in themselves, but only as long as they can lead the way across the mountains and reveal by their actions certain landmarks. But such an expectation backfires: at a place where a more poetically minded “Corin of the grove” or the maiden of “the wondrous vale” would have paid their respects to the landscape with a gesture or a word, the down-to-earth

muleteers waste no time and without much talking finish their simple meal and take off, as if nothing extraordinary happened. No signal is sent to Wordsworth and Robert Jones as to where to exult in the very moment of the crossing, and the experience remains unregistered by the consciousness of the travellers.

When from the Vallais we had turned, and clomb  
Along the Simplon's steep and rugged road,  
Following a band of muleteers, we reached  
A halting-place, where all together took  
Their noon-tide meal. Hastily rose our guide,  
Leaving *us* at the board; awhile we lingered,  
Then paced the beaten downward way that led  
Right to a rough stream's edge, and there broke off.<sup>19</sup>

Thus, the travellers stop short on the brink of the readable with a bunch of enigmas to handle. The readers of *The Prelude* are also baffled: Were the muleteers aware that Wordsworth and Jones were eager to enjoy the view of the crossing? Why did the band leave only the English to linger at that place and not tell them where to catch up on the way later? And whence this richly loaded phrase “at the board”? Why from that point on does the beaten road start to descend? Why does the river, which in *The Prelude* is usually analogous to the flowing progress of the journey,<sup>20</sup> now block and bar the way? All signs, first human and then natural, receive an erroneous or null reading from the young travellers. The travellers miss all the clues, and misunderstanding piles up. And so, being left by the road companions on their own, they turned to landscape for guidelines, hoping eventually to overtake the muleteers and enjoy the highest point of the crossing. But after their

underestimation of the contact with the natives, the landscape wouldn't cooperate either.

[We] paced the beaten downward way that led  
Right to a rough stream's edge, and there broke off;  
The only track now visible was one  
That from the torrent's further brink held forth  
Conspicuous invitation to ascend  
A lofty mountain. After brief delay  
Crossing the unbridged stream, that road we took,  
And clomb with eagerness, till anxious fears  
Intruded, for we failed to overtake  
Our comrades gone before.<sup>21</sup>

Tempted in their eagerness to follow the "conspicuous invitation" of the ascending road, the boys do not gain on the muleteers and spot no human shapes beckoning them. Fears instead of a more sublime awe arise. The abyss between expectations and reality dangerously widens. Now the travellers are disoriented not only in space, but also in time: in their understanding, the crossing is not only ahead of them, but also at some point in the future, and the longer they struggle to approach it, the further away they drift off. The conflict between the figurative and the real is aggravated. Wordsworth and Jones start suspecting that their self-centered figuration of the landscape is lacking and there is a need to reach out to the literal world. The question is how to do that.

Before I speak of the possible ways out of their subjective world and especially of the one Wordsworth picks, which ultimately led him to a new revelation about the Imaginary power, it is expedient to draw a distinction between the subjective vision of the world, which was closing upon the lost travellers, and the existential vision, which also presupposes that a subject has the center of the existence of the whole world inside of him, and for which

Wordsworth is also known. As the poet himself dictated to Miss Fenwick in 1843 in his ruminations on the “Ode,”

With a feeling congenial to this [a sense of the indomitableness of the spirit within], I was often unable to think of external things as having external existence, and I communed with all that I saw as something not apart from, but inherent in, my own immaterial nature. Many times while going to school have I grasped at a wall or tree to recall myself from this abyss of idealism to the reality. At that time I was afraid of such processes. In later periods of life I have deplored (as we have all reason to do) a subjugation of an opposite character, and have rejoiced over the remembrances, as is expressed in the lines, ‘obstinate questionings’, etc. To that dreamlike vividness and splendour which invest objects of sight in childhood, everyone (I believe, if he would look back) could bear testimony, and I need not dwell upon it here.<sup>22</sup>

In such intense moments, there cannot be the other, which is always an object; there cannot be the past as opposed to and separated from the present; hence, there cannot exist escapism. Such an existential habit of mind, when the subject and object are not alienated, in Wordsworth is especially associated with childhood and its experiences. So, a little girl in “We are Seven” does not accept death as separation from her brother and sister, even though she uses the word “died.” She does not treat her dead siblings as objects. But she counts them, when asked “Sisters and brothers, little maid, / How many may you be?,”<sup>23</sup> expanding her world to include her late brother and sister into her everyday life and never losing touch with their presence.

So, the difference is that the subjective vision is illusory and does not square with the outward facts, as it happens in the above crossing episode. It is precisely the discrepancy between the illusory subjective vision and the real fact that gets the travellers lost. The existential vision, and here Berdyaev is



helpful, is different from that. Taking landscapes in is an emotional way of bridging the gap between the human and the natural, when the human figure becomes neither alien to the incomprehensible landscape, nor dominated or effaced by it in a dehumanizing way; rather, the landscape becomes part of the person's inner world: the erroneous and lacking-in-feeling vision of the external objects gives way to the yielding and emotional inner scapes, as happens in "We are Seven." Berdyaev wrote:

Личность, какъ экзистенціальний центръ, предполагаетъ чувствилище къ страданіямъ и радостямъ. Ничто въ объектномъ мірѣ, ни нація, ни государство, ни общество, ни социальный институтъ, ни церковь, этимъ чувствилищемъ не обладаютъ. (25)

[Personality as an existential centre, presupposes capacity to feel suffering and joy. Nothing in the object world, nation or state or society, or social institution, or church, possesses this capacity.]<sup>24</sup>

And futher on:

[Подлинный персонализм] не можетъ признать личностью цѣлость, коллективное единство, въ которомъ нѣтъ экзистенціального центра, нѣтъ чувствилища къ радости и страданію, нѣтъ личной судьбы. Въ личности нѣтъ въ мірѣ абсолютнаго единства и тоталитарности, которымъ личность была бы подчинена, въ личности все частично, частиченъ и самый міръ. Все объективированное, все объектное можетъ быть лишь частично. Таковъ весь объективированный міръ, все объективированное общество со своими объективированными тѣлами. Этотъ объективированный міръ отличается массивностью, которая можетъ давить личность, но не цѣлостностью и не тоталитарностью. Экзистенціальний центръ, страдальческая судьба находится въ субъективности, а не въ объективности. [...] Космосъ, человѣчество, нація и пр. находятся въ человеческой личности, какъ въ индивидуализированномъ универсумѣ или микрокосмѣ, и выпаденіе, выбрасываніе ихъ во внешнія реальности, въ объекты, есть результатъ падшести человѣка, подчиненія его безличной реальности, экстеріоризаціи, отчужденію. Солнце

екзистенціально знаходиться не в центрі космоса, а в центрі людської особистості і воно екстеріоризовано лише в падшій стані людини. Реалізація особистості, концентрація і актуалізація її сили приймає сонце всередину, приймає всередину весь космос, всю історію, все людство. (36-37)

[Authentic personalism cannot recognize a whole, a collective unity in which there is no absolute existential centre, no point of sensitiveness to joy and suffering, no personal destiny, as a personality. Outside personality there is no absolute unity and totality in the world, to which personality would be subordinate: outside personality everything is partial, even the world itself is partial <fragmented>. Everything objectivized, everything which is an object can be partial only. Such is the whole objectivized world, and the whole of objectivized society with its objectivized bodies. This objectivized world is distinguished by a solidity which is able to threaten to crush personality, but it is not distinguished by wholeness nor by totality. An existential centre, and a suffering destiny are to be found in subjectivity, not in objectivity. . . . The cosmos, mankind, nation, etc., are to be found in human personality as in an individualized universe or microcosm, and their falling away from it, their ejection into external reality among objects, is the result of the fall of man, of his subordination to impersonal reality, exteriorization, and alienation. In the existential system the sun is to be found not in the centre of the cosmos but in the centre of human personality and it is exteriorized only in the fallen state of man. The realization of personality, the concentration and actualization of its strength, takes the sun into itself, it inwardly receives the whole cosmos, the whole of history, all mankind.]<sup>25</sup>

In the subjectivized vision of Mt. Blanc, the Vale of Chamouney, and of the missed crossing alike, the travellers strived to substitute their own ideas about the world for the reality, which on the emotional level brought either utter disappointment or blinding illusion. But what they did not attempt is to get through their heart, without any biases or comparing, every moment of what they really saw. From the subjective perspective, with its emotional dissonance with the reality, which dominates the crossing, if we apply

Berdyayev's existential personalism, there can be two ways out: (1) by way of objectivization; (2) by way of transcendence. And so Berdyayev explains:

Человѣкъ хочетъ выйти изъ замкнутой субъективности и это происходитъ всегда въ двухъ разныхъ, даже противоположныхъ направленихъ. Выходъ изъ субъективности происходитъ путемъ объективации. Это путь выхода въ общество съ его общеобязательными формами, это путь общеобязательной науки. На этомъ пути происходитъ отчужденіе челоѣческой природы, выбрасываніе ея въ объектный міръ, личность не находитъ себя. Другой путь есть выходъ изъ субъективности черезъ трансцендированіе. Трансцендированіе есть переходъ къ транссубъективному, а не къ объективному. Этотъ путь лежитъ въ глубинѣ существованія, на этомъ пути происходятъ экзистенціальныя встрѣчи съ Богомъ, съ другимъ челоѣкомъ, съ внутреннимъ существованіемъ міра, это путь не объективныхъ сообщеній, а экзистенціальныхъ общеній. Личность вполне реализуетъ себя только на этомъ пути. (27)

[Man desires to go out from the closed circle of subjectivity and this movement always takes place in two different and even opposite directions. Emergence from subjectivity proceeds by way of objectivization. This is the way which leads out into society with its forms of universal obligation, it is the way of science with its laws of universal obligation. On this path there takes place the alienation of human nature, its ejection into the object world: personality does not find itself. The other path is emergence from subjectivity through the process of transcendence. This is a passing over into the transsubjective and not to the objective. This path lies in the deeps of existence, on this path there take place the existential meeting with God, with other people, with the interior existence of the world. It is the path not of objective communication but of existential communion. Personality reaches full realization of itself only on this path.<sup>26</sup>]

Even though Berdyayev was not a scholar of Wordsworth, in his distinction between what he here calls “objectivization” and “transcendence,” he comes very close to Wordsworth’s differentiation between the two ways of seeking truth: as undertaken by a man of science and by a poet. Thus, in his 1800 Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth writes:

[Poetry's] object is truth, not individual and local, but general, and operative; not standing upon external testimony, but carried alive into the heart by passion; truth which is its own testimony. . . . The man of science seeks truth as a remote and unknown benefactor; he cherishes and loves it in his solitude: the poet, singing a song in which all human beings join with him, rejoices in the presence of truth as our visible friend and hourly companion. . . . [T]he poet binds together by passion and knowledge the vast empire of human society, as it is spread over the whole earth, and over all time.<sup>27</sup>

Thus, when lost, had Wordsworth and Jones taken a map, a compass, a telescope or even a “Claude-Lorrain” glass for that matter, by which to instrumentally correct their disoriented vision of the Alpine landscape, and had they returned to the path emotionally untransformed, that would have been succumbing to objectivization or “science.” Objectivization has already been attempted by the poet a few junctures earlier, near Mont Blanc. The travellers’ over-reliance upon external testimony with an acute awareness of their viewing “station,” observed almost with the formality of picturesque tours, undermined all the impressiveness of one of the pre-eminently sublime views. Such detached factualness of the travellers leads only to their awareness of the separateness of the subjective and the objective rather than anywhere close to finding the truth they wanted, in that case, the adequate experiencing of the mountain’s sublimity.

What happens in *The Prelude* after the travellers were placed in check by the brook and face the peasant’s eye-opening explanation, is transcendence, accompanied by a discovery of a new feeling and of a new power: the unifying imagination.<sup>28</sup> Growth of mind and of a personality takes place. The inner world of the poet expands to receive feelingly the outer

landscape as it is. To use Wordsworth's words from the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, the feeling here "gives importance to the action and situation, and not the action and situation to the feeling." From that point on, the path, even though it descends rather than scales the lofty peaks, is suddenly made open to the grandeur of the imaginative<sup>29</sup> and sublime panorama with the "immeasurable height / Of woods decaying, never to be decayed, / The stationary blasts of waterfalls" and "Winds thwarting winds," the giddy description of the giddy prospect of the Gondo Gorge that is couched in Miltonic terms.<sup>30</sup>

The unfettered clouds and region of the Heavens,  
Tumult and peace, the darkness and the light—  
Were all like workings of one mind, the features  
Of the same face, blossoms upon one tree;  
Characters of the great Apocalypse,  
The types and symbols of Eternity,  
Of first, and last, and midst, and without end.<sup>31</sup>

The poet's transcendent vision of the landscape leads to his communion with God, just as it happens in Berdyaev's quotation on transcendence above. And even though Wordsworth in his letters to Dorothy claimed that it was the Alpine panorama rather than human presence that turned his whole soul to God, in the text of *The Prelude*, it all starts with the meeting of the human being whose words the travellers, for the first time in this mountaintop experience, "translate by their feelings."

Nature does not rescue the travellers all by itself. The travellers had to wish for human guidance and communion starting with the wishful thinking about the distanced muleteers who now are missed, and whose absence gives

rise to fears and a belated realization that the lost guides were, in fact, “comrades.” But what is gone is gone. Another human being appears at a crucial moment. His appearance is so abrupt that it is often underestimated even by the modern reader, who sees the peasant as a counterpart of the muleteers in all ways. E. Hershey Sneath, who wrote about Wordsworth as a “Poet of Nature and Poet of Man” (placing man second to nature even in the title of his 1912 book), emphasizes similarities between all human beings met by Wordsworth during his journey from France to Switzerland and beyond as they are described in *The Prelude* and “Descriptive Sketches” alike:

These accounts are all in harmony with what seems to be fundamental in Wordsworth’s thinking—that Man and Nature are not far apart. The nearer that social conditions approach those of primitive or patriarchal man, the more accurately does Man hear Nature’s voice, and the more fully does she reveal herself to him.<sup>32</sup>

Without disagreeing with Sneath about the natural man, I stress the contrasts between the people Wordsworth mentions in the crossing episode, because after all, the muleteers’ closeness to nature was not of much assistance to the young English travellers, while the peasant’s knowledge of the locale proved profitable indeed. From my perspective, what comes to the fore is the poet’s relationship with the people he meets rather than those people’s affiliation.

In contrast to “*making* of them [the muleteers] our guide” — a phrase that distances the muleteers as objects to be used — the peasant’s introduction into the poem is much more involved. “A peasant met us,” says the poet, giving precedence of agency to the peasant, even on the level of discourse. Starting with this speech act, Wordsworth puts to right what went wrong in his encounter with the muleteers. Despite all differences in languages

and class, he establishes lines of communication with a person from this place.<sup>33</sup> Wordsworth and Jones approach the peasant “again and yet again,” with an effort, transcending the barriers of misunderstanding. The interpretation of the real landscape voiced by a local peasant is as hard for the wanderers to get through their heads and as strange to their ears as the foreign language he speaks, but they do not give up and “translate by their feelings” each word he mouths. Thus the turn towards transcendence starts with getting in touch with a human being, who, finally, is not reduced to a pastoral figure, but met honestly, large as life, with his appearance as solid as his experience of the region. He is more palpable than other people in the Alps described here. And in the 1850 text his presence is made even more tangible than in all previous versions of the poem.<sup>34</sup>

By fortunate chance,  
While every moment added doubt to doubt,  
A peasant met us, from whose mouth we learned  
That to the spot which had perplexed us first  
We must descend, and there should find the road,  
Which in the stony channel of the stream  
Lay a few steps, and then along its banks;  
And, that our future course, all plain to sight,  
Was downwards, with the current of that stream.  
Loth to believe what we so grieved to hear,  
For still we had hopes that pointed to the clouds,  
We questioned him again, and yet again;  
But every word that from the peasant’s lips  
Came in reply, translated by our feelings,  
Ended in this,—*that we had crossed the Alps.*<sup>35</sup>

Words translated by feelings bring home the idea that never crossed the minds of the travellers before: they had crossed the Alps. This announcement of the peasant, italicized by Wordsworth in the 1850 text, is in itself yet another

speech act, an expression that performs an action so that the world is a different place as the result of this speech. And this word comes from the peasant and resounds in the poet's mind. At that very moment, even before "the melancholy slackening" produced by the news is "dislodged" and the vision of the landscape changes, the poet makes shift in his terminology and sidesteps into the passage on Imagination, rethinking and voicing anew all the terms he used in the course of his Alpine journey. All those terms gain in significance here, all are understood in a new, more dazzling, light. Instead of the almost involuntary and imposed lingering at the halting place which was supposed to be one of the most intense emotional stops near the top of the crossing, now the poet is "lost as in a cloud, / Halted without a struggle to break through." The fear of having lost the thread of the road is replaced by the far mightier and sublime "awe."<sup>36</sup> The usurpation of the "soulless" image of Mont Blanc on the living thought becomes pale by the side of the Imagination's strength of usurpation. The hopes "that pointed to the clouds" and were thwarted give place to the "hope that can never die." The reality itself is no more the gilded and sugared reality of the "wondrous Vale of Chamouny," but the infinitely grandiose actuality fertile like "the whole Egyptian plain."

Imagination—here the Power so called  
Through sad incompetence of human speech,  
That awful Power rose from the mind'd abyss  
Like an unfathered vapour that enwraps,  
At once, some lonely traveller. I was lost;  
Halted without an effort to break through;  
But to my conscious soul I now can say—  
'I recognize thy glory': in such strength



Of usurpation, when the light of sense  
Goes out, but with a flash that has revealed  
The invisible world, doth greatness make abode,  
There harbours, whether we be young or old.  
Our destiny, our being's heart and home,  
Is with infinitude, and only there;  
With hope it is, hope that can never die,  
Effort, and expectation, and desire,  
And something evermore about to be.  
Under such banners militant, the soul  
Seeks for no trophies, struggles for no spoils  
That may attest her prowess, blest in thoughts  
That are their own perfection and reward,  
Strong in herself and in beatitude  
That hides her, like the mighty flood of Nile  
Poured from his fount of Abyssinian clouds  
To fertilize the whole Egyptian plain.<sup>37</sup>

Even though Book Six of *The Prelude* is not about the love of man, and even though Wordsworth is yet to approach this love in the “shepherd on the mountain” episode, where he will chant the verse of the sublimity of human form as “an index of delight,” human presence is of crucial importance in Wordsworth’s Alpine experience as well. Landscape *per se* does not give knowledge, nor does it produce exaltation in the minds of the travellers. The objectivized approach to landscape not tempered by inner feeling, with its thorough “dissection” of measurable and sensual data, results in emotional estrangement from nature and aesthetic disappointment in its views. The subjective vision, on the other hand, with its neglect of the factual reality, leads to illusions and loss of contact with the outer world. Only transcendence, for Wordsworth, as for Berdyaev, can unify the observer with the observed, the human traveller with the travelled world. And for Wordsworth, as for Berdyaev, transcendence begins — to use Berdyaev’s phraseology — with reaching out towards the trans-subjective: with the existential meeting with

other people, with the interior existence of the world, with God. In the Alpine crossing, before the existential meeting with both the landscape and God is made possible, the poet has to turn his face toward a human being, look steadily enough at him, and communicate with him as with a real human being rather than take him for no more than an instrumental authority, pastoral figure or the remote and churlish “other.” Only then, the brook previously blocking the way turns into a “fellow-traveller,” and Nature leads beyond itself.

Through the existential communication with a human, the poet is capable of receiving at least two types of felt information: (1) human knowledge and experience of the place he visits and describes in his poetry; and (2) information which is communicative in a different way than articulate speech, such as other people’s visions or gestalten. The peasant above mostly provides the information of the first kind, which is no wonder in the Book entitled “Cambridge and the Alps” rather than “Love of Man.” In the “Crossing the Alps” episode Wordsworth is more concerned with the shapes of the mountains than with those of people and only hints at the pattern he will develop in Book Eight when speaking about the transformation of a shepherd before the poet’s eyes from a pastoral figure to the sublime one. In “The Ruined Cottage,” MS D, as reworked in February-March of 1798, in addition to the Pedlar’s vision of the landscape, Wordsworth provides the Pedlar’s vision of Margaret in a set of different gestalten. For both visions the Pedlar has the “worthy eye.”

Both types of information can be eye-opening and lead to transcendence, which in the personalistic philosophy of Berdyaev is equated with personal freedom and opposed to the objectivization which enslaves.

Въ обьективациі чловѣкъ находится во власти детерминаціи, въ царствѣ безличности, въ трансцендированіи чловѣкъ находится въ царствѣ свободы и встрѣча чловѣка съ тѣмъ, что его превосходитъ, носить личный характеръ, сверхличное не подавляетъ личности. Это основоположное различіе. [...] Личность остается цѣлымъ, ни во что не входитъ и при ея отношеніи къ высочайшему другому. Отношеніе части къ цѣлому есть отношеніе математическое, какъ отношеніе органа къ организму есть отношеніе біологическое. Это принадлежитъ міру обьективациі, въ которомъ чловѣкъ превращается въ часть и органъ. Но экзистенціальное отношеніе личности къ другому, и самому высочайшему, ничего общаго не имѣетъ съ такимъ отношеніемъ. Трансцендированіе не означаетъ, что личность подчиняется какому-либо цѣлому, входитъ какъ составная часть въ какую-либо коллективную реальность, относится къ высшему другому, къ высшему существу, какъ къ господину. Трансцендированіе есть активный, динамическій процессъ, есть имманентный опытъ чловѣка, въ которомъ чловѣкъ переживаетъ катастрофы, переносится черезъ бездны, испытываетъ прерывность въ своемъ существованіи, но не экстеріоризируется, а интеріоризируется. Лишь ложная обьективациа трансцендированія, выбрасываніе его во внѣ создаетъ иллюзію трансцендентнаго, подавляющаго личность и господствующаго надъ ней. Трансцендированіе въ экзистенціальномъ смыслѣ есть свобода и предполагаетъ свободу, есть освобожденіе чловѣка отъ плѣна у самага себя. (27-28)

[In objectivization man finds himself in the power of determination, in the realm of the impersonal: in transcension <transcending> man finds himself in the realm of freedom, and the meeting of man with that which excels him has a personal character, the suprapersonal does not crush personality. This is a fundamental distinction. . . . Personality remains integral, it enters into nothing, even in its relation to the highest other. The relation of a part to the whole is a mathematical relation, just as the relation of an organ to an organism is a biological relation.

This relation of a part to a whole belongs to the world of objectivization in which man is turned into a part and an organ. But the existential relation of personality to an other, and that the

very highest, has nothing in common with such a relation. Transcension <transcendence> does not mean that personality is subordinated to any whole whatever, enters as an integral part into any collective reality whatever, or is related to the highest other, to the highest being, as to a master. Transcension is an active dynamic process, it is the immanent experience of a man in which he lives through catastrophes, is carried across abysses, experiences interruptions in his existence, but is interiorized not exteriorized. Only a false objectivization of transcension, the ejection of man into the external, creates the illusion of the transcendent which crushes personality, dominates over it. Transcension <transcendence> in the existential sense is freedom and presupposes freedom, it is the liberation of man from captivity to himself.]<sup>38</sup>

In Wordsworth, transcendence is also liberating, as we just saw. It liberates the observer's mind from the objectivized vision of the world, which is without feeling, on the one hand, and from the illusory subjectivity always leading off the track on the other. Both subjectivity and objectivization reflect the world partially and produce a set of gaps between the self and the other, the inner and the outer, the feeling and the unfeeling. The adequate perception of the world in its fullness is achieved only through transcendence.

Transcendence as togetherness with the universe, as it appears in Wordsworth's thought and writing, is described by Newton P. Stallknecht in his study of the poet's philosophy entitled *Strange Seas of Thought* (1958). Comparing Wordsworth to Dewey and Whitehead, the critic notes:

[F]or Wordsworth the most important "fact" of Nature is the "unity of all," or "the one life within us and abroad." For Wordsworth, apprehension of the togetherness of things in their primordial beauty is presented rather as the culmination of the poet's insight. Hence Wordsworth dwells upon his sentiment of Being and cherishes its content more persistently and with greater enthusiasm than do the philosophers. For Wordsworth, this sentiment is a talent which is death to hide, and its expression in palpable imagery is the first duty of the lover of Nature.<sup>39</sup>

This palpable imagery, resulting from the steady observation of and unification with the outer world, can be applied to the human figures as well. The difference is, however, that when the poet communes with natural objects, he endows them with his human feelings (*e.g.* “Beside yon spring I stood, / And eyed its waters till we seemed to feel / One sadness, they and I,” lines 82-84 ), while when coming into touch with human beings, who have their own emotions and perceptions, in order to commune with them he has to establish what he calls in “The Ruined Cottage” a “bond of brotherhood,” rather than mere endowing them with his feelings. Hence, when the poet gains a worthier eye in his transcending vision and starts creating that bond of brotherhood, he not only perceives the images and forms of things better and more definitely, as it happens with nature, but he also opens his eyes to the real feelings and experiences of the real people reflected by their forms. Margaret is one such figure whose emotions are well expressed by her images. A better term for those images would be *gestalten*, because they are not portraits of a Margaret standing before the observer’s very eyes but the Pedlar’s perceptions of her taken from his mind. Every *gestalt* in its totality of perception is very much fitting for the transcendental vision that unifies.

If transcendence liberates and brings emotional and visionary unity, the opposite process<sup>40</sup> leads to fragmentation of the unified perception of the world into the objective and subjective and to the loss of *gestaltic* vision with its loss of forms perceived. The example of that opposite movement is Margaret’s disintegration in her world, when the initially expressive forms of

her with all her stooping and searching the horizon, so easily separable from the background of the landscape and functioning more or less independently, by the end of her life story become camouflaged: her image fuses with the environment of her ruined dwelling. In contrast to the disoriented Alpine travellers, who found the way through to transcendence, Margaret does not transcend the limitations of her disoriented vision. On the one hand, by physically and gestaltically becoming a part of her cottage, she loses all senses and is objectified. On the other hand, she is overwhelmed by her subjectivity that feeds upon illusions. Her reading of the landscape is erroneous or null (she talks about the dying tree and does not see that her baby in her arms is just like that tree: dying). And Margaret shapes the images of her husband where there are actually none, so those images are as fanciful and “uncouth” as the ones Robert carved before his desperate disappearance (“At his door he stood / And whistled many a snatch of merry tunes / That had no mirth in them, or with his knife / Carved uncouth figures on the heads of sticks,” lines 162-65). Instead of transcending, she shuts down more and more. She does not have a worthy eye. And so Paul Magnuson mentions in his aforementioned study:

For Wordsworth, Margaret’s shaping of figures in the distance is a fanciful error, that she cannot overcome, and the Pedlar’s interpretation of the ruined cottage is the reality.<sup>41</sup>

The Pedlar, unlike Margaret or Robert, has the eye capable of adequate and at the same time sensitive vision of the world around him. He knows the true facts of Margaret’s story, and does not deceive himself or the poet that she is not dead. But what dominates his memory of her in MS D is not the disintegrated shape of a poor woman, but a well-defined form, cheerful and

charitable in its openness to the outer world, as Margaret used to be. When asked who used to live in the cottage, the Pedlar relates what is preeminently on his mind:

Many a passenger  
Has blessed poor Margaret for her gentle looks  
When she upheld the cool refreshment drawn  
From that forsaken spring, and no one came  
But he was welcome, no one went away  
But that it seemed she loved him. She is dead,  
The worm is on her cheek, and this poor hut,  
Stripped of its outward garb of household flowers,  
Of rose and sweetbriar, offers to the wind  
A cold bare wall whose earthy top is tricked  
With weeds and the rank speargrass. She is dead,  
And nettles rot and adders sun themselves  
Where we have sat together while she nursed  
Her infant at her breast. The unshod colt,  
The wandering heifer and the potter's ass,  
Find shelter now within the chimney-wall  
Where I have seen her evening hearthstone blaze  
And through the window spread upon the road  
Its cheerful light.<sup>42</sup>

After that the Pedlar stops in his description, and paints no further portraits of Margaret, until he is asked by the poet. Between that first and dominant gestalt of Margaret, as it is retained and each time re-met by the Pedlar when he is in the vicinity of the cottage, and all the following desperate and gradually blurred forms of her in the Second Part of the poem is a vast distance of more than a hundred lines relating Robert's story, the Pedlar's solemn pause, the poet's silent meditation and "begging" to continue the story, most of which were inserted by Wordsworth into MS D in February-March 1798 after numerous revisions. Such thoughtful distribution of Margaret's descriptions allows the reader to recognize the first, well-defined gestalt of Margaret as most important in the Pedlar's perception and to understand why

in the end of the poem he is capable of being comforted. Indeed, he is refreshed by yet another meeting with her not because she had suffered so much, but because for him she still exists in that landscape ready to offer each exhausted traveller a refreshing drink from the stream. In imagination, he accepts this offering with gratitude, now finding refreshment in the raindrops of a peaceful world of the paradisiacally overgrown spot:

She sleeps in the calm earth, and peace is here.  
I well remember that those very plumes,  
Those weeds, and the high speargrass on that wall,  
By mist and silent raindrops silvered o'er,  
As one I passed did to my mind convey  
So still an image of tranquillity,  
So calm and still, and looked so beautiful  
Amid the uneasy thoughts which filled my mind,  
That what we feel of sorrow and despair  
From ruin and from change, and all the grief  
The passing shows of being leave behind,  
Appeared an idle dream that could not live  
Where meditation was. I turned away,  
And walked along my road in happiness.<sup>43</sup>

It is this refreshment together with his own spot of time and the cheerful vision of Margaret presiding over it that the Pedlar (whose hat is “Bedewed with water-drops, as if the brim / Had newly scooped a running stream,” lines 49-51) upholds to the poet, and of which the poet partakes. The poet receives a lesson in transcendence. His irritated vision of the landscape with the insects buzzing and his toiling up a hill is enriched by feelings. As minding the peasant and his words, coming as a flash of lightning, helps the Alpine travellers to transcend their subjective illusions, in “The Ruined Cottage,” MS D, the poet’s interiorization of the Pedlar’s feeling vision of the landscape and human forms in it aid him in overcoming his objectivized and “othering” vision of the



landscape. The poet's openness to both the peasant and the Pedlar, to their words and images, their own and others, related by them, lead to the poet's liberation from his limitations. And in both cases, with the increasing degree of transcendence comes the increasing interest in another human being and increasing clarity in the awareness of the human form; the worthiness of the eye increases.

In Wordsworth, well-defined human gestalten signal a better unified vision of the observer, a deeper interest in the human beings that are met. Unlike the forms of nature, human gestalten can be colored not only by the poet's imagination, but also by the emotions and experiences of the people themselves. By seeing those emotions truly, through form, the poet creates a bond of brotherhood with those human beings. He engages himself in a communion with them, rather than in communication (see Berdyaev's distinction above). He transcends and is liberated.

### **End Notes**

1 For the discussion of the term "romanticism" and a select bibliography on the subject, see Perry, Seamus. "Romanticism: The Brief History of a Concept." Pp. 3-11 of *A Companion to Romanticism*. Edited by Duncan Wu, 1999. For the critical reception of Wordsworth and his works throughout several centuries, see John L. Mahoney, *Wordsworth and the Critics*, 2001.

2 See, for instance, David Ferry, *The Limits of Mortality: An Essay on Wordsworth's Major Poems* (Middletown, Conn., 1959). Ferry writes: "His [Wordsworth's] genius was his enmity to man, which he mistook for love, and his mistake led him into confusions which he could not bear. But when he banished the confusion, he banished his distinctive greatness as well" (p. 173). George McLean Harper upholds a similar view when writing about the poet: "By curiosities he means natural objects of interest. As at Orleans what he thought most worthy of record was a babbling spring, so here [Sockburn, Cumberland, and Westmorland], he cared more for waterfalls, gorges, peaks, and dales, than for the works of man" (pp. 301-02 of *William Wordsworth: His Life, Works, and Influence: vol. 1*. 1929. N.Y., 1966; 2 vols.).

F. W. Bateson joins in by noting: “It is characteristic of Wordsworth’s complete isolation from human society at this time that the one inhabitant of Germany for whom he felt any affection was a bird” (p. 149 of *Wordsworth: A Re-interpretation*. London, 1956).

“The chapters of the poem might have been very properly entitled, ‘Moods in Boyhood,’ ‘Moods in Cambridge,’ ‘Moods among my Books,’ ‘Moods among the Alps,’ ‘Moods in France,’ etc. Characters, indeed, rush occasionally across those moods. Now it is his humble ‘dame’—now it is his amiable sister—now it is a friend of youth, departed—and now the ‘rapt one with the Godlike forehead,’ the wondrous Coleridge, but they come like shadows, and like shadows depart, nor does their presence prevail for more than a moment to burst the web of the great soliloquy. Indeed, whether with them or without them, among mountains of men, with his faithful terrier, and talking to himself by the wayside, or pacing the Palais Royal, Wordsworth is equally and always alone” (p. 556 of Jonathan Wordsworth, M.H. Abrams, and Stephen Gill, eds. *William Wordsworth: “The Prelude,” 1799, 1805, 1850*. N.Y., 1979.).

There is also a set of studies specifically devoted to, what some critics call, the egotistical individualism and solipsism of Wordsworth. Keith Hanley’s *Annotated Bibliography* is helpful there.

3 Usually William Wordsworth’s poetry is compared to the paintings of Constable and Turner, rather than to the works of the portraitists of the time, such as Reynolds. Also, when compared with Rembrandt, it is Rembrandt’s landscapes and representation of “common natural objects” that are under discussion; see Hazlitt, William (1814 and 1817).

Among the studies that, in various degree, do shed light upon Wordsworth’s interest in pictures and his relation to portraiture and sketch are those by Richard C. Sha (“Resisting Monumentality: Wordsworth, Byron, and the Poetic Sketch” in his *The Visual and Verbal Sketch in British Romanticism*, 1998); Jacqueline M. Labbe, *Romantic Visualities* (1998); Florence Marsh, *Wordsworth’s Imagery* (1952); Anne K. Mellor, *Blake’s Human Form Divine* (1974); Martha H. Shackford, *Wordsworth’s Interest in Painters and Pictures* (1945); Walter K. Thomas, *A Mind Forever Voyaging: Wordsworth at Work Portraying Newton and Science* (1989); Marilyn Gaull, *English Romanticism: The Human Context* (1988).

See also Chapter Three of this dissertation.

4 Barth, p. 161.

5 Ibid., p. 162.

6 See Geoffrey H. Hartman, *Wordsworth’s Poetry, 1787-1814*, 1964.

7 For Wordsworth’s love of and interest in humankind see Margaret Sherwood, *Undercurrents of Influence in English Romantic Poetry* (1934), who recognizes in Wordsworth’s poetry “Mystical experience of the divine

through contact with other human souls”; Beth Darlington, “Reclaiming Dorothy Wordsworth’s Legacy” (1987); Frederick Garber, *Wordsworth and the Poetry of Encounter* (1971), in which he writes about the importance of likeness between the observer and the human observed, which is humanity (p.191); John Beer, *Wordsworth and the Human Heart* (1978), which traces the development of Wordsworth’s attitude toward humanity throughout his life and works, and rounds off the discussion with the chapter “The Stately and the Quixotic” saying:

[T]here were continuing moments of halted encounter when he would find himself in an ultimate place as poet and as a man — a place that was truly inviolable. The immediate vision and joy of childhood he had long regarded as marvellous but wasting assets; the power of the mind, though more dependable, must gradually fail; even memory itself might fade. But in the unfailing impulse of his heart at any corresponding expression from another he could recognize a resource that persisted: in that he remained, unalterably, the Wordsworth of “Salisbury Plain.” His nephew describes how on a wet night, returning from dinner with the widow of Richard Watson, Bishop of Llandaff, they met a woman in the road:

She sobbed as she passed us. Mr Wordsworth was much affected with her condition: she was swollen with dropsy, and slowly hobbling along with a stick, having been driven from one lodging to another. It was a dark and stormy night. Mr Wordsworth brought her back to the Low-Wood Inn, where, by the landlord’s leave, she was housed in one of his barns.

In those later years Hazlitt, who wrote in the essay mentioned earlier [*The Spirit of the Age*], “His Muse... is a levelling one,” blamed him for departing from his first principles. For others, he was, — far more completely and straightforwardly than for Browning himself — “the Lost Leader.” The evidence of an incident such as this, however, as of many in his life and poetry, is that even if his muse was not what Hazlitt and others would have liked her to be, she had an identity of her own, in which she remained a leveller — and that in that identity she was not finally betrayed. (pp. 253-54)

For the opposite view on Wordsworth and humanity see my note 2 above.

8 Magnuson, pp. 97-98.

9 Kenneth Johnston, *The Hidden Wordsworth: Poet, Lover, Rebel, Spy*, pp. 190/199.

10 Ibid., p. 200.

11 Ibid., p. 200.

12 Book VI, 524-28.

13 Book VI, 533.

14 Kenneth Johnston, *The Hidden Wordsworth: Poet, Lover, Rebel, Spy*, pp. 201-02.

15 Book VI, 547-56.

16 Imagination is often contrasted with fancy in Wordsworth. Below are some of the relevant excerpts on the subject. John Ogden, writing about “The Boy of Winander” spot of time, describes fancy and imagination as follows:

The playful interchange of mimic hootings and responding halloos is an instance of Wordsworth’s notion of fancy: it is amusing, somewhat surprising, and even slightly ludicrous; it depends on the rapidity and profusion of sounds; and it proves to be capricious and transitory (see *PW*, II, 441). This fanciful game sets up a contrast with the imaginative event that ensues, in which “solemn and tranquillizing images” are planted “for immortality... in the celestial soil of the Imagination” ([Wordsworth’s] *P[rose] W[orks]*, II, 440n.). Wordsworth’s distinction between fancy and imagination is shown by their different but complementary roles. Fancy excites the mind, while imagination captivates it. Fancy is often at work in the first stage of a process that completes itself in a work of imagination. (“The Structure of Imaginative Experience in Wordsworth’s *Prelude*,” p. 291)

Allan Chavkin stresses that Wordsworth “combines feeling and thought to produce a higher kind of thinking, what he calls the ‘imagination’ for lack of a better word. This higher kind of thinking is creative—it heightens, molds, emblemizes, modifies, and interprets reality” (Allan Chavkin, “Wordsworth’s Secular Imagination and ‘Spots of Time’,” p. 453).

And Wordsworth himself draws the following distinctions between fancy and imagination:

The law under which the processes of Fancy are carried on is as capricious as the accidents of things, and the effects are surprising, playful, ludicrous, amusing, tender, or pathetic, as the objects happen to be appositely or fortunately combined. Fancy depends upon the rapidity and profusion with which she scatters her thoughts and images; trusting that their number, and the felicity with which they are linked together, will make amends for the want of individual value: or she prides herself upon the curious subtilty and the successful elaboration with which she can detect their lurking affinities. If she can win you over to her purpose, and impart to you her feelings, she cares not how unstable or transitory

may be her influence, knowing that it will not be out of her power to resume it upon an apt occasion. But the Imagination is conscious of an indestructible dominion;—the Soul may fall away from it, not being able to sustain its grandeur; but, if once felt and acknowledged, by no act of any other faculty of the mind can it be relaxed, impaired, or diminished.—Fancy is given to quicken and to beguile the temporal part of our nature, Imagination to incite and to support the eternal. (William Wordsworth, the *Preface* of 1815).

17 Willey, p. 226; italics Willey's.

18 Kenneth R. Johnston in his recent biography of Wordsworth (1998) writes: "Coxe's book was well known in Wordsworth's circle: it had been donated to the Hawkshead school library by his friends the Raincock brothers and Edward Birkett, along with John Moore's *A View of Society and Manners in France, Switzerland, and Germany*, which contained much discussion of localities associated with Rousseau. Wordsworth and Jones adapted their itinerary from Coxe, reducing it considerably, and for the most part running it in reverse, from southern to northern Switzerland" (p. 190). See also *Ibid.*, p. 205.

19 Book VI, 562-69; italics Wordsworth's.

20 For the meanings of Wordsworth's Nature imagery see, for instance, Harold Bloom, *The Visionary Company* (p. 142-43); Herbert Lindenberger, *On Wordsworth's Prelude* (pp. 69-98); E. de Selincourt's notes to *The Prelude*.

21 Book VI, 568-77.

22 Duncan Wu, ed., *Romanticism: An Anthology*, p. 418.

23 "We Are Seven," 13-14.

24 *Slavery and Freedom*, p. 27.

25 *Ibid.*, pp. 41-42.

26 *Ibid.*, p. 29.

27 Hazard Adams, ed., *Critical Theory Since Plato*, pp. 441-42.

28 Stallknecht, in his *Strange Seas of Thought*, in connection with Wordsworth's poetry, also draws the distinction between the unified, imaginative, vision of the world (which he calls that of "esthetic objects") and the vision of "the scientific object [as] an abstraction":

We have just heard Professor Whitehead assert that Wordsworth apprehends the truly concrete. We might venture, on such authority, to suggest that the esthetic object is the genuinely concrete, and the scientific object an abstraction, withdrawn from the fullness of real things and their concrete fusion of interrelations. Thus we do not *pretend* that the mountains are alive. *As concrete, esthetic objects* the mountains have embodied in them characteristics which, in other realms of discourse, belong only to certain quadrupeds. As esthetic objects, the mountains and the animals embody one another. They share an “ideal form” whose presence in both is their interfusion. (p. 86; italics Stallknecht’s)

29 Even though, as many critics argue (see Hartman, *Wordsworth’s Poetry*, for example), that the realization of the imaginary power came to Wordsworth years later, the immediate description of the Gondo Gorge is colored by the language of imagination.

30 Wordsworth’s appropriation of Miltonic rhetoric, especially the famous “Of first, and last, and midst, and without end,” taken almost verbatim from Milton’s *Paradise Lost* (V, 165) is significant for creating the sublime aura in the poem. Nicola Trott in “The Picturesque, the Beautiful and the Sublime,” pp. 72-90 of Duncan Wu’s *Companion to Romanticism* (1999), writes about the sublimity of the Romantic style and its association with Milton:

The moral qualities of the rhetorical sublime come into play especially in reference to *Paradise Lost*, the Romantics’ ‘pre-eminent’ example: Coleridge contrasts the bogus ‘arithmetical sublime’ of Klopstock (a German epicist), who ‘mistakes bigness for greatness’, with the true sublimity of Milton, whose greatness arises ‘from images of effort and daring, and also from those of moral endurance’. (p. 78)

31 Book VI, 634-40.

32 E. H. Sneath, *Wordsworth: Poet of Nature and Poet of Man*, p. 44.

33 Ironically, to establish that kind of communication cost some effort on Wordsworth’s side. Again Kenneth Johnston is helpful in showing how dubiously and untrustworthy Wordsworth and Jones themselves looked while touring the Continent:

Well-off persons traveling by coach, on roads, between inns, could expect to advance reasonably well in settled regions, but not young men of uncertain class and dubious appearance, on foot in the mountains in unsettled times. Wordsworth noted this lightheartedly to Dorothy: “Our appearance is singular, and we have often... excited a general smile... and our manner of bearing our bundles, which is upon our heads, with each an oak stick in

our hands, contributes not a little to that general curiosity which we seem to excite.” (*The Hidden Wordsworth*, p. 190)

34 Compare the earlier, 1805, text, in which neither the peasant’s mouth nor his lips are made noticeable by direct naming:

By fortunate chance,  
While every moment now encreased our doubts,  
A peasant met us, and from him we learned  
That to the place which had perplexed us first  
We must descend, and there should find the road  
Which in the stony channel of the stream  
Lay a few steps, and then along its banks—  
And further, that thenceforward all our course  
Was downwards with the current of that stream.  
Hard of belief, we questioned him again,  
And all the answers which the man returned  
To our inquiries, in their sense and substance  
Translated by the feelings which we had,  
Ended in this—that we had crossed the Alps.  
(1805. Book Sixth. 511-24)

35 *The Prelude* 1850, Book VI, 577-91; italics Wordsworth’s.

36 On fear vs. awe, see the Norton *Prelude*, p. 466n., Wordsworth’s “The Sublime and the Beautiful” (pp. 354-355 of his *Prose Works*). Also, see Eve W. Stoddard, “The Spots of Time” (1985), where she explains:

Both the Fenwick note to the *Immortality Ode* . . . and Wordsworth’s fragmentary treatise on “The Sublime and the Beautiful” take this developmental approach to the understanding of experience. In the latter, Wordsworth distinguishes between two interpretations of the Sublime in Nature. The child’s response is Burkean: he is overcome with fear or terror. But the cultivated adult responds with awe or reverence, having developed a different system of rules for interpreting aesthetic experiences in Nature through the ability to distinguish between bodily danger and spiritual transcendence. (p. 20)

Berdyayev, following Kierkegaard, also distinguishes between different kinds of fear and awe.

Нужно отличать ужасъ (Angst) отъ страха (Furcht). Это дѣлаетъ Киркегардтъ, хотя есть условность терминологии каждаго языка. Страхъ имѣетъ причины, онъ связанъ съ опасностью, съ обыденнымъ эмпирическимъ міромъ. Ужасъ же испытывается не передъ эмпирической опасностью, а передъ тайной бытія и небытія, передъ трансцендентной бездной, передъ неизвѣстностью. Смерть вызываетъ не только страхъ передъ событіемъ, разыгрывающимся еще въ эмпирическомъ

обыденномъ міръ, но и ужасъ передъ трансцендентнымъ. Страхъ связанъ съ заботой, съ боязнью страданій, ударовъ. Страхъ не помнитъ о высшемъ міръ, онъ обращенъ внизъ, прикованъ къ эмпирическому. Ужасъ же есть состояніе пограничное съ трансцендентнымъ, ужасъ испытывается передъ вѣчностью, передъ судьбой. (45)

[It is necessary to distinguish anguish <trembling, awe> (Angst) from fear (Furcht). Kirkegaard <Kierkegaard> does this <1843>, although it is a relative distinction in the terminology of every language. Fear has causes, it is connected with danger, and with the every day world of common experience. Anguish <awe>, on the other hand, is experienced, not in the face of empirical danger, but in confronting the mystery of being and non-being, when face to face with the transcendent abyss, in the face of the unknown <infinity>. Death arouses not only fear in the face of an event which constantly occurs in the empirical every day world, but also anguish in the face of the transcendent. Fear is connected with anxiety, with the dread of suffering and the blows of fate <disappointments>. Fear fails to keep the higher world in mind. It is concerned with a lower level, it is chained to the empirical. Anguish <awe>, however, is a condition which borders upon the transcendent. It is experienced when a man is confronted by eternity, when he is faced by destiny. (*Slavery and Freedom*, p. 52)]

37 Book VI, 592-616.

38 *Slavery and Freedom*, p. 30.

39 Stallknecht, p. 83.

40 Berdyaev, consistent with his equating transcendence with freedom, with liberation from the deterministic power of the impersonal outer world (p. 30), considers objectivization as enslavement. He writes:

Порабощенность и порабащающее состояніе міра, детерминизмъ природы есть порожденіе объективации. Все превращается въ объекты, но объекты всегда означаютъ детерминацію извнѣ, отчужденность, выброшенность во внѣ, безличность. Рабство чловѣка у природы, какъ впрочемъ и всякое рабство, есть рабство у объектности. Порабощенная природа, какъ объектъ, есть природа детерминирующая извнѣ, деперсонализирующая, угнетающая внутреннее существованіе. Природа же, какъ субъектъ, есть внутреннее существованіе космоса, есть его экзистенціальность, а слѣдовательно и свобода. [...] Матерія всегда означаетъ зависимость, детерминированность извнѣ.



Поэтому матерія есть всегда объектъ. Матерія, какъ субъектъ, не есть уже матерія, есть уже внутреннее существованіе. Рабство чловѣка возрастаетъ по мѣрѣ возрастанія матеріальности. Порабощеніе и есть матеріализація. (82)

[The enslavement, the enslaving state of the world, the determinism of nature are the outcome of objectivization. Everything is turned into objects, but objects always indicate determination from without, alienation, ejection into the external, and impersonality.

The slavery of man to nature, as, of course, every other form of slavery, is slavery to the object world. Enslaved nature, as object, is nature which determines from without, it is nature which depersonalizes and oppresses inward existence. But nature, as subject, on the other hand, is the inward existence of the cosmos, its existentiality and consequently also its freedom. . . . Matter always denotes dependence, and a state of determination from without. For this reason matter is always object. Matter as subject is no longer matter, it is already inward existence.

The slavery of man increases in proportion to the growth of materiality. Enslavement indeed is materialization. (*Slavery and Freedom*, 95-96)]

41 *Coleridge and Wordsworth: A Lyrical Dialogue*, pp. 129-30.

42 "The Ruined Cottage," MS D, 98-116.

43 *Ibid.*, 512-25.

### CHAPTER 3: “MAN ENNOBLED OUTWARDLY BEFORE MY SIGHT”

To talk of an object as being sublime or beautiful in itself, without references to some subject by whom that sublimity or beauty is perceived, is absurd; nor is it of the slightest importance to mankind whether there be any object with which their minds are conversant that Men would universally agree (after having ascertained that the words were used in the same sense) to denominate sublime or beautiful. It is enough that there are, both in moral qualities & in the forms of the external universe, such qualities & powers as have affected Men, in different states of civilization & without communication with each other, with similar sensations either of the sublime or beautiful.<sup>1</sup>

Above, in the discussion of the “Crossing of the Alps” episode, I showed how in Wordsworth’s *Prelude* a lost traveller’s awakened regard for another human presence can be a decisive step towards adequate understanding of the real world in its wholeness and can liberate him from the partialities of subjectivity and objectivity. The encountered human being can pass down his intrinsic knowledge of the place to the lost either by words and speech acts (as it happens with the Alpine peasant) or by bringing to life a gallery of human images and their metamorphoses (as the Pedlar’s story exemplifies). In *The Prelude*, the poet himself frequently assumes the role of a guide who passes his rich knowledge of many mental scapes down to the reader, thereby leading his reader towards a transcendent vision of the universe. His technique is very similar to that of the peasant and the Pedlar: it involves both narration and multiple literary sketches of human forms. The

most prominent example of the latter occurs in Book Eight of *The Prelude*, in the shepherds on the mountain passage, in which the readers are presented with a set of the shepherds' gestalten, each of which is better defined than the preceding one, till finally the man is seen as "a solitary object and sublime":

Thus was man  
Ennobled outwardly before my sight,  
And thus my heart was early introduced  
To an unconscious love and reverence  
Of human nature; hence the human form  
To me became an index of delight,  
Of grace and honour, power and worthiness.<sup>2</sup>

How exactly the poet attempts to bring his reader to experience sublimity and infinity when viewing the human form, and how this recognition of the human form is liberating are two major questions guiding my discussion in this chapter. Hence, the chapter consists of two parts: first, I trace how the poet prepares the readers to be affected by the sublimity he describes; secondly, I inquire into how a human being can be represented so that he and his form are qualified to impart sublime impressions. Both questions are prompted by Wordsworth himself. In his fragmented "The Sublime and the Beautiful," the poet urges thinkers to note the process of their being affected by the sublime, not to underestimate the mind's preparedness for that experience, and not to rule out completely the objects's capability to impart the sublime impressions. And so Wordsworth writes:

The true province of the philosopher is not to grope about in the external world & when he has perceived or detected in an object such or such a quality or power, to set himself to the task of persuading the world that such is a sublime or beautiful object, but to look into his own mind & determine the law by which he is affected.<sup>3</sup>

And later on:

[I]t appears that even those impressions that do most easily make their way to the human mind, such as I deem those of the sublime to be, cannot be received from an object however eminently qualified to impart them, without a preparatory intercourse with that object or with others of the same kind.<sup>4</sup>

True to his principle, Wordsworth sets out to prepare his readers to be affected by the sublimity he announces in the shepherd's trans-figuration by repeatedly screening out human figures from the pastoral landscape, making them less fictitious, till we are sufficiently familiarized with the pattern. In Wordsworth, repetition is never a tautology<sup>5</sup>: it always builds up to a richer and more concentrated understanding of the reiterated, leading from "seeing" to "perceiving," to borrow the poet's terminology. Repetition is meant to prepare the reader to see eye to eye with the poet when he perceives the beautiful and the sublime and to fend off the Mont Blancian kind of disappointment. It is this preparatory role of repetition that is celebrated by Wordsworth in his poetry and is accounted for in his prose:

Such would have been the condition [disappointment] of the most eminent of our English Painters if his visits to the sublime pictures in the Vatican & the Cistine Chapel had not been repeated till the sense of strangeness had worn off, till the twilight of novelty began to dispel, and he was made conscious of the mighty difference between seeing & perceiving. . . .

[I]mpediments arising merely from novelty or inexperience in a well disposed mind disappear gradually and assuredly. Yet, though it will not be long before the Stranger will become conscious of the sublime where the power to raise it eminently exists, yet, if I may judge from my own experience, it is only very slowly that the mind is opened out to a perception of images of Beauty co-existing in the same object with those of sublimity.<sup>6</sup>

Thus, any stranger to the experience, according to Wordsworth, can be brought to recognize sublimity of a scene or an object easily enough, provided that he is exposed to them repeatedly.

Also, as the poet explains, repetition is opposed to depression and disappointment, which it prevents. In that, if we take this thought a step further, repetition can be opposite to recollection, which in *The Prelude* often brings back sad memories of past losses and accentuates evanescence. Recollection of the past as the past, be it of Mont Blanc as separate from the following discovery of imagination, of the gibbet separate from the soothing presence of Mary and Dorothy, or of Margaret's death without retaining her charitable and happy image, verges on depression. But it is not so with repetition. Each time the poet engages in palimpsestic limning, he fuses all past and present moments together and tends to forget about the sad discreetness of time. And vice versa, when the transcendent moment of fullness and joy is interrupted by the recollection of time with the awareness of the separateness of the past and the present and the future, sadness returns. So it happens most vividly in the 1813 sonnet to Wordsworth's daughter Catherine, in which he struggles with such questions as, what does it mean to lovingly remember someone? what is the true forgetfulness: when we forget the fact of death or the discontinuity of time and otherness of objects? The poet tolls changes on those questions, trying to achieve understanding and consolation through repetition, even if it is the repetition of self-reproach.

Surprised by joy — impatient as the Wind  
I turned to share the transport — Oh! with whom  
But Thee, deep buried in the silent tomb,

That spot which no vicissitude can find?  
Love, faithful love, recalled thee to my mind —  
But how could I forget thee? Through what power,  
Even for the least division of an hour,  
Have I been so beguiled as to be blind  
To my most grievous loss! — That thought's return  
Was the worst pang that sorrow ever bore,  
Save one, one only, when 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.

And yet, the last line of the sonnet — even though it is not a full grammatical construction — has no negation in it: “Could to my sight that heavenly face restore.” The sonnet comes full circle from its opening joy. The heavenly face *could* be restored to Wordsworth and it was, only not by self-recollection, or any kind of recollection.

The Wordsworthian use of nostalgic recollections and repetitions that ward off depression and lead toward the renovating “spots of time” agree, in many ways, with Søren Kierkegaard's understanding of the terms:

Repetition and recollection are the same movement, only in opposite directions; for what is recollected has been, is repeated backwards, whereas repetition properly so called is recollected forwards. Therefore repetition, if it is possible, makes a man happy, whereas recollection makes him unhappy--provided he gives himself time to live and does not at once, in the very moment of birth, try to find a pretext for stealing out of life, alleging, for example, that he has forgotten something.

. . . Hope is a new garment, starched and stiff and glittering, yet one has never had it on, and hence one does not know how it will become one and how it fits. Recollection is a discarded garment, which beautiful as it may be, does not fit, for one has outgrown it. Repetition is an imperishable garment, which fits snugly and comfortably, neither too tight nor too loose. Hope is a charming maiden but slips through the fingers, recollection is a beautiful old woman but of no use at the instant, repetition is a beloved wife of whom one never tires.<sup>7</sup>

From the gestaltic perspective also, repetition is a unifying agency, which makes separate elements scattered throughout the time or poem come together and form a recognizable pattern in the minds of the audience:

The recurrence of similar elements, especially at predictable intervals, creates and then satisfies a specific pattern of expectation in the reader, and so provides the impression that we are dealing with a unified, coherent, and stable structure.<sup>8</sup>

In fact, all spots of time in *The Prelude* are defined by their preceding contexts. Jeffrey Baker in his *Time and Mind in Wordsworth's Poetry*, gives a detailed analysis of repetitions of different kinds in the poet's Godlike hour passage, the Chapel Island episode, and the Furness Abbey spot, showing how Wordsworth in the course of his poem gives his readers a chance to generate memories of certain experiences, so that when he gets to his next spot of time, it would be almost as rich in accumulated associations for his readers as it is for him. For instance, as J. Baker tell us,

In the Furness Abbey lines, all of the suggestions of Prospero's Windermere island will be deftly manipulated in the reader's memory, producing the sense of a remembered reality of which the present reality of the abbey nave seems an echo or a repetition. And thus in turn suggests that it is the remoter past of the abbey that is reverberating in his mind, a tradition that is felt to persist among the ruins.<sup>9</sup>

Going back to my question as to how the poet prepares his readers to see the sublime in the human form, I would answer that Wordsworth creates several patterns of repetition, in which he keeps encountering human figures, each time learning to go beyond the traditional pastoral vision of them, each time receiving a piece of revelation from them that eventually spurs him into a

new imaginary leap, and each time focusing his eye more and more steadily upon those figures.

Like the Alpine Crossing (Book VI), Book VIII also springs from the poet's desire to overcome one of his letdowns. London, from which the crippled Hawkshead boy, contrary to the young Wordsworth's hopes, returns crippled as ever, bringing the first disappointment in the "region" of much expectation,<sup>10</sup> London, which is dominated by faceless crowds and sophisticated gadgets and mechanic artistry that change or "ape / The absolute presence of reality,"<sup>11</sup> is left behind. The pastoral vale at the foot of Helvellyn is conjured up like an oasis in the dreariness. This vision is so intensely pastoral, that it sweeps some readers into believing that the whole of Book VIII is written in that mood. For instance, Herbert Lindenberger in his study, *On Wordsworth's Prelude*, reads Book VIII as "devoted to the affirmation of pastoral values," in which Wordsworth allegedly presents three distinct types of pastoral, two of which ("literary pastoral" of a Corin of the groves and "the shepherd's life which he had himself observed from the walls of Goslar") in the name of sincerity he rejects, and the third, "the harsher pastoral of his native territory," the "'true' pastoral, as he saw and experienced it," he invokes.<sup>12</sup>

Although Wordsworth claimed to transform and refine the meaning of pastoral, his conception in one respect repudiates the very nature of the pastoral ideal. 'The psychological root of the pastoral,' writes Renato Poggioli in his penetrating analysis of the transformations which the form has undergone, 'is a double longing after innocence and happiness, to be recovered not through conversion or regeneration, but merely through a retreat.' Wordsworth's storm-battered shepherds have little



leisure for retreats; true pastoral, one suspects, must reside elsewhere within the Wordsworthian world. In writing of Rousseau's *Reveries*, Poggioli distinguishes a new role that pastoral assumed in the Romantic period:

“As the pastoral poet replaces the labors and troubles of love with an exclusive concern for the self, he changes into a new Narcissus, contemplating with passionate interest not his body but his soul. At this point, he deals only, in Whitman's words, with ‘the single, solitary soul,’ and the pastoral becomes the poetic vehicle of solipsism.... What Rousseau terms ‘rêverie’ is a state of passive introspection, by which the pastoral psyche reflects its shadow in nature's mirror, fondly and blissfully losing its being within the image of itself.”

By this definition, Wordsworth himself emerges as the shepherd of his poem; and during those mystic moments

In which the heavy and the weary weight  
Of all this unintelligible world,  
Is lightened,

he finds an inward Arcadia as blissful as, though less heavily peopled than, that of the older pastoral poets.<sup>13</sup>

Other critics recognize Wordsworth's attempt at pastoral criticism. Paul Alpers in *What Is Pastoral*, says unequivocally that “in Book VIII of *The Prelude*, . . . Wordsworth surveys and, in some sense, dismisses traditional pastoral.”<sup>14</sup>

Barth also admits of the modification of the pastoral vision in Book VIII:

The people here [below Helvellyn] “move about upon the soft green turf” (VIII, 58), and “all things serve them:” “them the morning light / Loves as it glistens on the silent rocks” (VIII, 63-64). The poet is still charmed by the myth of pastoral simplicity (VIII, 173-339), and it colors his view of the simple life of the countryside. But his view of country life is more realistic, for he adds to the traditional poetic pastoral myth the “snows and streams ungovernable” and “terrifying winds” that are part of the real shepherd's life (VIII, 219-220). Thus the real-life shepherd can, in the poet's imagination, bring together man and Nature, for the poet has felt the shepherd's presence “in his own domain / As of a Lord and Master” (VIII, 257-258). For the poet, man and Nature were first experienced together (VIII, 312-316), and so are always thereafter—at least when imagination is active—seen in light of one another.<sup>15</sup>

As I have shown in Chapter One of this dissertation, part of Wordsworth's "disappointment -> pastoral consolation -> imaginary vision" trajectory is the poet's gradual outgrowing of the enclosed pastoral world and its fictitiousness. That is why I agree with Alpers and Barth more than with Lindenberger and David Ferry, who incline to categorize the whole chapter under the catch-all word "pastoral," and emphasize the poet's move beyond the traditional pastoral rather than his absorption in its other modes. I amend their thesis, not refute it. And since I am more interested in the fact that Wordsworth *departs* from the world of "the gay Corin of the groves," I will depart from the term "pastoral" as well. In my reading of Book VIII, the emphasis is on the qualitative difference between the states of the gay Corin enjoying his enclosed vale and the sublime shepherd verging on the brink of infinity, rather than on their mutual pastoral roots. In fact, Wordsworth himself does not apply the word "pastoral" to his shepherd stationed above all height, but in the same breath as he pronounces the shepherd's human form to be sublime, the poet explicitly inveighs against associating this figure with the solipsistic Corin:

Or him [a shepherd] have I descried in distant sky,  
A solitary object and sublime,  
Above all height! like an aerial cross  
Stationed alone upon a spiry rock  
Of the Chartreuse, for worship. Thus was man  
Ennobled outwardly before my sight,  
And thus my heart was early introduced  
To an unconscious love and reverence  
Of human nature; hence the human form  
To me became an index of delight,  
Of grace and honour, power and worthiness.  
Meanwhile this creature—spiritual almost  
As those of books, but more exalted far;

Far more of an imaginative form  
Than the gay Corin of the groves, who lives  
For his own fancies, or to dance by the hour,  
In coronal, with Phyllis in the midst—  
Was, for the purposes of kind, a man  
With the most common; husband, father; learned,  
Could teach, admonish; suffered with the rest  
From vice and folly, wretchedness and fear;  
Of this I little saw, cared less for it,  
But something must have felt.<sup>16</sup>

Could it be that the sensation of sublimity simply cannot be felt in the traditional pastoral mode, because sublimity for Wordsworth is usually associated with the full-fledged imagination (even in the above passage, the form is “imaginative”), while the pastoral, as he continuously stresses in *The Prelude*, is dominated by fancy (or “imagination in embryo,” as Hartman calls it): “the gay Corin of the grove, who lives / For his own fancies”?<sup>17</sup> Hence, when the poet’s thought dwells on Corin’s world, human figures populating it are not exalted enough to be called sublime. When, however, the moment of transcendence comes, the poet is risen beyond the pastoral mode and beyond nature.

To achieve the transcendent, the poet has to overcome the objectivized or mechanical vision of the world (be it Mont Blanc or London) and then to grow beyond the limited illusory idealization of the pastoral fancy (Vale of Chamouny or Helvellyn’s Fair). Even though all three visions – objectivized, subjective, and transcendent – are stages of one and the same process of growth, they differ qualitatively. The “Crossing of the Alps” episode was elaborating on the first two stages, as we have already seen, followed by an

abrupt leap towards the imagination. Book VIII, in vivid detail, treats the move beyond the subjective.

To see this transcendence of the pastoral more clearly, it is expedient to briefly review some conventions of the mode. The sense of a place and time is important to pastoral art, and when the poet alters that sense, the mood of the whole poem changes. Traditionally, as Andrew Ettin explains,

[T]he pastoral is often thought of as synonymous with the secluded garden or the Golden Age, with the pure and honest country life that is so preferable to an artificial and corrupt courtly or urban society, or with a happier and more innocent past that has yielded to a decadent and turbulent present.<sup>18</sup>

In that world, the landscape is protective and emotionally comfortable, and even when it is set apart from the world, it is not set apart from nature. It is not only nature's friendliness that pastoral characters enjoy; their looks are also compared and placed next to natural objects and phenomena. And so, the human figures at the foot of Helvellyn are very much defined by the soft green field they tread; among them are "some ancient wedded pair," with smiles of a piece with the sheen of the faint and tranquil changing sun, and a young lass, sweet and ruddy like the fruits she carries:

But one there is, the loveliest of them all,  
Some sweet lass of the valley, looking out  
For gains, and who that sees her would not buy?  
Fruits of her father's orchard, are *her* wares,  
And with the ruddy produce, she walks round  
Among the crowd, half pleased with, half ashamed  
Of her new office, blushing restlessly.<sup>19</sup>

Young and old, infants and the ancient, populate Grasmere Fair, just as it should be in the true pastoral world. As Ettin notes,

there seem to be three seasons of life: childhood, late adolescence, and old age. There is no middle age. . . . [T]he child's attitude toward life seems ideal because it is harmonious with its environment . . . The young shepherds must be old enough to fall in love, which they do with heady energy, emotional exuberance, naiveté, and vulnerability. They lack the complete, selfless unity with their surroundings which they once enjoyed unconsciously, though they may feel self-consciously that they share nature's moods. Still inexperienced, they are not yet wise.

Beyond this stage lies another span of silence until we meet them again in old age. The old pastoral characters (like Virgil's Tityrus—fortunate senex—or Philemon and Baucis in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and Goethe's *Faust*, or Shakespeare's *Corin*) most clearly exemplify the complacent, philosophic acceptance of life, as well as the stable, familial, and religious values that characterize the quiet and sanctity of the pastoral environment. Usually they want only to be left alone, in peaceful semiretirement. These stages may be combined in the lamented shepherd of the pastoral elegy, usually one who, dying in the prime of life, may pass on to a more sublime understanding of the creative force within life, in a heavenly pastoral landscape still full of vitality but now divine and eternal.<sup>20</sup>

Wordsworth could abide by those age principles when writing in the pastoral mood. "Michael" is one such example: childhood and old age are in focus; there is no middle-age maturity: when Luke grows up, he leaves both his parents's house and the poem never to return. Likewise, Helvellyn watches over a whole Grasmere Fair of people, over many families, but the close-ups are of the young and old, rather than of the middle-aged. This pastoral convention of depicting people of certain ages gradually subsides when the poet first rests his eye upon the fairy-tale-like – but in his vision unpeopled – gardens of Gehol with their unsurpassed "beauty"<sup>21</sup> and then shifts back to homeland and lets the "fellow-labourer" enter the picture.

But lovelier far than this [Gehol], the paradise  
Where I was reared; in Nature's primitive gifts  
Favored no less, and more to every sense

Delicious, seeing that the sun and sky,  
The elements, and seasons as they change,  
Do find a worthy fellow-labourer there —  
Man free, man working for himself, with choice  
Of time, and place, and object; by his wants,  
His comforts, native occupations, cares,  
Cheerfully led to individual ends  
Or social, and still followed by a train  
Unwooded, unthought-of even — simplicity,  
And beauty, and inevitable grace.<sup>22</sup>

While these verses present the essence of the middle age, thereby transgressing the pastoral habit of glossing over that subject, about a hundred and fifty lines later in the poem, the poet diverts his attention from human age altogether. Along come human sketches on which nature's seasons, youthfulness and eldership left no dent. The fruitful season that humors and gratifies humanity in a very pastoral way is not conspicuous any more. The cheeks of shepherds do not pick up the highlights in any "ruddy produce," and even their flageolets<sup>23</sup> are left alone. That is when the human figure of a shepherd, first and foremost of a man, a human being, rather than of a youth or "labourer," is poised in its timelessness among the nature's fogs and the bright radiance of fair weather, which coexist in one and the same sentence.

When up the lonely brooks on rainy days  
Angling I went, or trod the trackless hills  
By mists bewildered, suddenly mine eyes  
Have glanced upon him distant a few steps,  
In size a giant, stalking through thick fog,  
His sheep like Greenland bears; or, as he stepped  
Beyond the boundary line of some hill-shadow,  
His form hath flashed upon me, glorified  
By the deep radiance of the setting sun.  
Or him have I descried in distant sky,  
A solitary object and sublime,  
Above all height! like an aerial cross  
Stationed alone upon a spiry rock

Of the Chartreuse, for worship. Thus was man  
Ennobled outwardly before my sight.<sup>24</sup>

In this vision, the poet transcends the pastoral and its fictitiousness. The shepherd stalks through the fog with his sheep; he is visible on the hill-side by himself; and when he is “on a spiry rock,” not protected by the embracing glen any longer, “above all height,” alone, where no sheep can be found, he is distanced not only from the eyes of the poet, but from his natural and pastoral duties. Indeed, what could have brought him so far away from the flock? Sheep usually do not scale mountain peaks. Maypoles are not erected there. Stripped of all utilitarian motives, of the attributes of his profession, even of his class, there he is, in all his essential humanness. Appropriately, it is not nature’s ruddy fruits or the radiance of her beams that are associated with his figure looming “above all height;” it is the aerial cross of Chartreuse. This image is suggested not by nature (which resigns her leadership at this point), and even not by the immediate surrounding of the Lake District, but comes from the poet’s own remote associations, from the recesses of his mind, which marries different locales, times, associations, and even figures of different shepherds, muleteers, mountain peasants, monks, and other men in order to extract the ennobled human form to which all men bear likeness.

What is particularly human about that transformation? Would not the ennobling of any natural, non-human, form develop along the same lines? Unlike even Blake’s Tyger, whose fearful symmetry is framed, lightened up, forged, and hammered out from the outside by its maker’s hand and eye, shoulder and art, the human figure is not only sharpened into shape by the

worthy eye of the on-looker; it is bodied forth by the shepherd himself. Nobody pushed and pulled him to the top of the lofty mountain; he himself went there, by his own choice, through his own effort. The shepherd aspired on his own wings to “a spiry rock”; in that he is his own maker. His human contour, rendered visible far and wide by his own efforts, is indeed a victory over the blurring fogs and shadows of the earthly environment. Thus, the poet’s delighted celebration of the ennobled human form implicitly recognizes the existence, will, effort, and aspiration of the human being who, sometimes striding through the fog, sometimes balancing on the brink of mountain shadows, eventually put himself into a position to be thus perceived.

If the poet is delighted, why is he not trusted by some readers who find his love of humankind to be lacking? Why does the “almost mathematical” purity of those human figures (to use David Pirie’s phrase<sup>25</sup>) seem so abstract? What warrants Jonathan Wordsworth’s assertion that the shepherds of Book VIII are far “removed from the human normality they are supposed to exemplify” and that “It is difficult not to think that Wordsworth was trying to portray in his former self a kind of love that he didn’t feel at the time of writing”?<sup>26</sup> Where does this cold abstractness, carefully pointed out by many critics come from? In the light of Berdyaev’s existentialism, it is over-generalization that can produce such a depersonalizing effect. In Book VIII, Wordsworth aims at universality: he tries to explain that he learned to recognize the sublime and delightful human form in every real-life human being, even though the full realization of that vision would come years and



experiences later. Back at that moment, though, of the reality of that man, he “little saw, cared less for it, / But something must have felt.”<sup>27</sup> His ability to feel, however vaguely, the reality of the glorified shepherd, not only overturns the pastoral sufficiency, but also predates his later realization of love of man. That vision is yet to come. For now, the poet exclaims,

blessed be the God  
Of Nature and of Man that this was so;  
That men before my inexperienced eyes  
Did first present themselves thus purified,  
Removed, and to a distance that was fit.<sup>28</sup>

For now, the universal is the same as the general and abstract for the young poet. It will not always be so. By the end of *The Prelude*, as I will show in the next chapters, he will be able to see the universal in the personal rather than in the general, and thus come closer to Berdyaev’s ideal.

In Wordsworth’s age, to uphold that all human beings are essentially the same, and to describe the real-life shepherd of the Lake District as sublime was already a revolutionary step. To claim that this very form of the cross-like shepherd can be recognized by the poet in virtually everybody (and “everybody” includes the upper classes) thereby, allegedly, making the shepherd not only an index of and to delight, but also a paragon of human nobleness, is yet another revolutionary move. Not surprisingly, the poet made – if not enemies – then opponents, against whom even Coleridge, in Wordsworth’s defence, had to tilt his sharp pen. Discussing Wordsworth’s choice of characters in poetry, Coleridge once again makes it clear that his

friend was interested in the universality of human nature, universality of a lofty and dignified kind, rather than in ranks or other “artificial advantages.”

Under this head I shall deliver, with no feigned diffidence, the results of my best reflection on the great point of controversy between Mr. Wordsworth and his objectors; namely, *on the choice of his characters*. I have already declared and, I trust, justified, my utter dissent from the mode of argument which his critics have hitherto employed. To *their* question, Why did you chuse such a character, or a character from such a rank of life? the poet might in my opinion fairly retort: why with the conception of my character did you make wilful choice of mean or ludicrous associations not furnished by me, but supplied from your own sickly and fastidious feelings? How was it, indeed, probable, that such arguments could have any weight with an author, whose plan, whose guiding principle, and main object it was to attack and subdue that state of association, which leads us to place the chief value on those things in which man *differs* from man, and to forget or disregard the high dignities, which belong to *human nature*, the sense and the feeling, which *may* be, and *ought* to be, found in *all* ranks? The feelings with which, as Christians, we contemplate a mixed congregation rising or kneeling before their common Maker: Mr. Wordsworth would have us entertain at *all* times, as men, and as readers; and by the excitement of this lofty, yet prideless impartiality in *poetry*, he might hope to have encouraged its continuance in *real life*. The praise of good men be his! In real life, and, I trust, even in my imagination, I honor a virtuous and wise man, without reference to the presence or absence of artificial advantages. Whether in the person of an armed baron, a laurel'd bard, &c., or of an old pedlar, or still older leach-gatherer, the same qualities of head and heart must claim the same reverence.<sup>29</sup>

Since rustic people are easier to strip of the vain influences of the social world to reveal their essentially<sup>30</sup> humane, pure and permanent core, Wordsworth inclined to resort to their images in his poetry. And so he declares in the “Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*.”

Humble and rustic life was generally chosen, because, in that condition, the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can attain their maturity, are less under restraint, and speak a plainer and more emphatic language; because in that condition of life our elementary feelings coexist in a state of

greater simplicity, and, consequently, may be more accurately contemplated, and more forcibly communicated; because the manners of rural life germinate from those elementary feelings, and, from the necessary character of rural occupations, are more easily comprehended, and are more durable; and, lastly, because in that condition the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature. The language, too, of these men has been adopted (purified indeed from what appears to be its real defects, from all lasting and rational causes of dislike or disgust) because such men hourly communicate with the best objects from which the best part of language is originally derived; and because, from their rank in society and the sameness and narrow circle of their intercourse, being less under the influence of social vanity, they convey their feelings and notions in simple and unelaborated expressions. Accordingly, such a language, arising out of repeated experience and regular feelings, is a more permanent, and a far more philosophical language than that which is frequently substituted for it by poets, who think that they are conferring honor upon themselves and their art, in proportion as they separate themselves from the sympathies of men, and indulge in arbitrary and capricious habits of expression, in order to furnish food for fickle tastes, and fickle appetites, of their own creation.<sup>31</sup>

This paragraph runs parallel to what Berdyaev has to say about human personality, which, according to him, depends on no rank or property: personality, as Berdyaev says, is that which is left when all “artificial advantages,” to key it to Coleridge’s phrase, are cast off:

Буржуа определяется не тем, что он есть, а тем, что у него есть. По этому критерию он судит о других людях. У буржуа есть собственность, деньги, богатство, орудия производства, положение в обществе. Но эта собственность, с которой он так сросся, не составляет его личность, то есть того, что он есть. Личность есть то, что человек есть, она остается, когда он уже ничего не имеет. (154)

[The bourgeois is defined not by what he is but by what he has. By this criterion he also forms his judgment of other people. The bourgeois has property, money, wealth, the means of production, a position in society. But that property with which he has to such an extent grown together, does not constitute his personality, that is, it does not make him what he is. Personality is what a man is, and that is left remaining when he possesses nothing at all.]<sup>32</sup>

Thus, it is Wordsworth's genuine overreaching towards the universality of human nature that, in the shepherds's case, took away from the concreteness of the people he was describing, making them once again approximate types rather than red-blooded men, as he conceived them to be. But the mood, imagery and place of those elevated portraits put them in other than a fanciful pastoral perspective. And so does the poet's adoption of other than pastoral time.

From the vantage point of Berdyaev's personalistic theory, I see three major kinds of time operating in *The Prelude*; two of those, the cyclic and existential, are strongly manifested in Book VIII. At first, however, we are aware only of various manifestations of pastoral cycles. W. J. B. Owen, for instance, does a great job of comparing how the time of the soft pastoral, as given in Wordsworth's text, acts as a foil to the time of the hard pastoral of his Lake District.<sup>33</sup> Owen looks closely at the sequence of three passages of VIII (the Paradisal Gehol, the mainly English pastoral, and the classical literary pastoral with Goslar "not far removed from the artificial fancies of the classics") and opposes their spacial and temporal remoteness to the immediacy of the Lake District; he points out:

Gehol's gardens are in remote China; they are remote with regard to China itself, being "beyond that mighty Wall" (126). Arcadia, Galesus, the Adriatic, Clitumnus, Lucretilis, are remote in the Mediterranean; *As You Like It* and *The Winter's Tale* are set in France, Sicily (the home of literary pastoral), and a fabulous maritime Bohemia. The endless plain north of Goslar is remote in Germany. Or the remoteness can be in time: so in the classical passages, and the possibly real-life English piece derived from Spenser is distanced into the past by setting it outside Wordsworth's observation though possibly within Spenser's, two

centuries before. Against these remotenesses we see all the more clearly the very present, hard, real-life pastoralism amid which the poet learned to love Nature and the men who inhabited it.<sup>34</sup>

Having outlined such temporal contrasts, Owen stops, for in that particular article his interest lies with the different kinds and ambivalences of the pastorals Wordsworth offers in VIII. My interest here, however, is in how the poet manages to move yet one leap further: to the *fullness* of time, which combines the remote and the immediate and does not fit within the limitations of the opening pastorals. The immediacy of the Lake District is, indeed, telling when Nature leads the poet to his love of shepherds, men “suffering among awful Powers and Forms” of his native and dearly beloved land.<sup>35</sup> But again, when the Greenland bears and the cross of the Chartreuse are admitted into the picture and become amalgated into the depictions of the Lake District shepherds, it seems to me, other, remote, times and spaces are brought up close.

The words of the “Spiry Rock” passage and what they signify are charged with highly concentrated associations that propel the thought of any attentive reader of the poem back and forth across the length of several Books. While many of the associations evoked by the Grasmere fair at the foot of Helvellyn, the Gehol and other eminently pastoral lines are intertextual (the beauty of which is not vitally diminished when the passage is enjoyed outside of *The Prelude*’s context), the main force of the imaginative leap of the “Spiry Rock” vision is intratextual, when but one word can open up a whole stream of associations with another spot of time within the same personal

history of growth. It is those generated Preludian associations that enrich the reader's appreciation of the fullness of the transcendent visionary moment.

One case in point is the expulsion of the monks from the Grand Chartreuse addressed in the revised Book VI, 1850 (lines 420-88),<sup>36</sup> the passage that in another form appeared in Wordsworth's *Descriptive Sketches*.<sup>37</sup> The addition of that section amplifies resonances both of the Spiry Rock vision and of the Chapel Island passage (X, 514-603) with its announcement of Robespierre's death.<sup>38</sup> A freeman of the Lake District, by his aerial appearance, re-fixes the Alpine cross nearly toppled by the French soldiers championing the "new-born Liberty" (VI, 442) by violation of the solitude of the Convent. For the dark memories to be transcended, the poet needs to re-take that parting of the Chartreuse again: he provides the link to that cross by explicitly naming it in VIII. As a reader, I'm also re-casting that parting look and once again envision the following:

Vallombre's groves  
Entering, we fed the soul with darkness; thence  
Issued, and with uplifted eyes beheld,  
In different quarters of the bending sky,  
The cross of Jesus stand erect, as if  
Hands of angelic powers had fixed it there,  
Memorial revered by a thousand storms;  
Yet then, from the indiscriminating sweep  
And rage of one State-whirlwind, insecure.<sup>39</sup>

The Nature's "Alpine throne" (VI, 431) is not shattered into pieces by the Lake District's "freeman" (VIII, 253), "lord and master" (VIII, 258) in the name of Liberty. Yet his independent, gestaltic, and delighting appearance returns dignity to all "the most common" (VIII, 289).

When the remote and the present fuse together into one rich perception, as above, this fusion gives birth to a third kind of time, of a higher order. Berdyaev calls it “existential,” and Jeffrey Baker describes it as “inner time” with its capacity eventually to “bring the mind to a visionary moment” (which is different from Lindenberger’s understanding of the same term). To Baker’s explanation first:

There is one important point, however, on which I disagree with Lindenberger. As one reads his chapters, one is constantly aware of modes of time arranged in pairs: time and eternity, inner and outer time, the time of the incident and the time of writing, and so on. I agree with the definitions of, and distinctions between, these kinds of time; I do not accept that they can be simply paired off. There is in Wordsworth’s time schemes a distinguishable, qualitative order. Thus the lowest time is clock time, mechanical in the narrowest sense, inflexible and uncreative. Next there is nature’s time, Newtonian, a mathematical continuum, and also inflexible, but less artificial than clock time and more conducive to spiritual well-being. Above these two is inner time, felt by the nerves and brain and lodged, as Woolf put it, “in the queer element of the human spirit.” This time is liberating and creative. And there appear to be occasions when inner time obliterates not merely the two inferior schemes, but itself also, bringing the mind to a visionary moment, an eternal present where “we see into the life of things.”<sup>40</sup>

If Baker’s classification is built upon the “creativity” and liberating force of the moment, Nicolas Berdyaev, also, accentuates the different ways in which those kinds of time progress, setting the fullness of an “existential” moment against the linearity of “historical time” (with its past moments lying behind and future moments lying ahead of the present moment) and against the circularity of “cosmic time” (with its daily, seasonal, and planetary rounds). Berdyaev elaborates:

Говорить о времени не значит говорить объ одномъ и томъ же. Время имѣетъ различные смыслы, и необходимо дѣлать

различенія. Есть три времени — время космическое, время историческое и время экзистенціальное. И каждый человекъ живеть въ этихъ трехъ формахъ времени. Время космическое символизируется кругомъ. Оно связано съ движеніемъ земли вокругъ солнца, съ исчисленіемъ дней, мѣсяцевъ и годовъ, съ календаремъ и часами. Это круговое движеніе, въ которомъ постоянно происходитъ возвращеніе, наступаетъ утро и вечеръ, весна и осень. Это есть время природы и, какъ природныя существа, мы живемъ въ этомъ времени. (214)

[To speak of time, is not always to speak of one and the same thing. Time has a variety of meanings and it is needful to make distinctions. There are three times: cosmic time, historical time; and existential time, and every man lives in these three forms of time. Cosmic time is symbolized by the circle. It is connected with the motion of the earth round the sun, with the reckoning of days, months, and years, with the calendar and the clock. This is a circular movement in which a return is constantly taking place, morning comes and evening, spring and autumn. This is nature's time, and as natural beings we live in this time.]<sup>41</sup>

Rotation of seasons and times of day has quite a presence in Book VIII and its pastoral passages. Shepherds are perfectly aware of their seasonal functions and festivities, be it at the summer Grasmere Fair, in the countryside of English fantasy, “along Adria’s myrtle shores,” by “the Hercynian forest” of Goslar. Even in the severe environment of the Lake District revisited in lines 215-56, when the poet, thrice, invokes the “awful” and “terrifying” powers of his native regions,

[H]ail to you  
Moors, mountains, headlands, and ye hollow vales,  
Ye long deep channels for the Atlantic’s voice,  
Powers of my native region! Ye that seize  
The heart with firmer grasp! Your snows and streams  
Ungovernable, and your terrifying winds,  
That howl so dismally for him who treads  
Companionless your awful solitudes!,<sup>42</sup>



he does not manage to break out of the vicious circle of cosmic time. Despite the “awfulness” of the landscape (the word signals its sublimity), the pastoral merry-go-round of human duties still wheels, except it is not so merry any more. The inner time, the existential moment is not yet achieved, even though the landscape is already prepared to be experienced as sublime. It is human beings with their round of tasks who are still not so. Even though, as W. J. B. Owen in his aforementioned article correctly states, Nature “in its hard reality ennobles its inhabitants,”<sup>43</sup> appearance of sublime human figures in this sublime region is not instantaneous. While the harshness of the real-life landscape keeps growing on the readers, the shepherds keep following their circular habits.

There, 'tis the shepherd's task the winter long  
To wait upon the storms: of their approach  
Sagacious, into sheltering coves he drives  
His flock, and thither from the homestead bears  
A toilsome burden up the craggy ways,  
And deals it out, their regular nourishment  
Strewn on the frozen snow. And when the spring  
Looks out, and all the pastures dance with lambs,  
And when the flock, with warmer weather, climbs  
Higher and higher, him his office leads  
To watch their goings, whatsoever track  
The wanderers choose.<sup>44</sup>

Wordsworth eyes the shepherds during the less benign of the seasons: winter. In spring, his eye does not catch a single person weaving wreaths and crowning his brow with flowers; instead, the shepherd treads on them and his feet “Crush out a livelier fragrance from the flowers / Of lowly thyme, by Nature's skill enwrought / In the wild turf.”<sup>45</sup> The pastoral put on its ears, or rather thrown under the shepherd's feet, is still a pastoral. The thyme-carpet

treatment Wordsworth gives to his Lake District freeman looks back to Helvellyn, by whose friendly foot the soft green turf of the valley was spread out and the lively bunch of blossoming folk whiled away time. It also looks forward to the giant shepherd stalking through the fog and eventually ending up on top of the mountain, as Book VIII unfolds.

That pastoral time is circular, Andrew Ettin agrees. Although, he adds that pastoral closed circularity often freezes a moment on the timeline of history.<sup>46</sup> He writes:

The notion of making time pause, even stop, or circle back to the beginning (stretching duration, in other words) is basic to the pastoral instinct for enclosure. Being absorbed in a moment of blessed, privileged time means being settled into an emotionally comfortable experience. Whether attained or not, the desire for that is at the heart of the pastoral. . . . Time stops in this moment. And then the moment is over. The frog jumps; someone calls out to George; he must straighten his Sunday clothes and run back to town. The natural passage of time and the requirements of a society that lives according to its own sense of the temporal proprieties and responsibilities reassert themselves. History returns with a rush, and with a metaphysical puzzle for the pastoral dreamer who has imagined the world halted for an instant into an ideally arranged picture. “The sun did set, and by the time it rose next morning the Titanic had been sunk. If the world had stopped, they would not have drowned; I thought about it for days.”<sup>47</sup>

Frozensness of the pastoral moment – or tiresome dwelling on one and the same unchangeable pattern – often goes hand in hand with make believe and escapist wishful thinking. The pastoral often desires to arrest a moment in the flow of life, much like Keats’s “cold pastoral” captures youth, with its beauty, music, ever-to-be-plucked kisses and never-to-be-sacrificed heifers, into the beautiful marble of a Grecian Urn to remain there deathless, “because it is lifeless,” as Cleanth Brooks once brilliantly noted.<sup>48</sup> Also, when the flow of

time is frozen, solidified, it can be set in stone, as with the monumental Urn. That which used to be temporal is turned into a substantial spatial object, and the materiality of the captured usually increases.<sup>49</sup>

History can serve as an antidote to pastoralism, when it wakes the dreamer from the pastoral fixedness back to reality, but it also brings the awareness of separateness of moments scattered over the linear time, giving rise to nostalgia and utopian hopes. Berdyaev again is helpful:

Историческое время порождено движениемъ и изменениемъ инымъ, чѣмъ то, что происходитъ въ космическомъ круговоротѣ. Историческое время символизируется не кругомъ, а прямой линіей, устремленной впередъ. Особенность историческаго времени именно въ этой устремленности къ грядущему, оно въ грядущемъ ждетъ раскрытія смысла. [...] Историческое время также связано съ прошлымъ и традиціей, устанавливающей связьъ временъ. Безъ этой памяти и этой традиціи во внутреннемъ смыслѣ слова нѣтъ исторіи. [...] Историческое время порождаетъ иллюзіи: исканіе въ прошломъ лучшаго, подлиннаго, прекраснаго, совершеннаго (иллюзія консерватизма), или исканіе въ будущемъ полноты совершенства, завершения смысла (иллюзія прогресса). [...] Въ настоящемъ человекъ не чувствуетъ полноты времени, и онъ ищетъ ее въ прошломъ или будущемъ, особенно въ переходные и мучительные періоды исторіи. (215-16)

[Historical time comes into being through movement and change of another sort than that which occurs in the cosmic cycle. Historical time is symbolized not by the circle but by the straight line stretching out forwards. The special property of historical time is precisely this stretching out towards what is coming, this reaching forward to determine. In what is coming it waits for the disclosure of a meaning . . . Historical time is also connected with the past and with tradition which establishes a link between periods of time. Without that memory and that tradition in the inner sense of the word there is no history. . . . Historical time gives birth to illusions; the search in the past for what is better, truer, more beautiful, more perfect (the illusion of the conservative) or the search in the future for the fullness of achievement and the perfection of meaning (the illusion of progress) . . . . In the present

man does not feel the fullness of time, and he seeks it in the past or in the future, especially in periods of history which are transitional and full of suffering.]<sup>50</sup>

Historical time in its most linear, without much comforting circularity of the pastoral, rules the London sections of Book VII. People's names, faces, scenes of life, once met never to be seen again, flow by the poet in an overwhelming endless stream. The moment is not the happiest in Wordsworth's life story. And the poet feels the urge to digress either to mull over his memories or to anticipate his return to countryside.

In contrast to both historical and cosmic times, with their awareness of the passage of minutes, days, seasons, years, and centuries, there is yet another time, which does not need any timepiece that ticks off separate moments. In this other time, everything comes together, and all experiences, those that are already under the person's belt and those that he foreshadows right now, manifest themselves simultaneously in a person's life by way of existence. The acceptance not only of happiness, but also of pain that is in that life warrants this vision against illusions. On the other hand, pain accepted becomes mitigated by the joys conjoined with it, for in life there is no pure good or evil, pain or happiness, as, for instance, Keats's "Ode on Melancholy" teaches. Wordsworth too, having fallen out of his illusory, almost pastoral, moment of forgetfulness in his "Surprised by joy" sonnet, back to the historical present, tries to come to terms with his pain by accepting it. With his acceptance of the tragedy of his daughter's death, he will again be in a communion with her, not separated from her by his unresponsiveness. And that kind of "sharing" cannot but revive other happiness they still – and always will – have in

common, which no separateness of times will be able to shatter. The unity of all feelings and emotions cannot but veil his melancholy, and the accepted pain cannot become more painful, and there will remain no repressed grief to escape. Both the numbness of illusions and the torment of waking up will cancel each other out. Hence, in his sonnet, by facing his pain, Wordsworth seeks not Lethe, but existential unity of all times, which can be achieved inwardly. The same he does when uniting all his visions of shepherds, passes, and crosses into one full visionary moment, which promises “delight.” That is the moment, the time, which Berdyaev calls “existential.”

Кромѣ времени космическаго и времени историческаго, объективированнаго и подчиненнаго числу, хотя и по разному, есть еще время экзистенціальное, время глубинное. Время экзистенціальное нельзя мыслить совершенно изолированно отъ времени космическаго и времени историческаго; есть прорывъ одного времени въ другое. *Kairos*, о которомъ любить говорить Тиллихъ, есть какъ бы вторженіе вѣчности во время, прерывность въ космическомъ и историческомъ времени, пополненіе и исполненіе времени. Съ этимъ связано мессіанско-профетическое сознаніе, которое изъ глубины экзистенціального времени говоритъ о времени историческомъ.

Время экзистенціальное лучше всего можетъ быть символизировано не кругомъ и не линией, а точкой. Это какъ разъ и значитъ, что время экзистенціальное меньше всего можетъ быть символизировано пространственно. Это время внутреннее, не экстеріоризированное въ пространствѣ, не объективированное. Это время міра субъективности, а не объективности. Оно не счисляется математически, не слагается и не разлагается. Бесконечность экзистенціального времени есть бесконечность качественная, а не количественная. (216)

[In addition to cosmic time and historical time, which are objectivized and subordinate to number, though in different ways, there is also existential time, profound time. Existential time must not be thought of in complete isolation from cosmic and historical time, it is a break-through of one time into the other. *Kairos*, about which Tillich is fond of speaking, is, as it were, the irruption of

eternity into time, an interruption in cosmic and historical time, an addition to and fulfillment of time. With this is connected the messianic prophetic consciousness which out of the depth of existential time speaks about historical time.

Existential time may be best symbolized not by the circle nor by the line but by the point. That is precisely what is meant by saying that existential time can least of all be symbolized by extension. This is inward time, not exteriorized in extension, not objectivized. . . . It is not computed mathematically, it is not summed up nor divided into parts. The infinity of existential time is a qualitative infinity, not a quantitative.]<sup>51</sup>

The fullness of the Spiry Rock moment is suggested not only by fusing together such remote images from different past experiences as the Greenland bears and the cross of the Chartreuse, which I mentioned earlier, but also by sheer absence of fragmented time: different seasons, weather conditions, times of day are interwoven to produce the unified vision. When the poet finally observes the aerial shape of the human on an inaccessible mountain top, it can be dawn or evening, day or dusk, and almost any possible time of year. But better yet, it is all of the above at once. No categories of cosmic and historic times can account for that vision, because the cross-like shepherd is not poised *in* time, he is *outside* of the flux of time, the difference convincingly backed by James Baker in his discussion of the Wordsworthian spots.

The words ["Spots of Time"] suggest moments which have a perceptible separateness from the general flow of time, a suggestion strengthened by the quality Wordsworth attributes to these moments — "distinct pre-eminence" (*Prelude*, 12: 209). As David Perkins has pointed out, "freezing" the moment is an artistic necessity.

Anyone who contemplates his own thoughts and feelings finds that they are always in process, changing as they recombine with different elements. Even our past is not settled, but constantly assumes new shapes and meanings in the shifting lights of the present. Yet a poem only can exist by solidifying a moment in the flux of consciousness.

And yet I am not quite happy with the manner in which Perkins

expresses the idea. “Solidifying a moment in the flux” has certain unfortunate undertones: if this is what poetry does, and all it does, it would seem to be a kind of imaginative thrombosis. William F. Lynch has very effectively attacked the notion that the function of arts is to freeze some moment of the past.... The real power of Wordsworth’s moments is not their frozenness or their solidity, but the immense energy within them, their power to make the reader’s imagination work backward and forward in an instant. And indeed, the very phrase “spots of time” and Wordsworth’s frequent use of the term “moments” suggest that he actually senses these moments, not as a solidifying of the flux, but as in a sense not part of the flux at all.<sup>52</sup>

Pseudo-frozenness of a visionary moment, of which Baker speaks here, seems to lead right into another question about the spiry rock shepherd: Does the cross to which the shepherd is likened make him any less human, by virtue of its being inanimate, utterly frozen? How is this shepherd not demoted to an object, how is he not “frozen,” “objectivized,” or “monumentalized” through that comparison? Richard Sha, who wrote on Wordsworth’s resistance to monumentality, can provide a helpful clue here. The monumentality of an object, as the examples the critic adduces in his article demonstrate, can be attenuated through the use of metonymy or – by extension – other kinds of substitution.<sup>53</sup> And the materiality of the cross is indeed attenuated in the passage in question. The comparison is not exclusively between the objects as objects, but between their immaterial gestalten, the shapes and their positioning, which, as I will show in a few pages discussing the definition of a human form, is the key difference. That is to say, when in his transcendental visions Wordsworth employs comparisons between animate and inanimate objects, he still manages to focus on the less material side of both, the side emotionally live.

Interestingly, liberty and freedom in Wordsworth, are never depicted as a material palpable object, a shrine, a monument. They are never objectivized. Richard Sha finds this peculiarly Wordsworthian for that age.

Wordsworth's suspicion of and resistance to monumentality is most clearly in evidence in his decision to represent liberty against the tradition of James Thomson's and William Collins's liberty poems. By contrast to his predecessors, Wordsworth refuses to enshrine liberty in a monument, even though, as Thomson and Collins recognized, that enshrinement facilitated the permanent domestication of liberty to British soil. . . . Collins admiringly details the temple's monumental characteristics: beautiful ornaments, Greek and Gothic architectural design, and inscription. Wordsworth, however, refuses to build a shrine to liberty. Rather than house liberty in such monumental architecture, and unlike "oppression build[ing] her thick-ribb'd tow'rs" (*Descriptive Sketches*, 795), Wordsworth depicts liberty in true sketchlike fashion in conflicting but insistently immaterial ways: as the blaze of a comet (775); as voice and then—even less palpably—an echo, "on ten thousand hearths his shout rebound" (777); as flames (781-82); as waves (792); as a spawning ground (783-85); and as having "Nile-like wings" (805).<sup>54</sup>

Even though the images of freedom are not monumental, there is a shape and a form to them, as Sha continues to explain:

If the poet's choice of images are self-consciously sketchlike, they are still, however, spatial images. Iconicity works here to lend materiality and shape, albeit provisionally, to an otherwise all too amorphous and unattainable freedom. More to the point, that iconicity allows Wordsworth to contain freedom, if only for the moment.<sup>55</sup>

To lift Sha's conclusions about the form that makes freedom attainable and containable for a moment (while utter monumentalization destroys this freedom) into the discussion of the different kinds of time, undertaken earlier in this chapter, I would say that there are different kinds of frozenness. One is material and monumental: the frozenness of the pastoral moment that fixes and turns into an Urn, palpable and embodied. Another kind of frozenness or



monumentality is the apparent stasis of an existential moment, that may look as if it is solidified (see Baker above). It may be symbolized by a point (see Berdyaev above), but in fact, it is only a seeming “thrombosis,” which points to infinity outside the flux of fragmented and measurable time. That apparent stasis is the gestalt of the cross-like shepherd, aerial and untouchable. Hence liberty or freedom in Wordsworth – to tie the threads of Sha’s, Baker’s, and Berdyaev’s arguments together – usually has the existential, seeming, stasis about it, while tyranny can take on the impressive monumentality of the historical towers of the Bastille or the beautiful frozenness of the pastoral and imperial Gehol.

As we have seen, in Book VIII of *The Prelude*, the poet starts out preparing his readers to experience the sublimity he will announce later in the Book by moving away from the traditional pastoral mood of different pastoral places and times that he describes until he arrives at the awful and terrible sublimity of his Lake District. There he continues to show shepherds absorbed in their cyclic activities, even though those activities are much more toilsome and occasionally dangerous, as they would be in real life. Nature and her imagery led as far as they possibly could on the way to sublimity. Now Wordsworth makes his next move: he gives initiative to man, saying that human presence can make landscape even more powerful and sublime:

A rambling school-boy, thus  
I felt his presence in his own domain,  
As of a lord and master, or a power,  
Or genius, under Nature, under God,  
Presiding; and severest solitude  
Had more commanding looks when he was there.<sup>56</sup>

Thus the “powers” of the poet’s native region (218), its “awful solitudes” and the grandiose and steady mountain forms, which, unlike the soft fanciful pastoral of Book VIII’s beginning, used to “seize / The heart with firmer grasp” (218-19), now yield center stage to man. Here, it is man, whose presence is felt, and it is he who is a “power” and to whose sublime and steady form the readers are about to be introduced.

Form and power are two of the three major characteristics of the sublime as Wordsworth specifies it in his fragmental essay on “The Sublime and the Beautiful.” The third component is duration.

And if this is analyzed [the grand impression the mountains make], the body of this sensation [of sublimity] would be found to resolve itself into three component parts: a sense of individual form or forms; a sense of duration; and a sense of power. The whole complex impression is made up of these elementary parts, & the effect depends upon their co-existence. For, if any one of them were abstracted, the others would be deprived of their power to affect.

I first enumerated individuality of form; this individual form was then invested with qualities and powers, ending with duration. Duration is evidently an element of the sublime; but think of it without reference to individual form, and we shall perceive that it has no power to affect the mind. Cast your eye, for example, upon any commonplace ridge or eminence that cannot be separated, without some effort of the mind, from the general mass of the planet; you may be persuaded, nay, convinced, that it has borne that shape as long as or longer that Cader Idris, or Snowdon, or the Pikes of Langdale that are before us; and the mind is wholly unmoved by the thought.... Prominent individual form must, therefore, be conjoined with duration, in order that Objects of this kind may impress a sense of sublimity; and, in the works of Man, this conjunction is, for obvious reasons, of itself sufficient for the purpose. But in works of Nature it is not so: with these must be combined impressions of power, to a sympathy with & a participation of which the mind must be elevated — or to a dread and awe of which, as existing out of itself, it must be subdued.<sup>57</sup>

Wordsworth is not explicit about the specifics of human sublimity in this essay: he dwells primarily on the natural sublime, and mentions in passing the works of men. We have it on the textual evidence of *The Prelude*, that when the poet speaks of the human sublime in Book VIII, he endows it with all three component counterparts of the natural sublime: power, form, and duration. Power is that of the lord and master presiding over a severe landscape, who, is free and unconquered by all natural climatic vicissitudes.

Duration is also brought into play as the book unfolds. Duration is not chronological here; it is an existential moment that, though it seems to be frozen and punctual, actually opens up into infinity of the spirit and of inner time. As the poet declares,

The human nature unto which I felt  
That I belonged, and revered with love,  
Was not a punctual presence, but a spirit  
Diffused through time and space.<sup>58</sup>

Presence, an act of being and existing, should not be downplayed in the spiry rock vision as long as we keep in mind how much stock Wordsworth put into the small word “was” when describing his leech-gatherer. “‘A lonely place, a Pond’ ‘by which an old man *was*, far from all house or home’ — not stood, not set, but ‘*was*’ — the figure presented in the most naked simplicity possible,” emphasizes Wordsworth in his 1802 comment on “Resolution and Independence.”<sup>59</sup> Likewise, his independent shepherd, “stationed alone upon a spiry rock,” *is* there. The word “stationed” is more indicative of being positioned, poised, existing, without any emphases on how the muscles of the body flex, and whether the shepherd is sitting, stretching, or striding.

Jeffrey Baker makes an interesting observation about what he calls the “muscular energy” and its direct connection to lower kinds of time, noting that when Wordsworth draws attention to muscular energy, he works in the mode of “the body’s physiological clock,”<sup>60</sup> which is much lower than inner time.

[T]he boys came to the Lady Holme and the Furness Abbey ruins by rowing or riding, means involving great muscular effort. Furthermore, both activities involve strict physical control, bodily equilibrium, and nervous and physiological alertness of a high order. Disaster can come in an instant if the mental tension is relaxed. Yet when the boys reach the ruins, they can throw off the burden of taking care of themselves, relax utterly, and merely absorb what the environment has to offer.<sup>61</sup>

Further on, the critic opposes this body’s physiological clock to relaxation and what he calls “deliberate holiday” with its independence from social shackles and imposed obligations of any kind. What is interesting, during the moments of relaxation in Wordsworth, as J. Baker parenthetically mentions, the outlines of the figures often become better defined.

This is how emotion is recollected in tranquility—from the generalized store of softly contoured images, a few precise and vivid impressions present themselves with clear outlines.<sup>62</sup>

Here, much like liberty and freedom in Sha’s discussion of monumentality, the more independent the poet is the further his portraits are removed from the bodily muscularity, while the emotion itself becomes clearly outlined.

Distancing his vision of the shepherd from the materiality of the flesh by avoiding any mention of muscular energy, the poet frees himself from the grip of objectivization and corruptibility of the lower kinds of time, yet once again achieves the mode of duration. And this link between duration and

nonmateriality, existential duration and the spirit's infinity, is specifically human: I do not remember any mountain in Wordsworth that, by itself, existed in that kind of time. Mountains are usually impressive by being ancient in the linear mode of time, like Mont Blanc.

Though all three components of the human sublime conjointly contribute to the sensation, form is especially important for the poet's vision of the sublime shepherds. In his fragment he advocates the possibility that only one of the three components will predominate:

It is to be remembered that I have been speaking of a visible object; & it might seem that when I required duration to be combined with individual form, more was required than was necessary; for a native of a mountainous country, looking back upon his childhood, will remember how frequently he has been impressed by a sensation of sublimity from a precipice, in which awe or personal apprehension were the predominant feelings of his mind, & from which the milder influence of duration seemed to be excluded. And it is true that the relative proportions in which we are affected by the qualities of these objects are different at different periods of our lives; yet there cannot be a doubt that upon all ages they act conjointly.<sup>63</sup>

Wordsworth does not give a crisp definition of form, especially of human form, in his essay, but it is possible to look closely at his careful wording in *The Prelude* and to try to gather from the text the notion of what form is and is not. First, it is expedient to understand what concepts are relative to form, and under what umbrella term they all can be categorized. As I showed in Chapter One of this dissertation, Wordsworth is often bent on giving shape to human existence. Whether he meets a peasant or makes the Pedlar revive Margaret's image, in his progression toward the imaginative and transcendent, the poet strives to render the invisible visible, to single out visible elements in

order to shape them into a gestalt. He barely notes the appearance of the Alpine peasant, but that is already a step ahead from the indifferent blindness of all previous episodes of the crossing. The gestalt is poor, not very well defined, but it is already a gestalt, because it is opposed to the chaotic, imageless, shadowed lack of appearance that precedes it. Lawrence J. Lujan, when defining gestalt, highlights the idea that configurative, gestaltic, unity can have various degrees of perfection.

A gestalt, like a living organism, is a system whose parts are dynamically connected in such a way that an alteration of one part changes the whole, and an alteration of the whole modifies all the parts. A gestalt is thus contrasted with an aggregate or sum, which can be created by putting together pieces one after the other without effecting a change in the qualities of any one of them. Between the summative aggregate and the homogeneous whole, there are various degrees of configurative unity; a “good gestalt has greater unity than a “poor” gestalt.<sup>64</sup>

“Gestalten,” from poor to perfect, is what I accept as the umbrella term for all human forms, partly visible figures, shapes, bodies and body parts which can be grasped by the inner eye in any of Wordsworth’s poem as opposed to the amorphousness of the background with all its unshaped shadows and fragments.

Then, to define form, it is necessary to clarify how it is different from all other gestalten. Especially pertinent to my discussion of the pastoral frozenness, as opposed to the existential apparent stasis, is the body’s relation to form. Both body and form are organized structures, the former being more corporeal than the latter. But are they at the opposite ends of the gestaltic spectrum? Are they diametrically opposed? Neither Sha, nor Baker address this question: it is not the purpose of their studies. Berdyaev, fortunately, provides

an answer in the context of his personalistic philosophy, considering both to be different stages of one and the same process of vision. Elsewhere he maintains that body “belongs to the human person and from it there cannot be abstracted the ‘spiritual’ in man. ‘Body’ is already form, signifying the victory of spirit over formless matter;” Berdyaev links body and form in that they are shaped, gestaltic. In his *Slavery and Freedom*, he gives more space to his consideration of the differences between form and body:

Форма тѣла совсѣмъ не есть матерія, совсѣмъ не есть явленіе физическаго міра, форма тѣла не только душевна, но и духовна. [...] Въ сознаниі людей XIX вѣка форма тѣла была въ небреженіи. Была физиологія тѣла, но не форма тѣла, которую хотѣли оставлять скрытой. Въ этомъ все еще сказывалось христіанское аскетическое отношеніе къ тѣлу, но очень непослѣдовательное, такъ какъ функціи тѣла совсѣмъ не отрицались. Но въ то время, какъ функціи тѣла физиологичны и связаны съ человѣкомъ, какъ съ существомъ принадлежащимъ къ животному біологическому міру, форма тѣла связана съ эстетикой. Форму тѣла, какъ явленіе эстетическое знала Греція, и это входило во всю ея культуру. Сейчасъ происходитъ частичный возвратъ къ греческому отношенію къ тѣлу и форма тѣла вступаетъ въ свои права. Это предполагаетъ измѣненіе христіанскаго сознанія и преодоленіе отвлеченнаго спиритуализма, противопологающаго духъ тѣлу и видящаго въ тѣлѣ враждебное духу начало. Духъ включаетъ въ себя и тѣло, онъ одухотворяетъ тѣло, сообщаетъ ему иное качество. (28-29)

[The form of the body is certainly not matter, it is certainly not a phenomenon of the physical world. The form of the body is not only of the soul, it is spiritual. . . . The form of the body was neglected in the consciousness of the people of the nineteenth century. There was a physiology of the body, but not a form of the body; they wished to let the form remain concealed. In this the Christian ascetic attitude to the body appeared all over again. But it was very inconsistent, since the functions of the body were by no means denied. But at that time, *the functions of the body being physiological and bound up with the conception of man as a creature who belonged to the animal biological world, the form of the body was linked on <sic> to aesthetics*. Greece was aware of the form of the body as an aesthetic phenomenon, and this

awareness ran through the whole of its culture. In these days a partial return to the Greek attitude to the body is taking place, and the form of the body is coming into its rights. This presupposes a modification of Christian consciousness and the overcoming of abstract spirituality, which places spirit and body in opposition and sees in the body a principle which is hostile to the spirit. The spirit includes the body also in itself, it spiritualizes the body, and communicates another quality to it.]<sup>65</sup>

Body in Berdyaev is more than flesh. And the more the bodily members are unified to create the homogeneous whole instead of thinking about physiological functions of separate parts and their aggregate or sum, the better its form is manifested. In other words, forms are much more perfect *gestalten* than bodies. The emphasis is in the eye of the beholder: if he uses his bodily eye mostly, he will focus on the physiology and corporeality of the viewed; while the worthy eye, observing the very same subject and being aware of its substantiality (or unsubstantiality, for that matter), will tend to observe the viewed in its wholeness, informed not only by anatomy, but also by the feelings, emotions, aspirations of the subject, which shape him as much.

In the course of Book VIII Wordsworth seems to shift from a more bodily perspective to the “worthy” one. He starts out with his sensuous description of a blooming maiden of the Grasmere Fair:

But one there is, the loveliest of them all,  
Some sweet lass of the valley, looking out  
For gains, and who that sees her would not buy?  
Fruits of her father’s orchard, are *her* wares,  
And with the ruddy produce, she walks round  
Among the crowd, half pleased with, half ashamed  
Of her new office, blushing restlessly.”<sup>66</sup>

This sketch is erotically suggestive, in sharp contrast to the almost ascetic figure of the cross-like shepherd. Contrasting as they are, these two images are



linked by an elaborately wrought chain of gradual gestaltic transformation, which in Book VIII happens right before the reader's inner eye, thereby preparing him for the experience of the upcoming human sublimity. The last links of this chain intricately illustrate a very fine difference between several nearly perfect gestalten, which, nonetheless, keep getting more and more focused till the image sharpens into "an index of delight."

Before I address the shepherds of those lines, a more detailed definition of "gestalt" is in order. As I mentioned earlier, "gestalt" is a configuration, pattern, structure, which, as a segregated whole, stands out from its background. A gestalt usually has parts, which mutually determine each other's characteristics and are dynamically connected with each other, so that when one element of the structure is altered, the whole gestalt is modified.<sup>67</sup> There are also different degrees of configurative unity depending on how "perfect" the given gestalt is. And there are factors which contribute to the experience of a "good" gestalt, which hold it together as a unified whole; among the most important and well-documented by Lujan are "proximity, similarity, closure, simplicity, and common movement or destiny."<sup>68</sup> Proximity and similarity are two of the classic principles in associationism, as practiced by Hartley, a mode of thought that influenced the young Wordsworth and Coleridge.<sup>69</sup> Those terms are rather self-explanatory: when elements are closest to each other, they tend to form groups – this is the principle of proximity. And the principle of similarity explains grouping among different elements; the ones that are similar (be it in size, shape, color, etc.) tend to be, perceptively, singled

out together. Among the examples of closure offered by Lujan is “a line which encloses a surface [and] tends to be seen as a unit. The more continuous the line, the more stable the unit. But not only are boundary lines perceived as wholes, the areas bound in by these lines are also seen as wholes.”<sup>70</sup> Simplicity is a principle formulated by Max Wertheimer in 1923, and it is that objects tend to be grouped together when the resulting group forms a simple pattern. “The fewer elements there are in a form, the greater its simplicity,” Lujan goes on to explain, “Elements which are uniform, regular, or symmetrical also contribute to the impression of simplicity.”<sup>71</sup> And later on:

[O]ne element essential in every case of simplicity is that a simple form is comparatively easy to explain . . . in terms of the number of steps involved, the number of mental operations involved, even the number of words involved.<sup>72</sup>

And finally, the principle of common movement, also formulated by Max Wertheimer, states that when elements move simultaneously and in a similar manner, they, again, tend to be perceived as a group.<sup>73</sup>

Now let us take a look at the series of the shepherds’ sketches that Wordsworth adduces in order to present the human being as a sublime object perfect in form. How “good” are these three gestalten of a shepherd?

A rambling school-boy, thus  
I felt his presence in his own domain,  
As of a lord and master, or a power,  
Or genius, under Nature, under God,  
Presiding; and severest solitude  
Had more commanding looks when he was there.  
When up the lonely brooks on rainy days  
Angling I went, or trod the trackless hills  
By mists bewildered, suddenly mine eyes  
Have glanced upon him distant a few steps,

In size a giant, stalking through thick fog,  
His sheep like Greenland bears; or as he stepped  
Beyond the boundary line of some hill-shadow,  
His form hath flashed upon me, glorified  
By the deep radiance of the setting sun:  
Or him have I descried in distant sky,  
A solitary object and sublime,  
Above all height! like an aerial cross  
Stationed alone upon a spiry rock  
Of the Chartreuse, for worship. Thus was man  
Ennobled outwardly before my sight,  
And thus my heart was early introduced  
To an unconscious love and reverence  
Of human nature; hence the human form  
To me became an index of delight,  
Of grace and honour, power and worthiness.<sup>74</sup>

Obviously, the last image of a shepherd, which is so delightful for Wordsworth, comprises the best gestalt of all three. It is very simple, indeed, the quality indicative of a good gestalt: “If the structure has all the qualities of a good gestalt, it is also the simplest structure possible under the circumstances.”<sup>75</sup>

The image of the cross, a very simple, symmetrical, and unified geometric figure, can hardly fall apart into disconnected elements. The principle of closure is also at work in this comparison with the cross. This well cut-out shape, in all its apparent stasis and spatiality, also stands out against the background of firmament, since it is discernable so far away. The description of the vision is clear, concise, and straightforward: only three lines of simple syntax capture the vision itself: “Above all height! like an aerial cross / Stationed alone upon a spiry rock / Of the Chartreuse, for worship.”

The gestalt of the sun-lit shepherd, which precedes the cross-like form, is less perfect. Even though the principle of closure is evidently at work in that vision, because the figure of the shepherd “flashed” upon the poet’s eye is

perceived as bounded by the sun's radiance, the principle of simplicity is less evident. The form of that shepherd is less geometrically simplified. It could even be asymmetrical: nothing in the text gives the figure order. And the words and syntax describing that perception are more complicated than the three crisp lines sketching the spiry rock shepherd.

or as he stepped  
Beyond the boundary line of some hill-shadow,  
His form hath flashed upon me, glorified  
By the deep radiance of the setting sun.

The shepherd's form and the observing poet confront each other in one and the same line; the background seems to have two figures all at once. The separation of observer and observed form is not complete; hence, the shepherd's shape does not comprise a perfectly segregated, gestaltic, whole.

The shepherd stalking through the fog is the least perfect gestalt of this final series of human sketches. Five uneven lines of elaborate syntax take away from the image's simplicity:

Angling I went, or trod the trackless hills  
By mists bewildered, suddenly mine eyes  
Have glanced upon him distant a few steps,  
In size a giant, stalking through thick fog,  
His sheep like Greenland bears.

The figures of the shepherd and the boy are in such close proximity that there is a chance of grouping them together. The group can also include the sheep that are "like Greenland bears." Neither principle of simplicity or of closure is at work here. And since there is no monolithic unity in this gestalt, we are brought to notice a number of different elements that can be grouped in different ways. If the principle of proximity helps to group the young

Wordsworth together with the shepherd and his sheep, the principle of similarity, based on the gigantic size of the latter two, makes a smaller group, which eliminates the watching and not so huge poet. Yet another, smaller, group can be recognized as separate in this imperfect gestalt if the principle of common movement is applied. The shepherd is “stalking through thick fog.” How does he move? How do his sheep move? Are their movements the same? For the principle of common movement, that simultaneity and similarity are of consequence. Lujan gives a good example to demonstrate how this principle can work:

If we are shown ten dots on a screen, and then two of the dots begin to move, they will tend to be grouped together, regardless of the size, shape, color, or position of the dots or the speed or direction of their movement; the others, staying at rest, will function as a background to the moving figure they constitute. If two of the dots move in one direction and eight of the dots move in another direction, we will see them as two opposing forces; the screen itself will now become a background to their interaction.<sup>76</sup>

Since in Wordsworth’s text, literally, the giant shepherd is stalking, while the sheep are just mentioned without any similar way of describing their movement, it is possible to group them separately.

That the stalking giant’s gestalt is not perfect by comparison with the aerial-cross shepherd’s is quite clear. Is it a gestalt at all, then? Is there any kind of unity to this shepherd’s image which would make him gestaltic? I see the fog as providing a certain degree of closure which swaddles the group into a bundle. The poet does not really belong with the shepherd and his flock simply because he is described as treading through “mists,” not “fog;” a different word results in a different impression, which forms a different, though

similar and close, structure. The fog also serves as the background in which the shepherd is embedded, and from which he suddenly, but not completely, separates himself. His image *is* gestaltic.

Thus, throughout Book VIII human images gradually become more clearly shaped: from the pastoral embodiment of lasses and shepherds whose images are made explicit only as fragments – either by highlighting the color of the girl’s cheek, by telling what she carries, or by mentioning that the shepherd “breakfasts with his dog”<sup>77</sup> – to the more perfect gestalten of the shepherds whose whole human forms are contoured. This development takes to the next level the pattern that we already saw working itself out in the Alpine Crossing book: the visibility of human beings increases as the poem progresses from the objectivized and fanciful toward the imaginative and transcendent. The human sublimity – which is epitomized in perfect human gestalt, in man’s power of feeling himself “In those vast regions where his service lies, / A freeman,”<sup>78</sup> and in existential duration – is finally revealed by the poet to the reader, whom he kept preparing for experiencing this sublimity by repeating certain patterns of thought and description in the course of several books.

We have, so far, traced how the poet prepares the “well-disposed reader” of *The Prelude* to be affected by the sublimity of the human form by way of repeating his patterns of undermining the pastoral and increasing his vivid interest in the human form. Next, we can inquire how the human form, which is shaped by the infinite and points to it, can be translated into the

limited dimension of the material canvas, pigment, or printed word so that it is qualified to “impart sublime impressions.”

The problem of incarnating the transcendent, no matter what medium an artist chooses, is addressed by Berdyaev in general philosophic terms when he writes of Romanticism. It should be noted, though, that the Romanticism he describes here is akin to the continental understanding of the term of the first decades of the twentieth century, which is more likely to reflect — among English poets — upon the rebellious and atheistic sides of Byron and P. B. Shelley rather than upon Wordsworth, because of the popularity of their works in the Berdyaev circle. On the one hand, Berdyaev notes, the infinite, the transcendent, cannot find its full and adequate expression in the limited, objectivized. On the other hand, Berdyaev adds, an artist cannot but continually attempt to express the spiritual and infinite through whatever means he has.

Романтизмъ не вѣритъ въ возможность достиженія совершенства творческаго продукта въ объективированномъ міре, онъ устремленъ къ безконечности и хочетъ это выразить, онъ погруженъ въ міръ субъективности и болѣе дорожитъ самымъ экзистенціальнымъ, творческимъ подъемомъ, творческимъ вдохновеніемъ, чѣмъ объективнымъ продуктомъ. [...] Въ романтизмъ есть много дурного и безсильнаго, но вѣчная правда романтизма — въ этой раненности неправдой объективации, въ сознаніи несоотвѣтствія между творческимъ вдохновеніемъ и творческимъ продуктомъ. [...]

Творч. [*sic.*] актъ есть не только движеніе вверхъ, но и движеніе къ другому, къ міру, къ людямъ. Философъ не можетъ не выражать себя въ книгахъ, ученый въ опубликованныхъ изслѣдованіяхъ, поэтъ въ стихахъ, музыкантъ въ симфоніяхъ, художникъ въ картинахъ, соціальный реформаторъ въ соціальныхъ реформахъ. [...]

Борьба противъ рабства у объективированнаго міра, противъ охлажденія творческаго огня въ продуктахъ творчества

заключается совсѣмъ не въ томъ, что творецъ перестаетъ выражать себя и реализовать себя въ своихъ твореніяхъ, это было бы нелѣпое требованіе — борьба эта заключается въ максимальномъ прорывѣ замкнутаго круга объективации черезъ творческій актъ, въ максимальной экзистенціальности твореній творца, во вторженіи максимальной субъектности въ объектность міра. (107-08)

[Romanticism does not believe in the possibility of attaining to the perfection of the creative product in the objectivized world. It <Romanticism> is bent upon infinity and desires to express it. It is immersed in the world of subjectivity and values the existential and creative impulse itself, the creative inspiration, more than the objective product. . . . In Romanticism there is much that is bad and weak, but the eternal truth of romanticism lies in the blow it deals to the falsity and wrong of objectivization, in its awareness of the lack of correspondence between the creative inspiration and the creative product.

It is necessary to understand more clearly what the objectivization of creativeness in the values of culture means, and in what sense it is necessary to rebel against it. . . . The creative act is not only a movement upwards but also a movement towards an other, towards the world and towards men. The philosopher cannot but express himself in his books, the scholar in his published investigations, the poet in his verse, the musician in symphonies, the artist in pictures, the social reformer in social reforms. The creative act cannot be stifled within the creator and find no outlet for itself. But it is absolutely untrue to identify the realization of the creative act with objectivization. . . . The struggle against slavery to the objectivized world, against the quenching of the creative fire in the products of creativeness, by no means consists in the fact that the creator ceases to express himself and to realize himself in his creations. That would be an absurd requirement. The conflict consists in the maximum break-through by the creative act, out of the closed circle of objectivization, in the maximum existentiality of the creator's creations, in the irruption of the maximum of subjectivity into the objectivized world. The meaning of creativeness is to be found in the anticipation of the transfiguration of the world, not in the fixation of this world in objective perfection.]<sup>79</sup>

This discrepancy between the live thought and the limitations of the expressive medium is lacerating to Wordsworth even more than man's sufferings, of which he himself had his share. The music of humanity often



remains unrecorded, unrecognized, or recorded inadequately, and that is sad.

He laments in *The Prelude*:

I sometimes grieve for thee, O Man,  
Earth's paramount Creature! not so much for woes  
That thou endurest; heavy though that weight be,  
Cloud-like it mounts, or touched with light divine  
Doth melt away; but for those palms achieved,  
Through length of time, by patient exercise  
Of study and hard thought; there, there, it is  
That sadness finds its fuel. Hitherto,  
In progress through this work, my mind hath looked  
Upon the speaking face of earth and heaven  
As her prime teacher, intercourse with man  
Established by the sovereign Intellect,  
Who through that bodily image hath diffused,  
As might appear to the eye of fleeting time,  
A deathless spirit. Thou also, man! hast wrought,  
For commerce of thy nature with herself,  
Things that aspire to unconquerable life;  
And yet we feel — we cannot choose but feel —  
That they must perish. Tremblings of the heart  
It gives, to think that our immortal being  
No more shall need such garments; and yet man,  
As long as he shall be the child of earth,  
Might almost 'weep to have' what he may lose,  
Nor be himself, extinguished, but survive,  
Abject, depressed, forlorn, disconsolate.<sup>80</sup>

And since the poet cannot stop creating, no matter how imperfect and perishable his product is, Wordsworth cannot but exclaim:

Oh! why hath not the Mind  
Some element to stamp her image on  
In nature somewhat nearer to her own?  
Why, gifted with such powers to send abroad  
Her spirit, must it lodge in shrines so frail?<sup>81</sup>

Frail shrines for the mighty spirit of great poets that remain are their extant manuscripts and volumes, as Wordsworth calls them, "Poor earthly casket of

immortal verse, / Shakespeare, or Milton, labourers divine!”<sup>82</sup> The verse is sovereign, but the spirit of those bards was even more so.

Wordsworth never relies on fixed, direct, quotations to convey any quickening imaginative experience. So, the Alpine peasant’s speech is not quoted by the poet; Wordsworth describes only the overall meaning and eye-opening effect of the shocking news. Likewise, the threshold of the White Lion Inn at Bowness, which Wordsworth frequented during his Hawkshead years and which is associated with joy and creativity, does not retain its inscription or any attempt to spell it out in the poem. The inn’s sign-board also is uncited. Instead, the poet describes the golden letters he was able to make out and the feeling which still lives in his heart, and which cannot be calcified by any direct quotation of the inscription.

But — though the rhymes were gone that once inscribed  
The threshold, and large golden characters,  
Spread o’er the spangled sign-board, had dislodged  
The old Lion and usurped his place, in slight  
And mockery of the rustic painter’s hand —  
Yet, to this hour, the spot to me is dear  
With all its foolish pomp.<sup>83</sup>

In stark contrast to such fluid unquoted phrases, which are linked with the moments of spiritual infinity (be it delight, imagination, or revelation), there stand fixed direct quotations linked with rigor mortis. “Sleep no more!” (X, 87) quotes Wordsworth at the revolutionary Carrousel square, viewing the dead “upon the dying heaped” (X, 57). And in the very same despondent Book X, he remembers the funeral of his teacher, thirty-two-year-old William Taylor, quoting his parting resounding of Gray’s line, “My head will soon lie

low” (X, 539) in order to resort to direct speech yet once again in the same Chapel Island episode, “Robespierre is dead!” (X, 573). Such citations stiffen the described into utter objectivization. Shelley’s materialization and mockery in “My name is Ozymandias, king of kings: / Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!,” is quite similar to Wordsworth’s dismissal of direct quotations as emblems of mortality.

When the poet does not want to become deadened, he resists direct quotation with all his effort. We see this resistance in the gibbet episode, when the five- or six-year-old Wordsworth accidentally parts from his grown-up guide and friend in the hills of Penrith.<sup>84</sup>

I remember well,  
That once, while yet my inexperienced hand  
Could scarcely hold a bridle, with proud hopes  
I mounted, and we journeyed towards the hills:  
An ancient servant of my father’s house  
Was with me, my encourager and guide:  
We had not travelled long, ere some mischance  
Disjoined me from my comrade; and, through fear  
Dismounting, down the rough and stony moor  
I led my horse, and, stumbling on, at length  
Came to a bottom, where in former times  
A murderer had been hung in iron chains.  
The gibbet-mast had mouldered down, the bones  
And iron case were gone; but on the turf,  
Hard by, soon after that fell deed was wrought,  
Some unknown hand had carved the murderer’s name.  
The monumental letters were inscribed  
In times long past; but still, from year to year,  
By superstition of the neighbourhood,  
The grass is cleared away, and to that hour  
The characters were fresh and visible:  
A casual glance had shown them, and I fled.<sup>85</sup>

Having reached literarily the dead end of the road, the boy reads the abbreviation carved in the turf at the foot of the Penrith gibbet-mast (1850,

Book XII), at which, after a stony descent, sunk in spirits, he lands. Much as the empty “iron chains” of the gibbet cannot retain the breath of the long-expired and turned-to-dust criminal, the grassless contours of the carved letters below elude the sound of his name. The boy never utters it. In fear, he recalls, “I fled, / Faltering and faint, and ignorant of the road” (246-47). He flees objectivization. Unuttered, to him, the words avoid definition; they become more meaningful, stretching to include his own overwhelming loss, fear, and struggle to find the way. And no sensible, no articulate word of common vocabulary is capable of containing this complex feeling. The inadequacy here is not in the concept, as Jim S. Borck explains, but in the expressive medium.

[T]he Romantics’ failure is not so much a conceptual lacking—as some of our contemporary critics will have it—but is, perhaps, a failure of their expressive medium, a failure exhibited in their nostalgic longings and in their method of composition. It can be for this reason that the usual nature of their revisions for their longer poems involves a form of addition to the text; Keats’s *Hyperion* fragments, Byron’s *Don Juan*, Shelley’s *The Triumph of Life* all show a curious inability to conclude. And Wordsworth, in effect, adds an extra book to the 1850 *Prelude*, though this extra book is essentially created by his dividing Book Ten to make Books Ten and Eleven. In *The Prelude*, then, and in *The Excursion* and *The Recluse*, Wordsworth, removed from his “first childhood,” feels compelled to define and redefine. But his definitions as given in the language of his poetry are failures because his words cannot create the original inseparable whole he knew as a child. Instead, his words are somehow non-ideographic, non-representational. The source of his poetry, and its visionary articulation, is like the name graven at the foot of the gallows. It cannot be semantically presented; it can only be periodically cleansed.<sup>86</sup>

The cleansing of the inscription, outlining the word without limiting it to a certain reading, resembles watching the horizon, beyond which the vastness lies. Thus, the unuttered inscription becomes an aperture into the infinite and

transcendent. As James B. Twitchell points out, speaking about the sublime entrances to the caves, “We do not know what lies beyond the aperture; we know only what we can imagine.”<sup>87</sup> Twitchell sees the Romantic sublime as the distinct margin, beyond which the transcendent experience lies. And even though his study takes for its subject the landscape horizon and the cave entrances, rather than outlines of the carved words or of human sun-lit figures, his insight very much informs my investigation as to how the bounding line contributes to the visible sublime. Outlining the words, Wordsworth, indeed, shows that the sublime is “tethered to language”; however, the poet, straining at the transcendent, breaks this tether, as the Penrith gibbet inscription demonstrates.

Essentially, *sublimity* describes a level of consciousness Wordsworth achieved by momentarily understanding the unity of inner and outer. This perception took him up to the threshold of transcendence but did not provide release. The sublime consciousness is still tethered to language; the self is not lost, but momentarily merged. As James Scoggins has argued in *Imagination and Fancy*, the sublime is only “the grounds for visionary experience,” not the experience itself.<sup>88</sup>

The similar sublimation is brought about by the White Lion inn’s threshold inscription, if we are to apply the following to the episode:

The sublime, we must remember, only goes to the edge of release, to the limit of language, to the horizon; it is still very much bound to the here and now, to the senses. It is a state of awareness, a state of elevated consciousness that is momentarily stopped at the threshold of something supraconscious.<sup>89</sup>

Or, to turn to Wordsworth’s poetic expression of the same idea,

the sight  
Hath wrought on my imagination since the morn  
Of childhood, when a disappearing line,

One daily present to my eyes, that crossed  
The naked summit of a far-off hill  
Beyond the limits that my feet had trod,  
Was like an invitation into space  
Boundless, or guide into eternity.<sup>90</sup>

The Romantic sublime is often visual.<sup>91</sup> It is more easily recognized by the eye than by the ear, even though in Wordsworth there are sublime sounds of torrents or of the minstrel's music. This visual quality of the poetic sublime affords comparison with the artistic sublime, the focus, especially in regard to the human figure of William Blake.

Blake is a poet and an artist who was very much interested in the human form and its divinity. And, according to Anne Kostelanetz Mellor, he ran into paradoxes linked with the depiction of human figures: on the one hand, the human form makes visible the divine and spiritual; on the other hand, as the critic says, Blake thought that the bounding line is extremely limiting rather than freeing. In her introduction to the study in question, Mellor writes:

I hope to show that in 1795, Blake was simultaneously rejecting as a Urizenic tyranny the outline or "bound or outward circumference" which reason and the human body impose upon man's potential divinity and at the same time creating a visual art that relied almost exclusively upon outline and tectonic means. This contradiction, which calls into question the nature and value of form, and specifically of the human form, became for Blake a profound philosophical issue, the dilemma of personal salvation itself. How can the individual achieve the divinity of which Blake believed he was capable while bound within a finite, mortal body? Contrarily, how can the divine artistic imagination survive and manifest itself in the mortal world, if not in bounded, perceptible forms?<sup>92</sup>

Mellor formulates Blake's problem, saying that the human form in his illustrations is anatomically conditioned: "An artist as obsessed with the human form as Blake was is necessarily limited to an anatomically permissible

vocabulary of gestures (although Blake used every available stylistic device of contortion and elongation to expand this vocabulary to its utmost).”<sup>93</sup> However, the critic does not draw a line between the anatomically informed body and the spiritualised one, more perfectly gestaltic, in which the infinite gleams through; she evokes the words “body” and “form” as identical equivalents, as the following passage on Blake makes evident:<sup>94</sup>

In 1795, he depicted the material world and the mortal human body as the domain of Urizen, the tyrant reason. Blake’s poetic denunciation of both the physical human body and of the bounding line or enclosed form as the work of an oppressive reason thus conflicted directly with his artistic reliance upon strong outlines and the human figure. Despite his philosophical questionings, Blake remained artistically committed to the conventions of romantic classicism, as the Tate Gallery color prints and the famous designs of the *Ancient of Days* and *Albion Rose* show. The conflict between his philosophical theory and artistic practice, between his philosophical rejection of the human body and his aesthetic glorification of the human figure, posed a profound problem for Blake.<sup>95</sup>

Blake is interested in human anatomy, there is no argument about that, especially when one compares his illustrations with Wordsworth’s poetic sketches of human figures, which in the severe climate of the Lake District (and the poet frequently draws the reader’s attention to this severity) could not but be thoroughly clothed. And even though Blake’s paintings, if compared with Wordsworth’s verbal sketch of the cross-like shepherd, is equally well outlined and gestaltic, his interest in human anatomy brings out more distracting details in the human image, which, on the one hand, take

away from the simplicity and unity of the gestalt, and on the other hand, draw the viewer's attention to the physiological functions of the corporeal.

Among other artists of the Romantic period, who were interested in the human figures, are Joseph Wright (1734-1797) and William Hogarth (1697-1764), who practiced genre painting, Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723-1792), who, unlike Blake, believed in fidelity to external reality and painted conversation pieces, Benjamin Robert Haydon (1786-1846), who in depicting the heroes of the past produced gigantic canvases concentrating on the largeness of human figures in them rather than on their bounding lines.<sup>96</sup> Such different artists as portraitists Sir Thomas Lawrence and James Granger, a physiognomist Johann Kaspar Lavater, caricaturists James Gillray, Thomas Rowlandson, George Cruikshank, and many others, also contributed to the blossoming art of painting in which human figures loomed large. Wordsworth, who not only saw many of those paintings,<sup>97</sup> but also sat for his numerous portraits and was depicted by Haydon among the crowd in the panoramic *Christ's Entry into Jerusalem*, nonetheless, in modern criticism is usually placed by the side of such landscape artists as Turner and Constable. William Turner, who in sharp contrast to Blake, valued color and light more than precision of form, even in such paintings as his *The Angel, Standing in the Sun* (1846. Oil on canvas. Tate Gallery, London, UK), blurs the geometry of the figure, letting the bright, dynamic, colorful clouds absorb parts of it. Like Wordsworth's shepherd, striding through the fog, Turner's Angel does not completely stand out of his veiling background. Sketching the cross-like shepherd, however,



Wordsworth's technique differs markedly from Turner's hazy human figures, reaching over into Blake's regions peopled with the gestaltic Milton and the Spirit of Plato (*Il Penseroso*, Pierpont Morgan Library).

John Constable, who, also, occasionally was not loth to finish his landscapes with a human-shaped stroke, to enforce what he called "human association" in his paintings, was too objective in his presentation, if compared with Wordsworth. As Marilyn Gaull aptly sums up, Constable's

paintings, however precise and original a response to the external world, exhibit little of the reflectiveness and spirituality of Wordsworth. If Wordsworth's clouds, as he said in the Intimations Ode, "took a sober colouring from an eye / That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality," Constable's reflect the weather, the wind, his reading in contemporary meteorology, his training as a miller, and his talent as a naturalist.<sup>98</sup>

And yet, the landscape painters's treatment of the sublime, their attention to the horizon or cave apertures, provides a clue to Wordsworth's use of analogous visual techniques. James Twitchell, besides characterizing the romantic sublime as the sense of a distinct margin or threshold to be crossed, pays particular attention to how the painters of the romantic period changed perspective and vantage points in order to present that margin in a marked way. He says:

Although this may be overstating the case, the shift in sensibilities that characterizes modernism began with the romantic painter's movement away from a middle ground prospect, complete with requisite coulisse, deflected vistas, sky dado, secondary vantage points, and silhouettes, to the "landscape sublime," with its intense concentration on the magnetic area of the horizon.<sup>99</sup>

One of such shifts in perspective is exemplified by a set of cavern paintings, in which the artists depict their subject from inside:

For the first time we start seeing *through* the cave in paintings as in, say, Louthembourg's *The Inside of the Cavern at Castleton*, 1778, as well as John Robert Cozens's *Alpine Ravine*, 1776, or Robert Freebairn's *Neptune's Grotto*, 1807. This perspective of seeing from inside out soon developed into the caves of John Martin, Francis Danby, and J. M. W. Turner where it took on allegorical and symbolic meanings.

What happened is that the enclosed space of the cave, complete with the startling shift in light at the aperture, became an image of sublimity.<sup>100</sup>

Joseph Wright of Derby was especially interested in cave painting, and it is his *A Cavern: Evening*, 1774. (Smith College Museum of Art, Northampton, Massachusetts) that Twitchell places next to Wordsworth's *Yew Trees* to illustrate what constitutes a fit object of the sublime when speaking of landscapes. The blinding light flashing on the beholder from beyond the margin is one of the noteworthy techniques of the visible sublime. Thus,

He [Wright] always painted the cave from the inside looking out, and he always made the light outside too bright to see through. This creates an aura effect, making us blink as if we, accustomed to the cave darkness, now have to pause, momentarily stunned by the iridescence and whiteness, before we can proceed.<sup>101</sup>

And further on:

[T]he cave image depends on our ability to perceive ourselves within that tight space. . . . The fascination with enclosed space and the sense of looking out through a hole into blinding light contain the same lighting as the blast furnace pictures now combined with the high gothic theme of a picture like *The Old Man and Death*: we are stopped, stymied, and strangely frightened.<sup>102</sup>

What is infinite, the vastness of the outside natural world visible through the cave opening, is made here visually enclosed by the well-defined aperture. Infinity can be contoured and haloed — as the painters's experiments show — without forcing the whole of it into a limited space. By extension, the infinity

of the human spirit also can be contoured without limiting it to the frame of the material body. If we understand the human form as an aperture to the infinite, the horizon of the transcendent, we can recognize that the human form is not oppressively limiting. On the contrary, the human form is but a clearly outlined entrance to the transcendent. And conversely, a blurred human shape with a faded outline does not work as an aperture, because it camouflages the opening to something which is beyond the here and now. An anatomically detailed body does not work as an aperture to the transcendent, either: the body's corporeal here and now blocks the light of the infinite.

The groundwork for depicting gestaltically the spiritual in human beings was established already in Byzantium. The same culture that produced Longinus put in much thought and practice into figuring out how to translate the human elevated, spiritual, and infinite into a painted icon. As early as in years 691-92, the Trullan Council (also known as the Sixth Ecumenical Council, the Third of Constantinople) laid down the dogmatic basis for icon painting by ordaining to represent Christ not as a Lamb, but as a human being, and by explaining in what the symbolism of the icon consists.

This 82nd rule of the Trullan Council says: "Certain holy icons have the image of a lamb, at which is pointing the finger of the Forerunner. This lamb is taken as the image of grace, representing the true Lamb, Christ our God, Whom the law foreshowed. Thus accepting with love the ancient images and shadows as prefigurations and symbols of truth transmitted to the Church, we prefer grace and truth, receiving it as the fulfillment of the law. Thus, in order to make plain this fulfillment for all eyes to see, if only by means of pictures, we ordain that from henceforth icons should represent, instead of the lamb of old, the human image of the Lamb, Who has taken upon Himself the sins of the world, Christ our God, so that through this we may perceive the height of the abasement of God the Word and be led to remember His life in

the flesh, His Passion and death for our salvation and the ensuing redemption of the world.”<sup>103</sup>

Since the divine became representable in the human image, there was a need to address the methods of representation, and so the Trullan Council did.

Leonid Ouspensky comments:

The abasement of God the Word is shown in such a manner that in looking at it we see and contemplate His divine glory in His human image; and we come thus to know that His death means Salvation and Redemption of the world. The latter part of the 82nd rule indicates wherein the symbolism of the icon consists. The symbol is not in the iconography, not in what is represented, but in the method of representing, in how it is represented. In other words, the teaching of the Church is transmitted not only by the theme, but also by the mode of expression. . . . Essentially this rule lays down the foundation of the iconographic Canon, that is, a certain criterion for judging whether an image is liturgical, just as in the domain of words and music the Canon determines whether a text or a hymn is liturgical. It establishes the principle of correspondence of the icon with the Holy Scriptures and defines in what this correspondence consists: the historical reality and the kind of symbolism which truly reflects the coming Kingdom of God.<sup>104</sup>

The ordinance of the Seventh Ecumenical Council, 787, further explained and established the veneration of icons along with other manifestations of the Church that “bear the seal of their transcendental nature.”<sup>105</sup> These directions and principles were put to use by different schools of icon painters. Wordsworth, who travelled to Europe several times and visited museums, churches, monasteries, and private galleries, knew many paintings created in the Early Christian tradition, including those painted by Greek and Italian masters. The poet, however, usually did not record his having seen various famous paintings and he never commented on them in writing, except in a few poems. That is why it is almost impossible to come up with a

list of paintings he knew and admired. It is Mary's and Dorothy's journals and letters that provide this kind of information. Thus, in 1820 the poet tours the Continent once again in order to show his wife and sister some places and scenes he enjoyed in his youth during the memorable trip with Robert Jones. Martha Shackford, in her book, *Wordsworth's Interest in Painters and Pictures*, mentions many churches and cathedrals the Wordsworths used to visit, both in Britain and on the Continent, where they enjoyed masterpieces of great artists. Wordsworth's interest in Christian art, and in visual art in general, accounts, in some measure, for his masterful sketching of the spiritual portraits of the shepherds. Even though these portraits are not liturgical, in that they are not really icons which can be venerated in the Church, his cross-like shepherd is in a position to be seen as stationed on the spiry rock "for worship." The poet was able to appropriate some of the techniques of the iconographic tradition, by verbally sketching the clear outline of the human figure, by using the inverted perspective, multiplicity of viewing positions, a relative immobility of the human shape, etc.<sup>106</sup> By turning to the old tradition of symbolic pictorialism, the poet solved, to a certain degree, the problem of inadequacy of his expressive medium. And Wordsworth's sadness for Man gets lifted and his exclamation of Book V,

Oh! why hath not the Mind  
Some element to stamp her image on  
In nature somewhat nearer to her own?  
Why, gifted with such powers to send abroad  
Her spirit, must it lodge in shrines so frail?<sup>107</sup>,

gives way to delight when he manages to sketch, in Book VIII,

A solitary object and sublime,  
Above all height! like an aerial cross  
Stationed alone upon a spiry rock  
Of the Chartreuse, for worship.<sup>108</sup>

The recognition of the sublime human form is liberating, because it points to the transcendent in human nature.

The thesis Wordsworth announced in Book VIII (69-80) and reiterated several times throughout the Book,

My present theme  
Is to retrace the way that led me on  
Through Nature to the love of human-kind,<sup>109</sup>

is sustained.<sup>110</sup> The poet demonstrated how Nature led him to the love of humankind by ennobling the human form before his eyes. First, Nature ennobled the human beings who live in the severe regions of the Lake District by strengthening their will and purifying their character. Then, Nature literally showed the well-outlined sublime human shape to the poet by flashing it on his eye and by distancing it. Only then did the poet internalize this ability to perceive, independent of the frames provided by the weather; he learns to recognize the human form when no fog or sunshine assist him. The poet, also following in Nature's steps, prepares the readers to recognize the sublimity he sees, verbally educating the human gestalten from the background of fog and sunshine. Finally, it is the natural sublime, with its three components — individual form, power, and duration — that, in Book VIII, contributes to understanding the human sublime.

## End Notes

- 1 Wordsworth, "The Sublime and the Beautiful," p. 357 in *Prose Works*.
- 2 *The Prelude*, Book VIII, 275-81.
- 3 "The Sublime and the Beautiful," p. 357 in *Prose Works*.
- 4 *Ibid.*, p. 359.
- 5 See also Wordsworth's 1800 note to "The Thorn" pp. 344-45 of Wu, *Romanticism: An Anthology*.
- 6 Wordsworth, "The Sublime and the Beautiful," pp. 358 / 360.
- 7 Cited in Stephen Prickett, *Romanticism and Religion: The Tradition of Coleridge and Wordsworth in the Victorian Church*, p. 271.
- 8 Lujan, p. 80.
- 9 Jeffrey Baker, p. 167.
- 10 *The Prelude*, Book VII, 93-98.
- 11 Book VII, 232-33.
- 12 Lindenberger, pp. 243-45.
- 13 *Ibid.*, 251-52.
- 14 Alpers, p. 18.
- 15 "'The Feeding Source': Imagination and the Transcendent in *The Prelude*," 2000, p. 29.
- 16 Book VIII, 279-94.
- 17 See Eve Walsh Stoddard's article, "Flashes of the Invisible World: Reading *The Prelude* in the Context of the Kantian Sublime," in which the critic explains imagination as linked with sublimity.
- 18 Andrew V. Ettin, *Literature and the Pastoral*, p. 127.
- 19 Book VIII, 37-43; italics Wordsworth's.
- 20 Ettin, p. 139.

- 21 Book VIII, 74.
- 22 Ibid., 98-111.
- 23 Ibid., 200.
- 24 Ibid., 262-76.
- 25 David B. Pirie, *William Wordsworth: The Poetry of Grandeur and of Tenderness*, p. 2.
- 26 Jonathan Wordsworth, *The Borders of Vision*, pp. 282 and 285.
- 27 Book VIII, 292-93.
- 28 Ibid., 301-05.
- 29 *Biographia Literaria*, XXII, pp. 598-99; italics Coleridge's.
- 30 Herbert Reed explains Coleridge's and Wordsworth's use of the term "essential." In *Biographia Literaria*,  
Coleridge goes on to examine Wordsworth's paradoxical statement that there is no 'essential difference' between the language of prose and the language of poetry. Characteristically, Coleridge pauses on the word 'essential', and has a paragraph, lending further colour to my suggestion that Coleridge may be regarded as among the first existentialist philosophers, in which he distinguishes between *essence* as 'in its primary significance . . . the principle of *individuation*, the inmost principle of the possibility of any thing, as that particular thing', and *existence* as 'the superinduction of *reality*'. He then goes on to point out that Wordsworth, in his use of the word *essence*, meant to imply no more than 'the point or ground of contradiction between two modifications of the same substance or subject'. 'Thus we should be allowed to say, that the style of architecture of Westminster Abbey is *essentially* different from that of St Paul's, even though both had been built of blocks cut into the same form, and from the same quarry'. Only in this sense, says Coleridge, can Wordsworth deny what is usually affirmed, that the formal construction of poetry is *essentially* different from that of prose. (*The True Voice of Feeling*, p. 42)
- 31 Hazard Adams, ed., *Critical Theory Since Plato*, p. 438.
- 32 *Slavery and Freedom*, p. 185.
- 33 Owen, W. J. B., "Two Wordsworthian Ambivalences," p. 3.



34 Ibid., pp. 4-5.

35 *The Prelude*, Book VIII, 165.

36 For the discussion of the Grand Chartreuse, see Duncan Wu, "The Grande Chartreuse and the Development of Wordsworth's *Recluse*;" and Joseph F. Kishel, "Wordsworth and the Grande Chartreuse."

37 See Richard C. Sha, "Resisting Monumentality: Wordsworth, Byron, and the Poetic Sketch," p. 172.

38 See J. Baker on the Chapel Island passage in his *Time and Mind in Wordsworth's Poetry*, pp. 159-65.

39 *The Prelude*, Book VI, 480-88.

40 *Time and Mind in Wordsworth's Poetry*, pp. 16-17.

41 *Slavery and Freedom*, p. 257-58.

42 Book VIII, 215-22.

43 "Two Wordsworthian Ambivalences," p. 8.

44 Book VIII, 223-234.

45 Ibid., 242-44.

46 Helen Hanna Black in her dissertation, "Some Versions of Early Romantic Pastoral, U. of Colorado, 1990, also dwells on the connections between the pastoral mode and history. She asserts that "aggression in Wordsworth's pastoral is the trace of history," which is "aggressively controlled."

47 Andrew V. Ettin, *Literature and the Pastoral*, pp. 142-43.

48 Cleanth Brooks, "Keats's Sylvan Historian: History Without Footnotes," p. 157.

49 For the discussion of temporal vs. spatial, see R. Wendorf, *Articulate Images: The Sister Arts from Hogarth to Tennyson*.

50 *Slavery and Freedom*, p. 259.

51 *Slavery and Freedom*, p. 260.

52 *Time and Mind in Wordsworth's Poetry*, pp. 144-45.

- 53 Richard Sha, p. 173.
- 54 Richard Sha, pp. 175-76.
- 55 Ibid., p. 176.
- 56 Book VIII, 256-61.
- 57 Wordsworth, *Prose Works*, pp. 351-52.
- 58 Book VIII, 608-11.
- 59 Cited in Harold Bloom, *The Visionary Company: A Reading of English Romantic Poetry*, p. 160.
- 60 *Time and Mind in Wordsworth's Poetry*, p. 173.
- 61 Ibid., p.173.
- 62 Ibid., pp. 170-71.
- 63 Wordsworth's *Prose Works*, p. 353.
- 64 Lujan, pp. 11-13.
- 65 *Slavery and Freedom*, pp. 31-32; italics mine.
- 66 Book VIII, 37-43; italics Wordsworth's.
- 67 Lujan, pp. 11-13.
- 68 Ibid., p. 68.
- 69 Ibid. pp. 76-77.
- 70 Ibid., p. 106.
- 71 Ibid., p. 213.
- 72 Ibid., pp. 214-15.
- 73 Ibid., p. 240.
- 74 *The Prelude*, Book VIII, 256-281.
- 75 Lujan, p. 216.

- 76 Lujan, p. 241.
- 77 Book VIII, 238.
- 78 Ibid., 252-53.
- 79 *Slavery and Freedom*, pp. 127-28.
- 80 Book V, 4-28.
- 81 Book V, 45-49.
- 82 Book V, 164-65.
- 83 Book II, 149-55.
- 84 Mark L. Reed in *Wordsworth: The Chronology of the Early Years, 1770-1799*, suggests that the event occurred in May 1775-April 1776.
- 85 Book XII, 225-46.
- 86 Jim S. Borck, "Wordsworth's *The Prelude* and the Failure of Language," p. 616.
- 87 *Romantic Horizons: Aspects of the Sublime in English Poetry and Painting, 1770-1850*, p. 82.
- 88 Ibid., p. 61.
- 89 Ibid., p. 66.
- 90 Book XIII, 143-50.
- 91 See James B. Twitchell, *Romantic Horizons: Aspects of the Sublime in English Poetry and Painting, 1770-1850*, ft. on p. 16.
- 92 *Blake's Human Form Divine.*, p. xv.
- 93 Ibid., p. xxii.
- 94 See also Ibid., pp. 28, 31, 36-37, 51, 54, 223, 226, 242.
- 95 Ibid., p. xvii.
- 96 Marilyn Gaull, pp. 322-50.

- 97 See M. H. Shackford, *Wordsworth's Interest in Painters and Pictures*.
- 98 Gaull, p. 342.
- 99 James B. Twitchell, *Romantic Horizons: Aspects of the Sublime in English Poetry and Painting, 1770-1850.*, p. 36.
- 100 Ibid., pp. 76-77; italics Twitchell's.
- 101 Ibid., p. 80.
- 102 Ibid., pp. 80-81.
- 103 Leonid Uspenskii [Ouspensky], "The Meaning and Language of Icons," pp. 30-31.
- 104 Ibid., pp. 31-32.
- 105 Ibid., p. 32.
- 106 See Boris Uspensky's structural and historical analysis of different Christian icons in *The Semiotics of the Russian Icon*, pp. 31-47. Also helpful are Moshe Barasch, *Icon: Studies in the History of an Idea*; Jean H. Hagstrum, *The Sister Arts: The Tradition of Literary Pictorialism and English Poetry from Dryden to Gray*; John Hollander, "The Gazer's Spirit: Romantic and Later Poetry on Painting and Sculpture;" W. J. T. Mitchell, *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology*.
- 107 Book V, 45-49.
- 108 Book VIII, 272-75.
- 109 Book VIII, 587-89.
- 110 See S. Gill, *Wordsworth: The Prelude*, for the opposite view:  
The difficulty with Book VIII, however, is not that this thesis is inherently implausible (though many will think that it is) but that there is a disjunction between what Wordsworth asserts as thesis and what he offers as supporting evidence. . . . None of the illustrative material, however, supports this [thesis] as a general and inclusive proposition. Wordsworth certainly declares that he loved shepherds from his earliest days, but in suggesting why he found them heroic beings, the verse repeatedly discloses the activity of Wordsworth's literary imagination, so much so that one might infer that the truer thesis would be, 'Love of Books leading to Love of Humankind'. (pp. 74-75)

#### CHAPTER 4: “UNCOUTH SHAPES” AND THEIR PROGRESS FROM TRANSGRESSION TO TRANSCENDENCE

So far I have used the terms “the sublime” and “the transcendent” in conjunction, highlighting the similarity of those Wordsworthian concepts in that they both signal the unity of vision, which spans the abyss between inner and outer, subject and object; both are linked with the elevation of the mind, and both approximate infinity. Sublimation, as transcending, is usually a struggle to get free, to get to the threshold.<sup>1</sup> Now, I would like to be more specific about those terms’ difference from Wordsworth’s concept of freedom.

In Berdyaev, “freedom” (“свобода”) is a catch-all word for liberty, liberation, independence, self-determination, and everything that is opposed to tyranny or any kind of pressure or determinism from without. Achieving freedom, in Berdyaev’s existential personalism, is the same as achieving transcendence. On the one hand, the person has to overcome the limitations of the unfeeling, purely intellectual involvement with the otherness of the observed, that is the objectivized perception. On the other hand, the subjective and escapist uninvolvedness with the other, also limits rather than liberates.

Замъчательно, что рабство челоѡка одинаково можетъ быть результатомъ того, что челоѡкъ исключительно поглощенъ своимъ «я» и сосредоточенъ на своихъ состояніяхъ, не замъчая міра и людей, и тѣмъ, что челоѡкъ выброшенъ исключительно во внѣ, въ объективность міра и теряетъ сознание своего «я». И то и другое есть результатъ разрыва между субъективнымъ и объективнымъ. «Объективное» или цѣликомъ поглощаетъ и парабощаетъ челоѡческую субъективность или вызываетъ отталкивание и отвращение, изолируя и замыкая въ себѣ челоѡческую субъективность. Но такое отчуждение, экстеріоризация объекта въ отношеніи къ субъекту и есть то,

что я называю объективацией. Поглощенный исключительно своимъ «я» субъект есть рабъ, какъ рабъ субъектъ цѣликомъ выброшенный въ объектъ. И въ томъ и въ другомъ случаѣ личность разлагается или она еще не формировалась. (стр. 116)

[It is worthy of note that the slavery of a man may be the result alike of his being exclusively engulfed by his own ego and concentrated upon his own condition without taking note of the world and other people; and of his being ejected exclusively into the external, into the objectivity of the world and losing the consciousness of his own ego. Both the one and the other are the result of a breach between the subjective and the objective. The 'objective' either entirely engulfs and enslaves human subjectivity or it arouses repulsion and disgust and so isolates human subjectivity and shuts it up in itself. But such estrangement and exteriorization of the object in relation to the subject is again what I call objectivization. Engulfed entirely by his own ego the subject is a slave, just as a subject which is wholly ejected into an object is a slave. Both in the one case and in the other personality is disintegrated or else it has not yet taken shape.]<sup>2</sup>

Transcendence is the opposite of both objectivization and subjectivization: it unites feeling with knowledge and releases the observing person from the shackles of “otherness.” Transcendence is freedom. And conversely, tyranny, enslavement, bondage (“рабство” translated as “slavery” by R. French) are equivalents of objectivization and illusory self-absorption, the opposites of transcendence.<sup>3</sup> In this chapter, I will trace how the notion of freedom approaches that of transcendence in *The Prelude*.

Such a progression from the illusory and unfeeling to the transcendent works itself out in Wordsworth’s *The Prelude*. This progression is nothing else but a description of how imagination reveals itself. “Wordsworth combines feeling and thought to produce a higher kind of thinking, what he calls the ‘imagination’ for lack of a better word,” affirms Allan Chavkin.<sup>4</sup> “It is

imagination,” writes Newton Stallknecht, “that reconciles the trio, emotion, intelligence, and volition, and frees the soul from conflict.”<sup>5</sup> When the soul is thus freed, as Stallknecht shows in his chapter “‘The One Life Within Us and Abroad,’” the most intense moment of consciousness is achieved and transcendence is experienced. And John T. Ogden similarly maintains that the imaginative act, the structure of which is embodied in all *The Prelude*’s spots of time, “though in various ways and degrees of completeness and complexity,”

proceeds through three different stages — from expectation through an interruption that is called in one instance relaxation, in another “abandonment of hope,” to an interpenetration of mind and object. A fourth stage, manifested in the very act of explanation, displays the poet’s recognition of what has happened and satisfaction in that occurrence.<sup>6</sup>

Ogden, using this structure, also probes into the relationship between the observer and the observed. It is noteworthy how Ogden’s outlining of Wordsworth’s paradigm is similar to Berdyaev’s theory, in which he opposes the illusory unity with the world to the real, transcendent one.

The structure of imaginative experience may also be described with regard to the fluxional relationship between the observing poet and the scene he observes. The relationship begins in engagement, falls into separation, then reveals a synthesis, and finally resolves into a mutual interdependence. The first and third stages are similar in that both of them involve the poet with the scene, but the difference between the two is striking. In the first stage the poet voluntarily engages himself with the scene; in the third stage he is unintentionally brought into a synthesis with it. At first he is distinct from the scene, but in the later stage he seems to melt or blend into it, as it melts or blends into him. At first the scene presents him with the known and the familiar; or, if it is strange, he still can perceive it in terms that are familiar to him. In the later stage the scene presents him with the unexpected and the unknown; even though he may have seen it many times before, he

how [sic.] sees it in a new way and with a new recognition. That new way is through imagination.<sup>7</sup>

In the final and well-developed the Ascent of Snowdon spot of time in *The Prelude*, Wordsworth has one of his most imaginary and transcendent experiences when he “[beholds] the emblem of a mind that feeds upon infinity,”

a mind sustained  
By recognition of transcendent power,  
In sense conducting to ideal form,  
In soul of more than mortal privilege.<sup>8</sup>

The poet calls this vision, this “communion raised / From earth to heaven” (117-18), a “freedom in himself,” a “genuine liberty” (131-32), thereby explicitly equating freedom and transcendence.

Not all spots of time elaborate transcendental experience: some of them act out the earlier stages of the imaginative process.<sup>9</sup> The word “sublime,” however, occasionally does appear even in the passages, in which transcendence is not completely achieved. Thus, in the Discharged Soldier episode of Book IV (369-468), on the night road, the poet stumbles into a shadowed “uncouth shape” (386), which turns out to be an old military man on his way back from the West Indies. In this encounter with the stranger Wordsworth does not describe himself as holding a deep emotional communion with the man: the poet, as some critics note, treats the veteran dubiously: both with kindness and condescension;<sup>10</sup> in other words, the poet does not achieve the perfect unity of vision, which is transcendence. Still, his



mention of the word “sublime” in connection with the soldier, however downplayed this use is, is noteworthy:

solemn and sublime  
He might have *seemed*, *but* that in all he said  
There was a strange half-absence, as of one  
Knowing too well the importance of his theme,  
But feeling it no longer.<sup>11</sup>

The old veteran “seemed” to be sublime, but was not completely so in the eyes of the young Wordsworth. He does not experience transcendence here because, according to Book IV, the tired soldier resists “feeling,” as the poet, curious to know about the battles, discovers, to his disappointment. The “bond of brotherhood” does not form between the two, and the silence that sets in is uneasy: it is not a communion but estrangement. The reader learns about that estrangement from the description of the landscape: in a very romantic way, nature seems to reflect the emotions of the humans within it; the wood seems to take on the gloominess and unnatural stillness of the fellow-travellers.

Our discourse  
Soon ended, and together on we passed  
In silence through a wood gloomy and still.<sup>12</sup>

Only when the poet commends the old man to a cottage-dweller, thereby finding for the former a place to rest at night and thereby proving his concern for the tired traveller, the soldier, for a fleeting moment, slightly revives and reveals a trace of emotion:

The cottage door was speedily unbarred,  
And now the soldier touched his hat once more  
With his lean hand, and in a faltering voice,  
Whose tone bespoke reviving interest  
Till then unfelt, he thanked me; I returned

The farewell blessing of the patient man,  
And so we parted. Back I cast a look,  
And lingered near the door a little space,  
Then sought with quiet heart my distant home.<sup>13</sup>

The poet's short date with that never-to-be-discovered human microcosm has ended. Transcendent union with the world does not happen this time. The threshold and the re-barred door to the aperture separates the poet from the veteran's life story and potential imaginary experience. The uncouth shape of this human being has never become "couth" or known. Interestingly, in the poem, this shape never becomes perfectly gestaltic, never separates itself from the background. The soldier always contrives to stay half-absorbed: first by the "shade of a thick hawthorn" (388-89), then by the ghastliness of the moonlight and the supporting mile-stone (395-96), then by "a strange half-absence," and finally, by the sheltering cottage.

The question is then, why when the sublime seems to appear in Wordsworth's descriptions, the transcendent does not always figure? James B. Twitchell, who studied the *Aspects of the Sublime in English Poetry and Painting, 1770-1850*, reserves for sublimity a marginal role. The sublime, from his informed perspective, is but a threshold of transcendence and, by extension, a threshold of "genuine liberty" or, as he says below, of "release" (see Chapter Three of this dissertation). The sublime can serve as a threshold to transcendent experience, as it happens in the cross-like shepherd vision: the poet's viewing of the spiritualized perfect human gestalt takes him into an existential moment. However, the threshold is not always passed: occasionally the sublimity of the human form is just hinted at. So, in the Discharged Soldier

episode of Book IV, the poet never mentions transcending into the supraconscious. He stops and lingers right on the threshold, both literally and figuratively speaking, without crossing over. He casts a backward look, one of his favorite moves in *The Prelude* for reflecting on the past, and again espies the tired man hidden in shadows by the curb of the muddy country-road. In the poem's present, this man is sheltered. Simply by comparing those two distinct moments of linear time, the boy finds satisfaction and peace, and he can, with a quiet heart, continue on his way home. It feels elevating to have been a good samaritan, but the moment is not transcendental yet: the blurred threshold separates the poet himself from the soldier and all his stories that could have ignited the poet's imagination and could have lead him to the supraconscious and mystical. Thus, the "uncouth shape," that is an imperfect gestalt, is a poor threshold to transcendence: it does not give access there; therefore, the "genuine liberty" is not achieved.

The notion of sublime changes in the course of the poem. In the opening books of 1805 (as well as of 1850), the sublime is very much Burkean, with its coupling of fear and love. However, as Eve Stoddard shows in her article "Flashes of the Invisible World,"

the poet both subsumes and outgrows Burke's sensationist model of the sublime, through close reflection on his own experiences of sublimity. This view is supported by Wordsworth's fragmentary prose treatise "The Sublime and the Beautiful." In "The Sublime and the Beautiful," Wordsworth distinguishes between a cultured and a primitive (or childlike) reaction to the sublime: "The relative proportions in which we are affected by the qualities of these objects are different at different periods of our lives." The "personal fear & surprise or wonder" which tend to affect the child are closer to Burke's sublime than the "comprehensive awe" or "religious admiration" that take their place (PrW 353).

This treatise, written approximately seven years after the 1805 *Prelude*, suggests that the poet had an earlier, naive view of sublimity, which was later superseded by a view closer to the Kantian.<sup>14</sup>

Obviously, the Burkean sublime is a threshold of a different order than the Kantian one. The kind of release, or “liberty,” linked with that threshold is also different. If the “genuine liberty” of the final book spells transcendence, the licentious transgression in the first spots of time results in another kind of release, which is a freedom bordering on wilfulness which is accompanied by an acute sense of fear. Thus, if we follow this logic, we see that the term “liberty” also evolves during the course of the poem.

John Beer, in “Nature and Liberty: the Linking of Unstable Concepts,” draws a crisp line between the romantic concepts of independence / liberty / freedom — especially after the 1790s — and details the evolution of Wordsworth’s use of the term “liberty” up to his “genuine” and transcendent understanding. His careful distinctions merit quoting at length.<sup>15</sup>

In English there had always been three words to describe the opposite of bondage. The first was “independence,” which in many ways remained the most favourable word since it stressed the right of the individual, or the country, to stand up for itself, to have its own view of things and to organize its own business without being dependent on another. It was the word much used in England at the time of the Civil War. “Liberty,” on the other hand, originally neutral, had acquired a strong political overtone as a result of the American and French Revolutions: those who used it might be suspected of having wide political aims and of wishing to overthrow the constitution of the state. In between was the word “freedom,” which could be seen as pointing either way, but which also gained something from its larger use to suggest ease of movement of one kind or another. In some ways the three words were interchangeable, but at times one or more was used with rhetorical overtones corresponding to the usages just mentioned. And when it came to the relationship with nature, different kinds

of imagery might be thought to fit each: independence might suggest a solitary, freestanding object, such as a tree or a mountain; while freedom and liberty might suggest birds soaring aloft, animals running wild, or unconstrained movements of the human body. These were by no means fixed connections, of course. One of the most striking images from previous literature, which stayed to haunt the English Romantics, was Milton's line in "L'Allegro," "The mountain-nymph, sweet Liberty." Here the symbolism of the mountain was transferred from the status of a firm object to the function of offering protection for those who wished to live in freedom.<sup>16</sup>

"But if the ideal of personal independence remained a constant for Wordsworth," John Beer continues, "'liberty' was another matter."<sup>17</sup> The poet's early fascination with the almost physical understanding of the term, when the liberated person almost literally casts off the shackles of slavery, is reflected in Wordsworth's unpublished letter to the Bishop of Llandaff, with the evocative comparison of the freed people with "the animal just released from its stall." The young poet, who wrote that letter, genuinely believed that the released animal would soon return to itself and would stop its violent kicks. The disappointment following upon the bloody aftermath of the French revolution brought about a change in the poet's formulation of the term. In his writings of 1802, the poet starts channeling the free powers of the raving nature — be it waves or winds — bringing into play "moral courage" and "images of purity and clarity" such as the single star or "the brook in the open sunshine."<sup>18</sup> By 1806-1807, Wordsworth's understanding of liberty undergoes further changes: in many ways it starts to approximate personal independence of an elevated order.

The point which Wordsworth was dwelling on more and more, in other words, was that liberty as an institutionalized social ideal

was a will-o'-the-wisp: it was as illusory to imagine that one could ever establish such a total state of liberty as it was to imagine that there was any necessary link between the power of liberty and the powers of nature. Liberty was primarily to be thought of in terms of the human mind, which needed to feed on certain elements in nature, but which was most likely to be established by cultivating a braced independence of spirit. The free human being has learned to live alone; but one learns to live alone, in Wordsworth's view, by knowing how to attune one's ears to the notes of true sublimity in nature.<sup>19</sup>

Attuning one's eyes to the forms of the true sublimity in human beings also fosters a sense of liberty, and this is the subject of the present chapter. James B. Twitchell once expressed a hope that "Someday critics will finally chart that movement up to, and then briefly at, the horizon which is the structure of *The Prelude*."<sup>20</sup> John Beer, hinging his discussion on images of nature in *The Prelude*, has traced "the gradual definition of the idea of liberty in Wordsworth's mind during his boyhood and youth."<sup>21</sup> Berdyaev, in no direct connection with Wordsworth's writings, advocated the link between freedom and the human form. Here, I will weave all these, but especially Berdyaev's and Wordsworth's texts, together into a complementary dialogue to argue that the sublime human form, which is gestaltic, with a distinct outline that serves as the "horizon" or a threshold to the transcendent, is gradually perfected in the poem in connection with the developing notion of freedom.

In what follows, I focus on several spots of time and other passages, taken from *The Prelude* in the 1850 order. I follow the traditional division of the poem into two movements: Books I through VIII comprise the first movement; and Books IX through XIV comprise the second one. Harold Bloom explains this division thus:

The first eight books form a single movement, summed up in the title of Book VIII, *Retrospect — Love of Nature Leading to Love of Mankind*. Books IX, X, and XI carry this Love of Mankind into its natural consequence, Wordsworth's *Residence in France*, and his involvement with the Revolution. Books XII and XIII deal with the subsequent crisis of Wordsworth's *Imagination, How Impaired and Restored*. The *Conclusion*, Book XIV, is the climax of Wordsworth's imaginative life and takes the reader back, in a full cycle, to the very opening of the poem. The *Conclusion* presents Wordsworth and Coleridge as "Prophets of Nature," joint laborers in the work of man's redemption.<sup>22</sup>

I see these two movements of the poem differently. In Books I-VIII, the growing poet led by Nature learns to discern the human form in the human flesh; these books, leading up to the poet's delight in the sublime human form, exemplify his gradual transcending of the determinism of matter, what I, following the widely-accepted formulation of Geoffrey Hartman, recognize as "Via Naturaliter Negativa." Books IX-XIV show how the poet transcends the determinism of powerful ideas: the growing mind learns to conjure up distinct human forms from the abyss of history, be it his long-missed teacher, the girl with a pitcher, the druids, or somebody else. This second movement of the poem, to me, is "Via Socialiter Negativa."

The opening books of the poem are dominated by Wordsworth's first sublime experiences of powerful love and fear, which are connected with his exercises in freedom of muscular movement of the young body, with his "boyish sports," his boyish wilfulness. It is the human aspect of the sublime that is continually redefined in the course of *The Prelude*, rather than the natural sublime with its impressive mountains and ennobling severity of the Lake District winter, both of which set the tone of the poem right from the

beginning. The very first spot of time relates the poet's frosty night wanderings "from snare to snare" among "the solitary hills":

Ere I had told  
Ten birth-days, when among the mountain slopes  
Frost, and the breath of frosty wind, had snapped  
The last autumnal crocus, 'twas my joy  
With store of springes o'er my shoulder hung  
To range the open heights where woodcocks ran  
Along the smooth green turf. Through half the night,  
Scudding away from snare to snare, I plied  
That anxious visitation;—moon and stars  
Were shining o'er my head. I was alone,  
And seemed to be a trouble to the peace  
That dwelt among them. Sometimes it befel  
In these night wanderings, that a strong desire  
O'erpowered my better reason, and the bird  
Which was the captive of another's toil  
Became my prey; and when the deed was done  
I heard among the solitary hills  
Low breathings coming after me, and sounds  
Of undistinguishable motion, steps  
Almost as silent as the turf they trod.<sup>23</sup>

Everything but the boy himself is sublime here, in its natural way: the boy's presence is not in harmony with the grand open heights, the vastness of the night sky with moon and stars shining over his head. He is troubling to their peace rather than in unity with it. Accordingly, instead of imagination, his "strong desire" to get as many woodcocks as he can — even if they are stolen from other people's snares — usurps the moment. The boy is transgressing rather than transcending. And the boundary that he crosses here is that of ownership, which is embodied not in the open mountain slopes, but in the bird snares. As soon as a freely running woodcock gets caught in one of those traps, it passes from the sublime world of Nature to the territorially divided world of commerce: it turns into someone's property. And the boy,



recognizing the bird as such, and recognizing the territorial division as well, licentiously poaches: “the captive of another’s toil / Became my prey,” he says. These words are not from freedom’s vocabulary. And the boy, becoming a plunderer, simultaneously becomes a prey himself. Like a woodcock, he feels trapped, chased, haunted. Like a captive woodcock, the boy is afraid. The sublime nature seems to turn on him, from which point on, even the smooth green turf that used to seem a perfect ground for freely running woodcocks and wondering Wordsworth, now seems to produce ominous sounds of pursuing steps and “breathings coming after” him. Those sounds, breathings, and motions in this description are as “undistinguishable” as the boy’s human form, which is not depicted as a perfect gestalt.

The same preyer-turning-into-prey motif with the same tendency to transgress rather than to transcend unfolds further in the following raven’s nest and boat-stealing spots of time. The portraiture in the episodes is, again, bodily, focused on muscular effort. But the emphasis is no longer on property, but on the sublimity of mighty natural powers (“the blast that blew amain” among the Yew Dale Craggs) and on forms (the towering and pursuing “grim shape” of Black Crag in the boat-stealing passage). And this face-to-face meeting with the natural sublime becomes the “not ignoble end” that the poet praises. Here is how Wordsworth recalls his hanging over the nest of the bird of prey:

Nor less when spring had warmed the cultured Vale,  
Roved we as plunderers where the mother bird  
Had in high places built her lodge; though mean  
Our object and inglorious, yet the end  
Was not ignoble. Oh! when I have hung

Above the raven's nest, by knots of grass  
And half-inch fissures in the slippery rock  
But ill-sustained, and almost (so it seemed)  
Suspended by the blast that blew amain,  
Shouldering the naked crag, oh, at that time  
While on the perilous ridge I hung alone,  
With what strange utterance did the loud dry wind  
Blow through my ear! the sky seemed not a sky  
Of earth — and with what motion moved the clouds!

Dust as we are, the immortal spirit grows  
Like harmony in music; there is a dark  
Inscrutable workmanship that reconciles  
Discordant elements, makes them cling together  
In one society. How strange that all  
The terrors, pains, and early miseries,  
Regrets, vexations, lassitudes interfused  
Within my mind, should e'er have borne a part,  
And that a needful part, in making up  
The calm existence that is mine when I  
Am worthy of myself! Praise to the end!  
Thanks to the means which Nature deigned to employ;  
Whether her fearless visitings, or those  
That came with soft alarm, like hurtless light  
Opening the peaceful clouds; or she may use  
Severer interventions, ministry  
More palpable, as best might suit her aim.<sup>24</sup>

As a result of Nature's interventions, the boy moves closer to another kind of threshold: not the one that delimits private property — be it the snares, nests, or the boat's mooring cave — but the one that points to the entrance to the supraconscious. Beyond that latter threshold, he feels, the unity of all exists: the same wind moves the clouds and supports the hill climbers; the same “huge and mighty forms” haunt the mountain regions and his mind. After returning the boat to the cave, overwhelmed by his newly discovered supraconscious, he goes home:

And through the meadows homeward went, in grave  
And serious mood; but after I had seen  
That spectacle, for many days, my brain

Worked with a dim and undetermined sense  
Of unknown modes of being; o'er my thoughts  
There hung a darkness, call it solitude  
Or blank desertion. No familiar shapes  
Remained, no pleasant images of trees,  
Of sea or sky, no clouds of green fields;  
But huge and mighty forms, that do not live  
Like living men, moved slowly through the mind  
By day, and were a trouble to my dreams.<sup>25</sup>

Those shapes, interestingly, “do not live like living men,” such men as the Lake District shepherds of Book VIII; those shapes are “unknown” that is, in a way, “uncouth.” They bring no joy, no delight. But they purify the human thought through fear and pain, urging the boy to measure himself not against a short-lived human memory, but against the eternity of nature: mountains, or yew trees, which have existed for centuries and which witness and judge his doings. Their sublimity speaks to the poet by way of their gestalten. At the same time, the terror they inspire in their sublimity alienates rather than invites communion. To access transcendental unity, another, a more welcome, threshold should be found. In his search, instinctively, the boy feels a need to “build up our human soul.”

Wisdom and Spirit of the universe!  
Thou Soul that art the eternity of thought,  
That gives to forms and images a breath  
And everlasting motion, not in vain  
By day or star-light thus from my first dawn  
Of childhood didst thou intertwine for me  
The passions that build up our human soul;  
Not with the mean and vulgar works of man,  
But with high objects, with enduring things —  
With life and nature, purifying thus  
The elements of feeling and of thought,  
And sanctifying, by such discipline,  
Both pain and fear, until we recognise  
A grandeur in the beatings of the heart.<sup>26</sup>

Wordsworth starts attending to the beatings of his own heart, to the visions of his own eye, and he begins to explore another kind of bodily freedom, linked not with licentious stealth but with joy, not with the appropriating of the external, but with the exploring of the inward. “Hissing along the polished ice,” he eyes the skyline with both the setting sun and the rising moon, with blinking stars above him, and with their icy reflections under him. He does not chase the bodily objects any more: what’s the use of following the elusive star, which ever flees? Unlike Tennyson’s Ulysses, the boy Wordsworth manages to reach such a star by cutting across its starry “reflex.” Likewise, he learns, that it is not necessary to move his own body all the time to attain certain visionary experiences of movement.

Not seldom from the uproar I retired  
Into a silent bay, or sportively  
Glanced sideways, leaving the tumultuous throng,  
To cut across the reflex of a star  
That fled, and, flying still before me, gleamed  
Upon the glassy plain; and oftentimes,  
When we had given our bodies to the wind,  
And all the shadowy banks on either side  
Came sweeping through the darkness, spinning still  
The rapid line of motion, then at once  
Have I, reclining back upon my heels,  
Stopped short; yet still the solitary cliffs  
Wheeled by me — even as if the earth had rolled  
With visible motion her diurnal round!<sup>27</sup>

This whirling experience of movement is far from being fanciful: Wordsworth truly feels what he describes. The abrupt suspension of motion when speeding can cause vertigo.<sup>28</sup> Hence, for a short while, the boy acutely experiences a sensation which is not externally-based. He learns that even the freedom of movement can triumph inwardly. What he still has to learn is that there are

other kinds of human freedom, independent of human physiology, of blood pressure, of giddiness; there are other kinds of shapes than those of inanimate objects. For now, the boy is absorbed in his own sensations of physical pull; his index to delight, or rather a “courser,” which points beyond the literal clouds, is the kite:

Unfading recollections! at this hour  
The heart is almost mine with which I felt,  
From some hill-top on sunny afternoons,  
The paper kite high among fleecy clouds  
Pull at her rein like an impetuous courser;  
Or, from the meadows sent on gusty days,  
Beheld her breast the wind, then suddenly  
Dashed headlong, and rejected by the storm.<sup>29</sup>

Liberty, as well, is likened to the literal breeze, blowing, significantly, on his body:

Dear Liberty! Yet what would it avail  
But for a gift that consecrates the joy?  
For I, methought, while the sweet breath of heaven  
Was blowing on my body, felt within  
A correspondent breeze, that gently moved  
With quickening virtue, but is now become  
A tempest, a redundant energy,  
Vexing its own creation.<sup>30</sup>

The correspondent breeze did not blow in vain, either. Nearing the end of Book I, the poet announces straightforwardly that the subject of this book is not only external influences of Nature, and that he had other “pure motions of the sense,” of calm delight and intellectual charm, which, he says,

if I err not, surely must belong  
To those first-born affinities that fit  
Our new existence to existing things,  
And, in our dawn of being, constitute  
The bond of union between life and joy.<sup>31</sup>

The transcendent wholeness of his early contemplative moments (such as I, 567-80) brings refreshment to him and intimates his later, mature understanding of the nature of such visions. But Book I pivots on the wilfulness of Wordsworth's formative years when he, free in his bodily movements, explores licentiousness. This is not a "genuine liberty," of course. This is an illusion of individualism, to use Berdyaev's terminology. Being separate in his body from the outside world, the boy, by association, is aware of physical boundaries of different kinds. He thinks in the terms of the outer world: he ventures to transgress physically, but gains no joy or wholeness through that; boundaries and hedges are not destroyed by way of trespassing. This tendency to think in fragmented categories of me vs. not me, mine vs. theirs, means vs. ends, my body vs. exterior world, are symptomatic of the objectivization of consciousness. The just desire to overcome such separateness might mislead one to evoke another desire, to take possession of what is on the other side of the fence. The illusion that capturing objects can result in a unity with them is exactly what Berdyaev calls "slavery to the objective world:"

[Ч]еловѣкъ есть рабъ у самого себя. Онъ попадаетъ въ рабство у объектнаго міра, но это есть рабство у собственныхъ экстеріоризаций.... Человѣкъ всегда является рабом того, что находится какъ бы внѣ его, что отчуждено отъ него, но источникъ рабства внутренній. Борьба свободы и рабства разыгрывается во внѣшнемъ, объективированномъ, экстеріоризированномъ мірѣ. Но съ экзистенціальной точки зрѣнія это есть внутренняя духовная борьба. (110)

[Man is a slave to himself. He falls into slavery to the objective world, but this is slavery to his own exteriorizations....Man is always a slave of that which lies, as it were, outside himself, which

is estranged from him, but which is an inward source of slavery. The struggle between freedom and slavery is carried on in the outer, objectivized, exteriorized world. But from the existential point of view it is an inward and spiritual struggle.]<sup>32</sup>

So, the ten-year-old boy exteriorizes his inner struggle for the union with the desired: he tries to steal the skiff. Then, externally, he is pursued by the crag, and then, internally, by the thoughts about that crag. These stealing episodes, the first spots of time in *The Prelude* are an expression of individualism in the boy, because,

[И]ндивидуализмъ есть уже объективация и связанъ съ экстеріоризаціей чловѣческаго существованія. Это очень прикрито и не сразу видно. Индивидуумъ есть часть общества, часть рода, часть міра. Индивидуализмъ есть изоляция части отъ цѣлаго или возстаніе части противъ цѣлаго. Но быть частью какого-либо цѣлаго, хотя бы возставъ противъ этого цѣлаго, значить уже быть экстеріоризированнымъ. Лишь въ мірѣ объективации, т.-е. въ мірѣ отчужденности, безличности и детерминизма, существуетъ то отношеніе части и цѣлаго, которое обнаруживается въ индивидуализмѣ. (114)

[Individualism is objectivization and is connected with the exteriorization of human existence. This fact is to a large extent screened from view and is not immediately evident. The individual is a part of society, a part of the race, a part of the world. Individualism is the isolation of the part from the whole, or the revolt of the part against the whole. But to be a part of any kind of whole, even if it be in revolt against that whole means to be exteriorized already. Only in a world of objectivization, that is to say a world of alienation, impersonality and determinism, does that relation of part to whole exist which is disclosed in individualism.]<sup>33</sup>

This individualism lets the boy see Nature as a separate entity as well, which makes it possible to make Nature an object worthy of being “sought / For her own sake.”<sup>34</sup>

Book Two plays out how the poet outgrows licentiousness. Transgression gives way to transport. He gains liberty to serve in Nature's temple (*cf.* II, 462-63). What he depicts in the spots of time in Book II, is a series of boating races. But the mentality of the contenders is not possessively-aggressive or jealous any longer: it is not the victory, but participation that matters. They race each other till the winner reaches one of the appointed islands of Windermere. Among those, was an isle with the ruins of Our Lady's shrine, where the boys rested. And everyone who has come and feels the beauties of the islands — the musical birds, the leafy oak towering above fragrant lilies of the valley, the chants of the shrine — and thus becomes a winner.

When summer came,  
Our pastime was, on bright half-holidays,  
To sweep along the plain of Windermere  
With rival oars; and the selected bourne  
Was now an Island musical with birds  
That sang and ceased not; now a Sister Isle  
Beneath the oak's umbrageous covert, sown  
With lilies of the valley like a field;  
And now a third small Island, where survived  
In solitude the ruins of a shrine  
Once to Our Lady dedicate, and served  
Daily with chaunted rites. In such a race  
So ended, disappointment could be none,  
Uneasiness, or pain, or jealousy:  
We rested in the shade, all pleased alike,  
Conquered and conqueror. Thus the pride of strength,  
And the vain-glory of superior skill,  
Were tempered; thus was gradually produced  
A quiet independence of the heart;  
And to my Friend who knows me I may add,  
Fearless of blame, that hence for future days  
Ensued a diffidence and modesty,  
And I was taught to feel, perhaps too much,  
The self-sufficing power of Solitude.<sup>35</sup>



Instead of stealing something, taking it away from the wholeness of the beautiful landscape, the boys add their own creative touch to nature: when darkness comes, when birds fall silent, and the religious chants stop, the schoolboys leave their own harmonious gift, their performing flutist, Robert Greenwood, on one of the islands and, rowing away to a distance, hear him making melodious music:

[E]re night-fall,  
When in our pinnace we returned at leisure  
Over the shadowy lake, and to the beach  
Of some small island steered our course with one,  
The Minstrel of the Troop, and left him there,  
And rowed off gently, while he blew his flute  
Alone upon the rock — oh, then, the calm  
And dead still water lay upon my mind  
Even with a weight of pleasure, and the sky,  
Never before so beautiful, sank down  
Into my heart, and held me like a dream!<sup>36</sup>

In this human portrait, it is the sound that dominates the vision: the Minstrel is music itself; he is not a human shape here. As for Wordsworth himself, his self-portraits are sketchy and as corporeal and muscular as they are in Book One. He paints himself plying the oars, participating in epicurean “rustic dinners” (89). His refreshment is not that of the renovating virtue of the spots of time, but quite substantial: “Nor did we want / Refreshment, strawberries and mellow cream” (II, 159-60), he good-naturedly boasts. “The blood-red wine” (II, 144) seems to flow everywhere: it brims the decanters and glasses at the White Lion Inn; it almost runs in the juvenile poet’s veins: “my blood appeared to flow,” says the poet, “For its own pleasure, and I breathed with joy” (II, 187-88). Other human forms, by contrast, seem marmoreal and frozen:

they are monuments, whom the remarkably “uncouth” horse-riders leave behind:

Our steeds remounted and the summons given,  
With whip and spur we through the chauntry flew  
In uncouth race, and left the cross-legged knight,  
And the stone-abbot, and that single wren  
Which one day sang so sweetly in the nave  
Of the old church, that — though from recent showers  
The earth was comfortless, and touched by faint  
Internal breezes, sobbings of the place  
And respirations from the roofless walls  
The shuddering ivy dripped large drops — yet still  
So sweetly 'mid the gloom the invisible bird  
Sang to herself, that there I could have made  
My dwelling-place, and lived for ever there  
To hear such music.<sup>37</sup>

During his outings, the poet learns another kind of solitude: not the one that alienates, but the solitude of a creator:

Hence life, and change, and beauty, solitude  
More active even than ‘best society’ —  
Society made sweet as solitude  
By inward concords, silent, inobtrusive  
And gentle agitations of the mind  
From manifold distinctions, difference  
Perceived in things, where, to the unwatchful eye,  
No difference is, and hence, from the same source,  
Sublimier joy; for I would walk alone,  
Under the quiet stars, and at that time  
Have felt whate'er there is of power in sound  
To breathe an elevated mood, by form  
Or image unprofaned.<sup>38</sup>

Berdyayev explains this creative solitude that strives for unity with the outer world, contrasting it to the estranged, individualistic one:

Замъчательно, что великіе творческіе люди въ сущности никогда не были индивидуалистами. Они бывали одинокими и не признанными, бывали въ остромъ конфликтѣ съ окружающей средой, съ установленными коллективными мнѣніями и сужденіями. Но они всегда сознавали свою призванность къ

служенію, они имѣли универсальную миссію. Нѣтъ ничего болѣе ложнаго, чѣмъ сознаніе своего [*sic.*] дара, своего генія, какъ привилегіи и какъ оправданія индивидуалистической изоляціи. Есть два разныхъ типа одиночества — одиночество творческой личности, переживающей конфликтъ внутренняго универсализма съ объективированнымъ универсализмомъ, и одиночество индивидуалиста, противопоставляющаго этому объективированному универсализму, къ которому онъ въ сущности принадлежитъ, свою опустошенность и безсиліе. Есть одиночество внутренней полноты и одиночество внутренней пустоты. Есть одиночество героизма и одиночество пораженности, одиночество, какъ сила, и одиночество, какъ безсиліе. (115)

[It is remarkable that great creative men have in fact never been individualists. They have been solitary and unrecognized, they have been in sharp conflict with their environment, with established collective opinions and judgments. But they have always thought of themselves as called to service, they have had a universal mission. There is nothing more false than to regard one's gifts and one's genius as a privilege and as a justification of individualistic isolation.

There are two different types of solitariness <solitude> — the solitariness of creative personality which experiences the conflict of inward universalism with objectivized universalism, and the solitariness of the individualist who sets his desolation and impotence in opposition to that objectivized universalism to which he in fact belongs. There is a solitariness of inward plenitude and a solitariness of inward emptiness. There is a solitariness of heroism and a solitariness of defeatism, a solitariness which is strength and a solitariness which is weakness.]<sup>39</sup>

Finally, Wordsworth overcomes his separatist individualism of the stealing episodes and achieves his longed for feeling of unity with nature. The poet was seventeen years old at the time, as his intellectual biography, *The Prelude*, says. In his union with the outside world of Nature, he endows natural objects, “where no brotherhood exists / To passive minds” (II, 385-86), with life. Or, as he puts it, “To unorganic natures were transferred / My own enjoyments” (II, 391-92). No human figure appears in the view. The poet becomes a priest exclusively to Nature:

From Nature overflowing on my soul,  
I had received so much, that every thought  
Was steeped in feeling; I was only then  
Contented, when with bliss ineffable  
I felt the sentiment of Being spread  
O'er all that moves and all that seemeth still;  
O'er all that, lost beyond the reach of thought  
And human knowledge, to the human eye  
Invisible, yet liveth to the heart;  
O'er all that leaps and runs, and shouts and sings,  
Or beats the gladsome air; o'er all that glides  
Beneath the wave, yea, in the wave itself,  
And mighty depth of waters. Wonder not  
If high the transport, great the joy I felt,  
Communing in this sort through earth and heaven  
With every form of creature, as it looked  
Towards the Uncreated with a countenance  
Of adoration, with an eye of love.  
One song they sang, and it was audible,  
Most audible, then, when the fleshly ear,  
O'ercome by humblest prelude of that strain,  
Forgot her functions, and slept undisturbed.<sup>40</sup>

Why is this “transport” (II, 376) not a genuine liberty, then? The union is achieved, but even though, on the one hand, he is liberated from a narrow understanding of freedom as transgression and, consequently, from fear, on the other hand, he loses himself in nature, merges in union with her to his self-forgetfulness, which does not preserve the person. There is a very difficult balance to maintain between the extremes of alienating individualism and the all-absorbing outer world. The medium is a personality, that is when a person recognizes himself as an autonomous being capable of development, growth, and emotional union with the universe, and at the same time, he is not utterly defaced by that union. To retain “the consciousness of Whom we are” while holding communion with everything around, is, according to Wordsworth, a truly divine quality. The poet will articulate this realization much later in *The*

*Prelude*. For now, I evoke this thought just to show how the poet's understanding of transcendent unity in Book XIV will surpass that of the transport of Book II:

Such minds are truly from the Deity,  
For they are Powers; and hence the highest bliss  
That flesh can know is theirs — the consciousness  
Of Whom they are, habitually infused  
Through every image and through every thought  
And all affections, by communion raised  
From earth to heaven, from human to divine.<sup>41</sup>

Meanwhile, the teenage Wordsworth of Book II merges ecstatically with the universe, and Berdyaev can illuminate his experience. Berdyaev does not take this kind of union for genuine liberty, either. Rather, he considers such a transport to be an enslaving lure of false union with the universe or, as he names it, the cosmos.

То, что я называю космическимъ прельщеніемъ, есть экстагическій выходъ за предѣлы личнаго существованія въ космическую стихію, надежда на приобщеніе къ этой первостихіи. На этомъ были основаны всѣ оргіастическіе культы. Но это всегда было не столько выходомъ изъ замкнутаго существованія личности къ міровому общению, сколько снятіемъ самой формы личности и ея раствореніемъ. (Бердяевъ, стр. 86)

[What I call the lure of the cosmos is an ecstatic emergence beyond the boundaries of personal existence into the cosmic element, it is the hope of entering into communion with this primary element. All orgiastic cults have been founded upon this. But it has always been not so much an emergence from the closed existence of personality into a world of communion, as the depriving of personality of its very form, and its dissolution.]<sup>42</sup>

In Book III of *The Prelude*, the balance tips the other way yet again: the poet enters the university. And the whole book explores another kind of relationship — not with Nature this time — but with the civilized world of

high literacy and science. This book, traditionally, is seen in criticism as not specifically marked with any developed spots of time. Not utterly dismissed, but “Imagination slept,” as the poet himself regrets while he was at Cambridge. He suffers from the remotness of that elite education from Nature, and calls this ivory tower unfree. Berdyaev’s thoughts on the enslavement caused by civilization estranged from Nature is not a far cry from Wordsworth’s ruminations about Cambridge in Book III.

Употребляю сейчасъ слово цивилизація въ распространенномъ смыслѣ, который связываетъ ее съ процессомъ социализаціи человѣка. О цѣнностяхъ культуры рѣчь будетъ потомъ. Цивилизація создана человѣкомъ, чтобы освободиться отъ власти стихійныхъ силъ природы. Человѣкъ выдумалъ орудія, которыя поставилъ между собой и природой, и потомъ безконечно совершенствовалъ эти орудія. Интеллектъ былъ величайшимъ орудіемъ человѣка и въ немъ достигъ человѣкъ огромной изощренности. Но это сопровождалось ослабленіемъ инстинктовъ, организмъ человѣка началъ деградировать, такъ какъ въ борьбѣ орудія органическія начали замѣняться орудіями техническими. Человѣка цивилизаціи въ разныя эпохи преслѣдовала мысль, что, отойдя отъ природы, онъ потерялъ свою цѣлостность и первоначальную силу, онъ сталъ раздробленнымъ. (99-100)

[I now use the word ‘civilization’ in the broad and widely diffused sense which connects it with the process of the socialization of man. I shall speak about cultural values later on. Civilization is created by man in order to free himself from the power of the elemental forces of nature. Man has invented tools, which he has placed between himself and nature, and has gone on endlessly perfecting these tools. His intellect has been the greatest of man’s implements and in the sphere of the intellect man has reached a very high degree of cultivation and inventiveness. But this has been accompanied by a weakening of the instincts, man’s organism has begun to decline, for in the struggle organic implements have begun to be replaced by technical implements. At various epochs civilized man has been harassed by the thought that in getting away from nature he was losing his completeness and primary inherent strength, that he was becoming disintegrated.]<sup>43</sup>

The fragmenting rather than unifying power of the civilized intellect, the human dependency on objects, instruments, artificiality, equally sickens Wordsworth: the poet is stifled by the utter unfreedom of Cambridge's curriculum, as he describes it. Instead of communing with and learning directly from nature, Wordsworth likens being at Cambridge to roaming through a museum and perusing artifacts, objects, and implements of all educative kinds.

Carelessly I roamed  
As through a wide museum from whose stores  
A casual rarity is singled out  
And has its brief perusal, then gives way  
To others, all supplanted in their turn;  
Till 'mid this crowded neighbourhood of things  
That are by nature most unneighbourly,  
The head turns round and cannot right itself;  
And though an aching and a barren sense  
Of gay confusion still be uppermost,  
With few wise longings and but little love,  
Yet to the memory something cleaves at last,  
Whence profit may be drawn in times to come.<sup>44</sup>

Such an artificial way to learn burdens the young mind, to giddiness, with a dead freight of "most unneighbourly" things. The mood is that of nearly suffocating within the four walls of the confinement. Instead of a free stroll in his native hills, the boy is channelled into swallowing museum's dust. In Book V, the poet epitomizes this way of learning in two figures, comparing himself to "a stalled ox debarred / From touch of growing grass" (V, 242-43), and to a locomotive, saying: "to the very road / Which they have fashioned would confine us down, / Like engines" (V, 356-58). The sense of utter objectivization and bondage colors his lines. He again seems to feel like a trapped woodcock.

I, bred up 'mid Nature's luxuries,  
was a spoiled child, and rambling like the wind,  
As I had done in daily intercourse  
With those crystalline rivers, solemn heights,  
And mountains; ranging like a fowl of the air,  
I was ill-tutored for captivity,  
To quit my pleasure, and, from month to month,  
Take up a station calmly on the perch  
Of sedentary peace.<sup>45</sup>

The poet's sense of captivity is represented through objectivized portraiture. The human figures the young Wordsworth meets on campus and in the neighbourhood look as "o'ertasked by Time" and "covetous of exercise and air" as the museum artifacts themselves. The student "clothed in gown and tasselled cap" whom the boy's carriage passes by on the road (III, 7-12) wears the same garb Wordsworth will be wearing a few verses later in the poem, after he pays a number of visits both "To Tutor or to Tailor, as befel" (28). And the "spiritual men" of the college are also, to some extent, reduced to the same common cap-and-gown denominator, which is yet further objectivized by literally translating their uniforms to material canvasses.

Imagination slept,  
and yet not utterly. I could not print  
Ground where the grass had yielded to your steps  
Ye generations of illustrious men,  
Unmoved. I could not always lightly pass  
Through the same gateways, sleep where ye had slept,  
Wake where ye waked, range that inclosure old,  
That garden of great intellects, undisturbed.  
Place also by the side of this dark sense  
Of nobler feeling, that those spiritual men,  
Even the great Newton's own ethereal self,  
Seemed humbled in these precincts, thence to be  
The more endeared. Their several memories here  
(Even like their persons in their portraits clothed  
With the accustomed garb of daily life)  
Put on a lowly and a touching grace



Of more distinct humanity, that left  
All genuine admiration unimpaired.<sup>46</sup>

Berdyayev also links objectivization with equipment, such as uniforms. Uniforms or any status clothes can be de-facing, and in that sense, objectivizing, abstracting, enslaving:

Существуетъ цивилизованное варварство, за которымъ чувствуется не «природа», а машина, механизмъ. Индустриальная техническая цивилизація являет собою все возрастающее цивилизованное варварство, падение качества. Но въ этомъ цивилизованномъ варварствѣ нѣтъ никакого возврата къ «природе». Въ челоуѣкъ цивилизаціи періодически пробуждается звѣрь и дикарь, но въ измѣненномъ цивилизаціей формѣ, т.-е. въ ухудшенной формѣ. Цивилизованіе челоуѣка есть процессъ не идущій особенно глубоко и очень легко съ челоуѣка сдираются покровы цивилизаціи. При этомъ челоуѣкъ продолжаетъ пользоваться всѣми орудіями цивилизаціи. У Карлейля были очень глубокія идеи объ одеждѣ (*Sartor Resartus*). Это есть проблема отношенія между видимостью и подлинностью. (102)

[There is a civilized barbarism which is much worse than primitive barbarism, barbarism at the back of which is to be sensed not 'nature' but the machine, and mechanism. Industrial technical civilization is showing itself an ever growing civilized barbarism, a decline in quality. But in this civilized barbarism there is no sort of return to 'nature'. In the man of civilization the beast and the savage are from time to time awakened, but in a form which is changed by civilization, that is to say in a deteriorated form. The civilizing of man is a process which does not go particularly deep and the trappings of civilization are very easily stripped from him. Meanwhile he continues to make use of all the equipment of civilization. In Carlyle there are some very profound ideas about clothes (*Sartor Resartus*). It is a problem of the relation between appearance and reality.]<sup>47</sup>

In Book III of *The Prelude*, the poet often presents himself as gown-conscious to a fault. Objects associated with the lives of great poets of the past impress the young students who walk the same streets the poets tread, wear the same scholarly dress the poets wore, sleep and carouse in the same rooms

where the poets lived. The leitmotif of the giddy blood-red wine and the youthful assemblies recurs again.

Yea, our blind Poet, who in his later day,  
Stood almost single; uttering odious truth —  
Darkness before, and danger's voice behind,  
Soul awful — if the earth hath ever lodged  
An awful soul — I seemed to see him here  
Familiarly, and in his scholar's dress  
Bounding before me, yet a stripling youth —  
A boy, no better, with his rosy cheeks  
Angelical, keen eye, courageous look,  
And conscious step of purity and pride.  
Among the band of my compeers was one  
Whom chance had stationed in the very room  
Honoured by Milton's name. O temperate Bard!  
Be it confest that, for the first time, seated  
Within thy innocent lodge and oratory,  
One of a festive circle, I poured out  
Libations, to thy memory drank, till pride  
And gratitude grew dizzy in a brain  
Never excited by the fumes of wine  
Before that hour, or since. Forth I ran  
From the assembly; through a length of streets,  
Ran, ostrich-like, to reach our chapel door  
In not a desperate or opprobrious time,  
Albeit long after the importunate bell  
Had stopped, with wearisome Cassandra voice  
No longer haunting the dark winter night.  
Call back, O Friend! a moment to thy mind  
The place itself, and fashion of the rites.  
With careless ostentation shouldering up  
My surplice, through the inferior throng I clove  
Of the plain Burghers, who in audience stood  
On the last skirts of their permitted ground,  
Under the pealing organ. Empty thoughts!  
I am ashamed of them: and that great Bard,  
And thou, O Friend! who in thy ample mind  
Hast placed me high above my best deserts,  
Ye will forgive the weakness of that hour,  
In some of its unworthy vanities,  
Brother to many more.<sup>48</sup>

Interestingly, that with the sense of belonging to an academic club, there comes unceremonious familiarity, when the very garb that distinguishes the

students from the “town” can be treated with relative disrespect: it can be carelessly tossed, tucked, hitched up “ostrich-like” to accommodate the scampering boy, who by his own boyish nature cannot but occasionally run late and cannot possibly strut with pomp and circumstance all the time. Instead of being properly pressed and dressed, Wordsworth rushes into the chapel like a wind with his “surplice” — a uniform white linen robe required for that occasion every morning — dangling over his shoulders. So, he moves as the boy naturally does. But he speaks a very unnatural vocabulary and thinks with quite unnatural vanity, especially if we take into consideration Wordsworth’s own renunciations of pompous language in his Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*. The turned phrases like “In not a desperate or opprobrious time,” “the importunate bell / . . . with wearisome Cassandra voice,” invite a gently ironic smile from the mature Wordsworth; while his youthful slighting of “the plain Burghers,” people of different “skirts” in all senses of this word, elicits his blushing sigh. In other words, at Cambridge, Wordsworth is tested by the lure of belonging to an intellectual elite, by yet another kind of determinism, that of academic stripe. Berdyaev again is in unison:

Культура основана на аристократическомъ принципѣ, на принципѣ качественного отбора. Творчество культуры во всѣхъ сферахъ стремится къ совершенству, къ достиженію высшаго качества. Такъ въ познаніи, такъ въ искусствѣ, такъ въ выработкѣ душевнаго благородства и культурѣ человѣческихъ чувствъ.... Истина аристократична въ томъ смыслѣ, что она есть достиженіе качества и совершенства въ познаніи, независимо отъ количества, отъ мнѣнія и требованія человѣческихъ количествъ. Но это совсѣмъ не значитъ, что истина существуетъ для избраннаго меньшинства, для аристократической группы, истина существуетъ для всего человечества и всѣ люди призваны быть приобщенными къ ней.

Нѣтъ ничего противнѣ гордости и презрительности замкнутой элиты. (105)

[Culture is founded upon the aristocratic principle, upon the principle of qualitative selection. The creativeness of culture in all spheres struggles towards perfection, towards the attainment of the highest quality. It is so in knowledge, it is so in art, it is so in the working out of nobility of soul, and in the culture of human feelings.... Truth is aristocratic in the sense that it is the attainment of quality and perfection in knowledge, independently of quantity, opinion and the demands of human majorities. But this in no way means that truth exists for the select few, for the aristocratic group. Truth exists for the whole of mankind and all men are called to enter into communion with it. There is nothing more repellent than the pride and contempt of a closed *élite*.]<sup>49</sup>

With false understanding of one's elite chosenness there comes unwholesome isolation, as Berdyaev explains:

Одиночество почитающихъ себя принадлежащими къ культурной элитѣ есть ложное одиночество, это есть все-таки стадное одиночество, хотя бы стадо было малой группой, это не есть одиночество пророковъ и гениевъ. Геній близокъ къ первореальности, къ подлинному существованію, культурная же элита подчинена законамъ объективации и социализации. Это въ ней вырабатывается культуropоклонство, которое есть одна изъ формъ идолопоклонства и рабства чловѣка. Подлинный духовный аристократизмъ связанъ съ сознаниемъ служенія, а не съ сознаниемъ своей привилегированности. (105)

[The isolation of people who venerate themselves as those who belong to a cultured *élite*, is a wrong isolation. It is the isolation of a herd of animals, even though the herd may be a small group. It is not the solitariness of the prophets and the geniuses. The genius lives near to primary reality and to real existence, whereas the cultured *élite* is subject to the laws of objectivization and socialization. The worship of culture is elaborated within it and that is one of the forms which idolatry and human slavery assume. True spiritual aristocracy is connected with a sense of service, not with the consciousness of one's own privileged position.]<sup>50</sup>

Wordsworth, fortunately, eschews the shackles of the elite isolation, because he is not a stranger to other kinds of solitude, more creative and close to Nature. Such moments occasionally visit him:

Though I had learnt betimes to stand unpropped,  
And independent musings pleased me so  
That spells seemed on me when I was alone,  
Yet could I only cleave to solitude  
In lonely places; if a throng was near  
That way I leaned by nature; for my heart  
Was social, and loved idleness and joy. (III, 230-36)

Holding up the foil of free and loving thirst for learning to the routine of scholastic studies, the poet arrives at an inevitable conclusion:

I did not love,  
Judging not ill perhaps, the timid course  
Of our scholastic studies; could have wished  
To see the river flow with ampler range  
And freer pace; but more, far more, I grieved  
To see displayed among an eager few,  
Who in the field of contest persevered,  
Passions unworthy of youth's generous heart  
And mounting spirit, pitiably repaid,  
When so disturbed, whatever palms are won.<sup>51</sup>

“Was ever known / The witless shepherd who persists to drive / A flock that thirsts not to a pool disliked?” reasons Wordsworth (408-10), once again remembering his favorite shepherds. On the authority of their example, he questions freedom and liberty of education as it was at that English citadel of knowledge. He looks around for the human sublime, and finding no live and lofty gestalten of Milton, Spenser, Newton, the boy rests his eye on the human statue. It is the most glorious human form rendered describable in all Book III: Newton's statue. It's noteworthy that the poet uses the same word “index” in connection with this vision, as he employs in the cross-like shepherd spot of

time. This index, however, is not to delight yet, but “of a mind,” potent and creatively solitary.

And from my pillow, looking forth by light  
Of moon or favouring stars, I could behold  
The antechapel where the statue stood  
Of Newton with his prism and silent face,  
The marble index of a mind for ever  
Voyaging through strange seas of Thought, alone.<sup>52</sup>

From Wordsworth’s Cambridge perspective, the human being is put firmly and monumentally on the pedestal in the antechapel, which is but an outer part of the temple of the human heart, which, when opened, raises the eyes to the spires, where the aery human gestalt is stationed like a crowning cross.

Wordsworth’s summer vacation takes him back to his beloved Hawkshead, where he gets a break from the confining conventions of the university curriculum and elite. He also views with a new eye the neighborly folk and especially Ann Tyson, his old Dame, who was a second mother to him during his Hawkshead years. The contrast between the two ways of life, that of Cambridge and that of Hawkshead, is precise; but the contrast is not between the natural man and the civilized one. Wordsworth opposes to the mundane superficiality of Cambridge the unpretentious spirituality of the Lake District, which is especially conspicuous in his following loving lines:

Yes, I had something of a subtler sense,  
And often looking round was moved to smiles  
Such as a delicate work of humour breeds;  
I read, without design, the opinions, thoughts,  
Of those plain-living people now observed  
With clearer knowledge; with another eye  
I saw the quiet woodman in the woods,  
The shepherd roam the hills. With new delight,  
This chiefly, did I note my grey-haired Dame;  
Saw her go forth to church or other work

Of state, equipped in monumental trim;  
Short velvet cloak (her bonnet of the like),  
A mantle such as Spanish Cavaliers  
Wore in old time. Her smooth domestic life,  
Affectionate without disquietude,  
Her talk, her business, pleased me; and no less  
Her clear though shallow stream of piety  
That ran on Sabbath days a fresher course;  
With thoughts unfelt till now I saw her read  
Her Bible on hot Sunday afternoons,  
And loved the book, when she had dropped asleep  
And made of it a pillow for her head.<sup>53</sup>

Ann is so comfortable with her Bible, that she can fall asleep holding it. Her affections, her “smooth domestic life,” harmonize with those Sunday naps. And the whole vision, even with her Cavalier cloak, never reaches the ridiculousness of the ostrich-like student claiming a privileged place at service. Ann seems to be much more spiritual, if not pious, by contrast. Berdyaev would have agreed:

Проблема стоит совсем не такъ, что цивилизации слѣдуетъ противопоставлять какое-то здоровое и блаженное варварство, какого-то природнаго челоѵка или добраго по природѣ дикаря. Это совершенно натуралистическая постановка проблемы, настолько устарѣвшая, что о ней не стоитъ и говорить. Злу и рабству цивилизации невозможно противопоставлять добро и свободу природы. Судъ надъ цивилизаціей не можетъ совершать природа, его можетъ совершать только духъ. Челоѵку цивилизации со всѣми его недостатками противостоитъ не природный челоѵкъ, а духовный челоѵкъ. (100)

[The problem is not by any means to be put like this, that it would be a good thing to set up in opposition to civilization some sort of healthy and happy barbarism, some kind of natural man, or savage who is good by nature. This is an absolutely naturalistic way of stating the problem, and it is so much out of date that it is not worth while to discuss it. It is impossible to place the evil and slavery of civilization in antithesis with the good and freedom of nature, and nature cannot pass judgment upon civilization. Only spirit can pass such judgment.

In opposition to civilized man with all his deficiencies there stands not the natural man but the spiritual man.]<sup>54</sup>

It is only after perceiving lovingly the devotional side of his old Dame, that Wordsworth tells in *The Prelude* about his Godlike hour, the spot of time when one magnificent morning he comes to realize his vocation. Significantly, the youth does not specify “Poetry is my vocation,” for that is a too narrow, compartmentalized, even elite way to put it. Instead, Wordsworth on the spur of the visionary moment, formulates his feeling more holistically: he feels, with all his being that he should be “a dedicated spirit.”

Magnificent  
The morning rose, in memorable pomp,  
Glorious as e'er I had beheld — in front,  
The sea lay laughing at a distance; near  
The solid mountains shone, bright as the clouds,  
Grain-tinctured, drenched in empyrean light;  
And in the meadows and the lower grounds  
Was all the sweetness of a common dawn —  
Dews, vapours, and the melody of birds,  
And labourers going forth to till the fields.

Ah! need I say, dear Friend! that to the brim  
My heart was full; I made no vows, but vows  
Were then made for me; bond unknown to me  
Was given, that I should be, else sinning greatly,  
A dedicated Spirit. On I walked  
In thankful blessedness, which yet survives.<sup>55</sup>

The dedicated man walks on, liberated from the uncertainties, vanities, and unhappiness of the previous book of his life. He still does not say that he is to be a Poet. For now, he simply chooses to look more closely at the real spiritual people he meets on his way, such as the discharged soldier (whom he does not slight as he used to slight the Burghers at the chapel), to meditate upon “an appropriate human center”:



When from our better selves we have too long  
 Been parted by the hurrying world, and droop,  
 Sick of its business, of its pleasures tired,  
 How gracious, how benign, is Solitude;  
 How potent a mere image of her sway;  
 Most potent when impressed upon the mind  
 With an appropriate human centre — hermit,  
 Deep in the bosom of the wilderness;  
 Votary (in vast cathedral, where no foot  
 Is treading, where no other face is seen)  
 Kneeling at prayers; or watchman on the top  
 Of lighthouse, beaten by Atlantic waves;  
 Or as the soul of that great Power is met  
 Sometimes embodied on a public road,  
 When for the night deserted, it assumes  
 A character of quiet more profound  
 Than pathless wastes.<sup>56</sup>

Wordsworth's initial vision of the human forms he "impresses upon the mind" is not yet sublime but "uncouth," the word Wordsworth uses again and again. Such uncouth shapes are not limited to the discharged soldier. While Wordsworth develops his feel for creativity, he gets to meet more humans whose inner worlds remain locked to him, even though each time the poet manages to perfect his insight; namely, he has a dream about the "uncouth" (V, 75) Arab-Quixote, whose image is far from being definite. Like a two-faced Janus, this human shape is in continual metamorphosis; it never becomes a perfect gestalt<sup>57</sup>: "and now," notes the poet, "He, to my fancy, had become the knight / Whose tale Cervantes tells; yet not the knight, / But was an Arab of the desert too" (V, 121-24). Likewise, the boy of Winander is not really known to the poet; he remains a mystery to contemplate and elegize when standing at a local country church-yard (V, 392). Even less "couth" is a heap of garments spotted by the boy Wordsworth near Esthwaite Water, in

1779, during his first year at Hawkshead. The drowned man, whose stiffened body is found on the next day by the searchers, is ghastly and has no expressive form, because, being dead, he has no existent emotions and feelings to inform his countenance. He is frozen as an object into death, and he represents the corporeal in its most objectivized. Not only the drowned body, but also its clothes remain a shapeless heap; the dead man's story remains unknown.

Meanwhile, the poet derives his strength not from the civilization of Cambridge, but from the culture of books he is fond of reading. He is no more frightened by the corpse of the dead stranger than he is by artistic marbles or urns. He associates the dead body with fairy-tales, the *Arabian Nights* (V, 462) and Greek art. Thanks to these cultural, aesthetic associations, fear is mitigated and the scene becomes almost a pastoral elegy:

At last, the dead man, 'mid that beauteous scene  
Of trees and hills and water, bolt upright  
Rose, with his ghastly face, a spectre shape  
Of terror; yet no soul-debasing fear,  
Young as I was, a child not nine years old,  
Possessed me, for my inner eye had seen  
Such sights before, among the shining streams  
Of faëry land, the forests of romance.  
Their spirit hallowed the sad spectacle  
With decoration of ideal grace;  
A dignity, a smoothness, like the works  
Of Grecian art, and purest poesy.<sup>58</sup>

Unlike the drowned man, whose marmoreal image invites comparison with the refined artistic products of distant civilizations and societies, the boy of Winander appears as an untamed creator of his own individual culture. In distinguishing between “civilization” and “culture,” I follow Berdyaev, who

continued the discussion of the terms begun by many thinkers, including Spengler, Dostoyevsky, K. Leontiev. Berdyaev, among other things, says that “Civilization” is more socially-based, while “culture” is more individual.

Цивилизаціей нужно обозначать болѣе соціально-коллективный процессъ, культурой же процессъ болѣе индивидуальный и идущій вглубь. Мы, напримеръ, говоримъ, что у этого челоуѣка есть высокая культура, но не можемъ сказать, что у этого челоуѣка очень высокая цивилизація. Мы говоримъ духовная культура, но не говоримъ духовная цивилизація. Цивилизація означаетъ большую степень объективации и соціализации, культура же болѣе связана съ личностью и духомъ. (103-04)

[By civilization must be meant a process which is more social and collective, by culture, a process which is more individual and one which goes deeper. We say, for instance, that such and such person is a man of the highest culture, but we cannot say that such and such a person is a man of very high civilization. We speak of spiritual culture, but we do not speak of spiritual civilization. Civilization indicates a higher degree of objectivization and socialization, whereas culture is more closely linked with personality and spirit.]<sup>59</sup>

It follows from the above that culture presupposes more free creativity on the part of a creator.

Культура означаетъ обработку матеріала актомъ духа, побѣды формы надъ материей. Она более связана съ творческимъ актомъ челоуѣка. (104)

[Culture indicates the fashioning of material by the action of spirit, the victory of form over matter. It is more closely connected with the creative act of man, although the difference here is relative, as are all differences which arise from classification.]<sup>60</sup>

In contrast to the smooth Grecian “spectre” of the drowned man, to the elegant shapes of the shell and the stone of the Arab-Quixote, to the civilization of Cambridge, with the average bands of gowned students, and with the like “fruits” of this “modern system” of education (V, 293-364),

Wordsworth offers a story of a creative child, reared by Nature: the boy of Winander. This boy is also mimicking what he sees and hears, but there is an element of wildness, of imaginative freedom to his education, which Wordsworth prizes highly. Berdyaev's personalistic philosophy will help to understand the Winander spot of time, because it articulates the connection between the creativeness and the creator's being untamed by the objectivizing society.

Существуют гениальные творцы культуры. Но культурная среда, культурная традиция, культурная атмосфера также основана на подражательности, какъ и цивилизация. Очень культурный человекъ известного стиля обычно высказываетъ обо всемъ мнѣнія подражательныя, среднія, групповыя, хотя бы эта подражательность сложилась въ культурной элитѣ, въ очень подобранной группѣ. Культурный стиль всегда включаетъ въ себя подражательность, усвоение традиции, онъ можетъ быть социалью оригинальнымъ въ своемъ появленіи, но онъ индивидуально не оригиналенъ. Гений никогда не могъ вполне вмѣститься въ культуру и культура всегда стремилась превратить гения изъ дикаго животного въ животное домашнее. Соціализации подлежитъ не только варваръ, но и творческій гений. Творческій актъ, въ которомъ есть дикость и варварство, объективируется и превращается въ культуру. (104)

[There are creative geniuses of culture; but the cultured milieu, cultured tradition and cultured atmosphere are based also upon imitation, just as civilization is too. The highly cultured man of a certain style usually expresses imitative opinions upon every subject: they are average opinions, they belong to a group, though it may well be that this imitativeness belongs to a cultured *élite* and to a highly select group. A cultured style always includes imitativeness, and assimilation to tradition. It may be that socially it is original in appearance, but individually it is not original. Genius has never been completely able to find a place for itself <himself> in culture, and culture has always striven to turn genius from a wild animal into a domestic animal. It is not only the barbarian who is subject to socialization; the creative genius is also. The creative act, into which there enters an element of savagery and barbarism, is objectivized and changed into culture.]<sup>61</sup>

The boy of Winander is one such creative genius. His classroom, fortunately for him, is not a museum-like room, but the hills, lake, forest; his teachers are real owls, whom the boy catechizes; his freedom (V, 520) is that of imagination; the pealing is of the “responsive calls” rather than of Cambridge’s organ (III, 57). Like the “Minstrel” Robert Greenwood, who made his tuneful music in the boat-racing days on Windermere, the boy of Winander plays with melodious sounds. Only now, Wordsworth does describe his human shape, making it visible:

many a time

At evening, when the earliest stars began  
To move along the edges of the hills,  
Rising or setting, would he stand alone  
Beneath the trees or by the glimmering lake,  
And there, with fingers interwoven, both hands  
Pressed closely palm to palm, and to his mouth  
Uplifted, he, as through an instrument,  
Blew mimic hootings to the silent owls,  
That they might answer him; and they would shout  
Across the watery vale, and shout again,  
Responsive to his call, with quivering peals,  
And long halloos and screams, and echoes loud,  
Redoubled and redoubled, concourse wild  
Of jocund din; and, when a lengthened pause  
Of silence came and baffled his best skill,  
Then sometimes, in that silence while he hung  
Listening, a gentle shock of mild surprise  
Has carried far into his heart the voice  
Of mountain torrents; or the visible scene  
Would enter unawares into his mind,  
With all its solemn imagery, its rocks,  
Its woods, and that uncertain heaven, received  
Into the bosom of the steady lake.

This Boy was taken from his mates, and died  
In childhood, ere he was full twelve years old.  
Fair is the spot, most beautiful the vale  
Where he was born; the grassy churchyard hangs  
Upon a slope above the village school,  
And through that churchyard when my way has led

On summer evenings, I believe that there  
A long half hour together I have stood  
Mute, looking at the grave in which he lies!<sup>62</sup>

The boy of Winander is a master of communication. And he needs no additional artificial tools to facilitate his rapport with the world: no flute, no Claude Lorrain glass, no surplice. He is a natural. But he is closer to the “Pagan suckled in a creed outworn” and to the “old Triton” blowing “his wreathed horn” of the famous Wordsworthian sonnet than to the cross-like shepherd of *The Prelude*. This boy communicates primarily with natural creatures, and when he is “taken from his mates,” one wonders whether those mates are owls rather than human boys and girls. For the human Wordsworth, anyway, this boy is inaccessible: between them there is a threshold of a grave; and for now, this threshold is uncrossable. The poet is urged to seek freedom elsewhere.

In search of the truth, Wordsworth, very predictably, has a fling with mathematics. He does not go into deep analysis of his choice, except saying that he was charmed by the “clear synthesis” that mathematics deals with. Berdyaev, again, without any connection to Wordsworth, keeps relating his own experience, which turns out to be very similar.

Парадоксъ въ томъ, что наиболее общеобязательный характеръ имѣетъ познаніе въ наукахъ математическихъ и физическихъ. Тутъ познаніе менѣе зависитъ отъ духовнаго состоянія и духовной общности людей, оно имѣетъ одинаковые результаты для людей разныхъ религіозныхъ вѣрованій, разныхъ національностей и разныхъ классовъ. Наоборотъ познаніе въ наукахъ историческихъ и социальныхъ и въ наукахъ о духъ и о цѣнностяхъ, т.-е. въ философіи, носитъ менѣе общеобязательный характеръ именно потому, что предполагаетъ большую духовную общность людей. Наименьшей

общеобязательностью отличаются истины религиозного характера, так как предполагают максимальную духовную общность. Внутри религиозной общины эти истины представляются наиболее общеобязательными, наиболее «объективными», наиболее «субъективными». Все это свидетельствует о том, что автономия сферы познания относительна, что оно не может быть отделено от целостного существа человека, от его духовной жизни, т.-е. от человека интегрального. Познание зависит от того, каков человек и каково отношение человека к человеку. (98)

[The paradox lies in the fact that the universally binding character of cognition is to be found in its highest degree in mathematics and the physical sciences. Here cognition depends less upon spiritual conditions and the spiritual community which people share. It produces the same results for men of different religious beliefs, different nationalities and different classes. On the other hand, knowledge in the historical and social sciences and in sciences of the spirit and of values, that is to say in philosophy, has a lower degree of universally binding character just because it presupposes a greater spiritual community in which people share. Least of all universally binding are truths of a religious character, because they presuppose the maximum of spiritual community. Within the religious body these truths are accepted as the most universally binding, but outside it they appear as the least universally binding, as the least 'objective' and the most 'subjective.'

All this is evidence of the fact that the autonomy of the sphere of knowledge is relative and that it cannot be separated from the whole being of man, from his spiritual life, that is to say from the integral man. Cognition and the acquisition of knowledge depend upon this: what is man like and what sort of relations exist between man and man.]<sup>63</sup>

The mathematical castaway, who is also a lonely creator, when shipwrecked — of whom Wordsworth sings in VI — prefers the company of his treatise on Geometry to the “fellow-sufferers.” He would not,

Although of food and clothing destitute,  
And beyond common wretchedness depressed,  
To part from company and take this book  
(Then first a self-taught pupil in its truths)  
To spots remote, and draw his diagrams  
With a long staff upon the sand, and thus

Did oft beguile his sorrow, and almost  
Forget his feeling: so (if like effect  
From the same cause produced, 'mid outward things  
So different, may rightly be compared),  
So was it then with me, and so will be  
With Poets ever. Mighty is the charm  
Of those abstractions to a mind beset  
With images, and haunted by herself,  
And specially delightful unto me  
Was that clear synthesis built up aloft  
So gracefully; even then when it appeared  
Not more than a mere plaything, or a toy  
To sense embodied: not the thing it is  
In verity, an independent world,  
Created out of pure intelligence.<sup>64</sup>

The way Wordsworth paints the castaway's figure is very abstracted as well: he specifies no name or locale in his description. His overall description is neither the man's face nor his posture or silhouette, but the geometrical diagrams drawn on the sand by the man's staff.

Like the mathematical castaway, who makes a choice between his fellow-sufferers (with whom he does not have much intellectual interest in common anyway) and his vocation, Wordsworth also makes his choice of profession, which lies not within Cambridge's walls.

[M]any books  
were skimmed, devoured, or studiously perused,  
But with no settled plan. I was detached  
Internally from academic cares;  
Yet independent study seemed a course  
Of hardy disobedience toward friends  
And kindred, proud rebellion and unkind.  
This spurious virtue, rather let it bear  
A name it more deserves, this cowardice,  
Gave treacherous sanction to that over-love  
Of freedom which encouraged me to turn  
As from restraints and bonds.<sup>65</sup>

As a result,



These were the days  
 Which also first emboldened me to trust  
 With firmness, hitherto but lightly touched  
 By such a daring thought, that I might leave  
 Some monument behind me which pure hearts  
 Should reverence. The instinctive humbleness,  
 Maintained even by the very name and thought  
 Of printed books and authorship, began  
 To melt away; and further, the dread awe  
 Of mighty names was softened down and seemed  
 Approachable, admitting fellowship  
 Of modest sympathy. Such aspect now,  
 Though not familiarly, my mind put on,  
 Content to observe, to admire, and to enjoy.<sup>66</sup>

This is the first act of freedom in the whole *Prelude*, when Wordsworth reveals his unique, fledgling personality. He separates his interests – in a very gestaltic way – from the background of his environment with its determinism of dominating opinion. Wordsworth makes truly his own, definite decision. Likewise, Berdyaev classifies making a choice and recognizing a vocation as “freedom” rather than a “lure”:

Сильная личность есть выраженный характер. Характеръ есть побѣда духовнаго начала въ челоѣкъ, но побѣда въ конкретно-индивидуальной формѣ, связанной съ душевно-тѣлеснымъ составомъ челоѣка. Характеръ есть овладѣніе собой, побѣда надъ рабствомъ самому себѣ, которая дѣлаетъ возможнымъ и побѣду надъ рабствомъ окружающему міру. Характеръ обнаруживается прежде всего въ отношеніи къ окружающей средѣ. Темпераментъ есть природная данность, характеръ есть завоеваніе и достиженіе, онъ предполагаетъ свободу.... Характеръ личности, который всегда означаетъ независимость, есть ея сосредоточенность и ея обрѣтенная форма свободы. Личность, характеръ личности означаетъ, что челоѣкъ сдѣлалъ выборъ, совершил различеніе, что онъ не безразличенъ, не смѣшиваетъ. (41-42)

[A strong personality is an expressed character. Character is the victory of the spiritual principle in man, but victory in a concretely individual form, which is bound up with the soul-body constitution of man. Character is the possession of power over oneself, it is the victory over slavery to oneself, a triumph which

makes possible victory over slavery to the surrounding world also. Character is revealed above all in relation to environment. Temperament is a natural gift; character is conquest and attainment; it presupposes freedom. . . . The character of personality, which always denotes independence, is its concentration and its freedom which has already found some expression. Personality, the character of personality, indicates that a man has made a choice, that he has established differences, that he is not indifferent, and that he makes distinctions.]<sup>67</sup>

And further on:

Личность связана съ сознаниемъ призванія. Каждый человекъ долженъ сознать это призваніе, независимо отъ размѣра дарованій. Это есть призваніе въ индивидуально неповторимой формѣ дать отвѣтъ на Божій призывъ и творчески использовать свои дары. Сознавшая себя личность слушаетъ внутренній голосъ и повинуется лишь ему, она не покорствуеъ вѣшнимъ голосамъ. (42)

[Personality is bound up with the consciousness of vocation. Every man ought to be conscious of that vocation, which is independent of the extent of his gifts. It is a vocation in an individually unrepeatable form to give an answer to the call of God and to put one's gifts to creative use. Personality which is conscious of itself listens to the inward voice and obeys that only. It is not submissive to outward voices.]<sup>68</sup>

In this way Wordsworth prepares for his Alpine experience. He scales the mountains as a free man learning to speak to men in their own language again. He becomes a communicator surpassing the boy of Winander: he mimics more than the invisible owls' hootings: he mimics the peasant's speech acts, that also bring a "shock of mild surprise" and allow the imagination to soar. Interaction between the real human beings and the poet is initiated. By approaching man, the poet comes to learn that it is possible to get access to transcendent vision. He also comes to learn that the human form itself can be

perceived as sublime — a realization which, eventually, leads to the spiry rock vision of the real-life Lake District shepherd.

Enough of humble arguments; recal,  
My Song! those high emotions which thy voice  
Has heretofore made known; that bursting forth  
Of sympathy, inspiring and inspired,  
When everywhere a vital pulse was felt,  
And all the several frames of things, like stars,  
Through every magnitude distinguishable,  
Shone mutually indebted, or half lost  
Each in the other's blaze, a galaxy  
Of life and glory. In the midst stood Man,  
Outwardly, inwardly contemplated,  
As, of all visible natures, crown, though born  
Of dust, and kindred to the worm, a Being,  
Both in perception and discernment, first  
In every capability of rapture,  
Through the divine effect of power and love;  
As, more than anything we know, instinct  
With godhead, and, by reason and by will,  
Acknowledging dependency sublime.

Ere long, the lonely mountains left, I moved,  
Begirt, from day to day, with temporal shapes  
Of vice and folly thrust upon my view,  
Objects of sport, and ridicule, and scorn,  
Manners and characters discriminate,  
And little bustling passions that eclipsed,  
As well they might, the impersonated thought,  
The idea, or abstraction of the kind.<sup>69</sup>

With the above, the first movement of *The Prelude* rounds off. The poet has come a long way from the wilfulness and bodily freedom of his first chapters of life to the spiritual vision of the sublimity of any human being in his or her gestaltic form, which points to infinity. The inner richness of all human beings, with whom the poet comes into contact by now, has made him appreciate and admire man in general. That man should be free in his noble aspirations is the logical conclusion the poet comes to. And since some unfair social regimes

deprive men of the most essential humanness, they should be reformed, if not peacefully, then by force: *liberté, fraternité, égalité!*

Berdyayev, who lived through another just but bloody revolution, and who used to entertain exactly the same ideas about general justice and socially determined freedom, who also experienced first-hand the effects of such a fair revolution, writes years later:

Но такъ сложна чловѣческая природа и такъ запутано его существованіе, что изъ одного рабства онъ можетъ впасть въ другое, впасть въ абстрактную духовность, въ детерминирующую власть общей идеи....

Основной вопросъ реализаціи личности не есть вопросъ о побѣдѣ надъ детерминаціей матеріи. Такова лишь одна сторона. Основной вопросъ есть вопросъ о цѣлостной побѣдѣ надъ рабствомъ.... Духовная побѣда есть не только побѣда надъ элементарной зависимостью чловѣка отъ матеріи. Еще болѣе трудна побѣда надъ обманными иллюзіями, ввергающими чловѣка въ рабство, наименѣе сознаваемое. (206)

[But so complex is human nature and so entangled man's existence, that he may fall out of one form of slavery into another, he may fall into abstract spirituality, into the determining power of a common idea. . . .

The fundamental question of the realization of personality is not a question of victory over the determinism of matter, that is one side of the subject only. The fundamental question is the question of an entire victory over slavery. . . . The spiritual victory is not only victory over the elementary dependence of man upon matter. Still more difficult is the victory over deceptive illusions which precipitate man into slavery in its least recognizable form.]<sup>70</sup>

How abstract were the young Wordsworth's notions of justice and *liberté*? The poet does not conceal his sincere but over-generalized attitude: "My heart was all given to people," says he (IX, 124). He praises "The faculties of men" in general (240). And he sounds baffled when, for some reason, he is at risk of appearing to be unfeeling. Why in the world, he seems to

wonder, even when he physically touches the ruins of the Bastille and pockets one of those stones (much as in childhood he was eager to make off with a boat), is the emotion missing?

Where silent zephyrs sported with the dust  
Of the Bastile, I sate in the open sun,  
And from the rubbish gathered up a stone,  
And pocketed the relic, in the guise  
Of an enthusiast; yet, in honest truth,  
I looked for something that I could not find,  
Affecting more emotion than I felt.<sup>71</sup>

Emotions triggered by a concrete human being prove much more touching than those of the general man or of the general nation. The poet, then unawares, makes the same observation:

For 'tis most certain, that these various sights,  
However potent their first shock, with me  
Appeared to recompense the traveller's pains  
Less than the painted Magdalene of Le Brun,  
A beauty exquisitely wrought, with hair  
Dishevelled, gleaming eyes, and rueful cheek  
Pale and bedropped with everflowing tears.<sup>72</sup>

The revolutionary Book IX reads as elegiac, because Wordsworth narrates either the stories of people he knew and loved, as about Michel Beupuy (whose “sword was haunted by his touch / Continually, like an uneasy place / In his own body” (IX, 159-61)) or the romances of Vaudracour and Julia (the 1805 text only), of residents of Chambord (IX, 480-95) and others. All of those people perished; and the “chivalrous delight” linked with the revolutionary chapter of Wordsworth’s life is tempered. This Book does not have any developed spots of time, either. And none of the sketches of the human beings there, if given at all, are gestaltic. The “shapeless eagerness” (IX, 19) of the poet is literally shapeless. The materiality of the muscles’ movement

dominates Wordsworth's memories once again. But now, these portraits represent the pain and suffering of other human beings, rather than the poet's own movement. And now, it is against that suffering that Beauvuy intends to fight:

And when we chanced  
One day to meet a hunger-bitten girl,  
Who crept along fitting her languid gait  
Unto a heifer's motion, by a cord  
Tied to her arm, and picking thus from the lane  
Its sustenance, while the girl with pallid hands  
Was busy knitting in a heartless mood  
Of solitude, and at the sight my friend  
In agitation said, "'Tis against *that*  
That we are fighting.'<sup>73</sup>

Objectivization here assumes yet another guise: it is not now, as before, the separateness of the spoil from the jealous boy, who wants to steal it. The separateness now, more than ever, is that of a means from the end, of the present from the future. In the future, the revolutionaries were hoping for the "better days / To all mankind" (531-32).

Революції преслідують великія цѣли освобожденія чловѣка отъ угнетенія и порабощенія. Тѣ, которые готовили революцію, были героическими людьми, способными на жертвы и отдачу своей жизни идеѣ. Но въ эпоху своего торжества революції истребляютъ свободу безъ остатка, допускаютъ ее гораздо меньше, чѣмъ эпохи дореволюціонныя, и дѣятели революції ставшіе у власти, бывають свирѣпыми, жестокими и запятнываютъ себя чловѣческой кровью. Одинъ и тотъ же революціонеръ до революції и въ разгаръ революції — совершенно разные люди, даже лицо мѣняется, нельзя узнать лица... Роковая ошибка дѣятелей революції связана съ отношеніемъ къ времени. Настоящее разсматривается исключительно, какъ средство, будущее же какъ цѣль. Поэтому для настоящаго утверждается насиліе и порабощеніе, жестокость и убійство, для будущаго же свобода и чловѣчность, для настоящаго кошмарная жизнь, для будущаго райская жизнь. Но великая тайна скрыта въ томъ, что средство важнѣе цѣли.

Именно средства, путь свидетельствуют о духе, которым проникнуты люди. По чистоте средств, по чистоте путей узнаете, какого люди духа. (162)

[Revolutions pursue the great end of liberating man from oppression and slavery. The men who have prepared the way for revolution have been heroic people, who were capable of sacrifice and of giving their lives for an idea. But at the period of their triumph revolutions entirely obliterate every trace of freedom. They tolerate it to a much smaller extent than the period which preceded the revolution, and the makers of the revolution when they have power in their hands become ferocious and cruel, and stain themselves with human blood. One and the same revolutionary is an entirely different man before the revolution and in the flaming outburst of it. He is two quite distinct persons. Even his face is altered. You cannot recognize his face. The horror which is associated with revolution certainly does not belong to the ends which it usually pursues; these ends are commonly freedom, justice, equality, brotherhood, and the like exalted values. The horror is associated with the means it employs. Revolution seeks triumph at all costs and whatever may happen. Triumph is achieved by force. This force inevitably turns into violence. There is a fateful mistake of the makers of revolution which is connected with their relation to time. The present is regarded exclusively as a means, the future as an end, and on this account violence and enslavement, cruelty and murder are affirmed for the present, but for the future, freedom and humanity. For the present, life is a nightmare, in the future, life is paradise.

But there is a great mystery concealed in the fact that the means are more important than the end. It is precisely the means they employ, the way they take, which bear witness to the spirit by which people are imbued.]<sup>74</sup>

The London of Book VII is nothing by comparison with the hellish Great Terror of Book X. The “Oh, happy time of youthful lovers”! (553) of Book IX ends up being “an imbecile mind” (IX, 585). Fear and objectivization rule the day. The only human shapes caught by the eye are the heaps — not simply of garments this time — but of dead bodies. The word “liberty” no longer makes sense:

Amid the depth  
Of those enormities, even thinking minds

Forgot, at seasons, whence they had their being;  
Forgot that such a sound was ever heard  
As Liberty upon earth: yet all beneath  
Her innocent authority was wrought,  
Nor could have been, without her blessed name.  
The illustrious wife of Roland, in the hour  
Of her composure, felt that agony,  
And gave it vent in her last words. O Friend!  
It was a lamentable time for man,  
Whether a hope had e'er been his or not;  
A woful time for them whose hopes survived  
The shock; most woful for those few who still  
Were flattered, and had trust in human kind:  
They had the deepest feeling of the grief.<sup>75</sup>

Only in Book XII does the poet refuse to fragment happiness and liberty into a means to an end. He looks at his wife, Mary, and learns from her to appreciate and better the here and now: “She welcomed what was given, and craved no more” (XII, 158), admiringly says the poet. Following her example, the poet approaches the topic of the spots of time, those refreshing, renovating moments that mitigate suffering and lead towards the sublime, and then to transcendent. One such spot was occasioned by his father’s death at Christmas. However grievous the event, the poet manages to find peace and quiet when meditating on it:

Yet in the deepest passion, I bowed low  
To God, Who thus corrected my desires;  
And, afterwards, the wind and sleety rain,  
And all the business of the elements,  
The single sheep, and the one blasted tree,  
And the bleak music of that old stone wall,  
The noise of wood and water, and the mist  
That on the line of each of those two roads  
Advanced in such indisputable shapes;  
All these were kindred spectacles and sounds  
To which I oft repaired, and thence would drink,  
As at a fountain.<sup>76</sup>



“Perfect love,” that the poet manages to achieve here, “casteth out fear.” With the same attentive, or “worthy” eye, the poet looks at the human being again and values him not in an abstract general way. A concrete man who is nearer ourselves now outweighs “that idol proudly named / ‘The Wealth of Nations’” by Adam Smith and other theories (76-78, XIII). Now Wordsworth gains

A more judicious knowledge of the worth  
And dignity of individual man,  
No composition of the brain, but man  
Of whom we read, the man whom we behold  
With our own eyes.<sup>77</sup>

Likewise, the poet now repudiates the general and refuses to “level down the truth / To certain general notions” (XIII, 212-13), be it a universal book in a form of the shell, which stands for all poetry, but speaks no concrete familiar language, or be it a perfect cross-like human form, which has no concrete dear face. As Berdyaev, Wordsworth starts differentiating between the general and the concrete, siding with the latter.

Отношение личности къ универсальному совсѣмъ не есть отношение къ родовому, общему. Тутъ мы подходимъ къ самой трудной проблемѣ персоналистической философіи и трудность тутъ связана съ навыками мысли, порожденными ложной постановкой проблемы номинализма и реализма. Каково отношение личности къ общностямъ и къ объектному міру? Вѣрно, что *universalia* находятся не *ante rem* (платоновскій реализмъ, онъ же идеализмъ) и не *post rem* (эмпирической номинализмъ), а *in rebus*. Для интересующей насъ проблемы это значитъ, что универсальное находится въ индивидуальномъ, т.-е. въ личности, не какъ производное отъ количественнаго опыта, а какъ изначальное качество.[...] Универсальное не есть общее, универсальное не абстрактное, а конкретное, т.-е. есть полнота. Универсальное и тѣмъ менѣе общее не есть самостоятельное существо, оно находится въ единичныхъ существахъ, *in rebus* по старой терминологіи. Индивидуальное совсѣмъ не есть часть

универсального.[...] Универсальное, воплощенное въ индивидуальномъ, преодолеваетъ противоположность между универсальнымъ и индивидуальнымъ. Универсальное есть опытъ въ субъектъ, а не реальность въ объектъ. (33-34)

[The relation of personality to the universal is certainly not a relation to the species and the common. Here we approach the most difficult problem of personalist philosophy, and the difficulty is connected with habits of thought which arise from a false way of stating the problem of nominalism and realism. What is the relation of personality to communities and to the world of objects? It is true that *universalia* are not *ante rem* (platonian realism, which is the same as idealism) and not *post rem* (empirical nominalism) but *in rebus*. For the problem which concerns us now this means that the universal is to be found in what is individual, I.e. In personality, not as derived from quantitative experience, but as a primary quality. . . . The universal is not the common <the general>; it is not abstract, but concrete, I.e. It is plenitude <wholeness, fullness>. The universal is all the less common in that it is not independent being, it is to be found in single beings, *in rebus*, according to the old terminology. The individual is by no means a part of the universal. . . . The universal, embodied in the individual, overcomes the antithesis between the universal and the individual. The universal is an essay, an attempt, <experience> on the part of the subject, not a reality in the object.]<sup>78</sup>

Interestingly, having chosen the concrete over the general, an existentialist does not need to repudiate the universal. That is, by recognizing the distant cross-like shepherd as an abstraction and too general a vision, the poet still can see the cross-like human gestalt in people who are close to him; he can recognize the universal in the concrete and singular.

Остается логическое противоположеніе общаго и единичнаго, универсальнаго и индивидуальнаго. Но это противоположеніе есть порожденіе объективирующей мысли. Внутри существованія единичное, индивидуальное универсально, конкретно-универсально и никакого универсальнаго, какъ общаго, не существуетъ. «Лошади вообще» и «человѣка вообще» не существуетъ и нѣтъ единства всѣхъ отдѣльныхъ лошадей и людей, какъ «общаго», но въ отдѣльной лошади и въ отдѣльномъ человѣкѣ существуетъ универсальность (не общность) лошадиного и человѣческаго существованія. Единство въ реальности не

походити на единство въ мысли. Универсальность отдельнаго чловѣка мы постигаемъ не черезъ отвлеченіе общихъ намъ чловѣческихъ свойствъ, а черезъ погруженіе въ его единичность. (64)

[There remains the logical antithesis of the common and the unique and particular, of the universal and the individual; but this antithesis is brought into being by objectivizing thought. Within existence the one, the individual, is universal, concretely universal, and no universal as common exists. "Horse in general" and "man in general" do not exist. There is no unity of all separate horses and men as "common." But in the separate horse and in the separate man exists the universality (not the commonness) of equine and human existence. Unity in reality does not resemble unity in thought. We arrive at the universality of a separate man not by abstracting the properties common to us human beings but by submersion in his oneness <by getting through to his uniqueness, singularity>.]<sup>79</sup>

This Berdyaev's explanation of the universal as the concrete, sheds light on what Wordsworth flashes out in his poem. The pastoral prettiness of young lasses, the elegiac dignity of the drowned figure give way to the shepherds, abstract and universal in their remoteness. And when, during the Great Terror, the general and abstract human figures become lost in the formless void of general masses and among the heaps of dead bodies, the poet comes to embrace the value of the human concreteness. "Uncouthness" does not frighten Wordsworth from that point on. The reserve he felt with the discharged soldier vanishes; the poet freely talks to the poor and vagrant people on the road and learns their unique stories:

Awed have I been by strolling Bedlamites;  
From many other uncouth vagrants (passed  
In fear) have walked with quicker step; but why  
Take note of this? When I began to enquire,  
To watch and question those I met, and speak  
Without reserve to them, the lonely roads  
Were open schools in which I daily read  
With most delight the passions of mankind,

Whether by words, looks, sighs, or tears, revealed;  
There saw into the depth of human souls,  
Souls that appear to have no depth at all  
To careless eyes.<sup>80</sup>

At the same time, Wordsworth continues, he does not justify oppression. The social aspect of slavery should be dealt with, as well:

True is it, where oppression worse than death  
Salutes the being at his birth, where grace  
Of culture hath been utterly unknown,  
And poverty and labour in excess  
From day to day pre-occupy the ground  
Of the affections, and to Nature's self  
Oppose a deeper nature; there, indeed,  
Love cannot be; nor does it thrive with ease  
Among the close and overcrowded haunts  
Of cities, where the human heart is sick,  
And the eye feeds it not, and cannot feed.<sup>81</sup>

Berdyayev would have agreed with such a perspective:

Рабы должны быть освобождены путем социального акта, но они внутри могут остаться рабами, победа над рабством есть духовный акт. Социальное и духовное освобождение должно было бы идти рука об руку. (95)

[Slaves ought to be set free by social action, but even so they might still remain slaves inwardly. The victory over slavery is a spiritual act. Social and spiritual liberation ought to go hand in hand.]<sup>82</sup>

Having shifted from the general to the individual, the poet promises another vision “of a new world — a world, too, that was fit / To be transmitted, and to other eyes / Made visible” (XIII, 370-72), that is visible not to the bodily eye, and which is the vision on Mount Snowdon in the closing Book XIV of *The Prelude*.

In the second movement of *The Prelude*, Wordsworth transcends the determinism of powerful ideas, the abstractions which do not allow him to see

a concrete human being behind the general slogans. The concrete hungry girl with a heifer whom the poet meets in France should not be helped exclusively in the happy future: she may not survive the revolution itself. She should be helped right away, and she should also grow spiritually to become a free person. The poet starts seeing liberty not as the end, but as a process of growth. Otherwise, it is terror and unstoppable violent dismembering that hold sway; the heroes would transform into villains, as it happened with Robespierre. When the poet realizes that freedom is a matter of spirit, he starts paying more attention to the individual humans. Again, he is capable of seeing their sublime form. Those people are not necessarily before his bodily eye; they can be long passed away; still, Wordsworth is capable of recognizing their individual value, and he can conjure up their individual sublime forms. Sheer transgression in social matters is as unfortunate as stealing. In the end, it is the transcendent communion with concrete individual human beings, as with nature, that liberates both man and society. And the poet turns to Book XIV to dwell on this discovery.

### **End Notes**

1 See Martin Price, "The Sublime Poem: Pictures and Powers," *Yale Review* 58 (1968), 194-213.

2 *Slavery and Freedom*, pp. 137-38.

3 Making liberal use of the term "transcendence," on the pages of *Slavery and Freedom*, Berdyaev does not evoke the word "sublime" ("сублимальное" ["sublimálne" in transliteration]) even though he occasionally resorts to the "elevated," "lofty" ("возвышенное") but not as a term with a clear definition. One of the explanations of such terminology is the difference between the English and Russian critical texts, of course. In modern English criticism, the term "sublime" appears in such diverse contexts as of Longinus (standing for "περι Υψους"), of Immanuel Kant ("Erhaben"), of Sigmund

Freud (“Sublimierung”), of various post-Burkean thinkers (“the sublime”), and so forth. (See also Twitchell, pp. 1-39; N. Trott; Monk; M. Nicolson.) I employ this term here as it appears in the British and American schools, for in the Russian intellectual discourse of today “сублимальное” [*sublimalnoe*], unlike the “lofty,” is primarily a Freudian term.

4 Chavkin, p. 453.

5 Stallknecht, p. 201.

6 Ogden, pp. 291 and 293.

7 Ogden, “The Structure of Imaginative Experience in Wordsworth’s *Prelude*,” 292-93.

8 *The Prelude*, Book XIV, 74-77.

9 Ogden, pp. 294 and on.

10 Even though, keeping in mind Wordsworth’s insistence on the importance of so-called “power” that should capture the attention of the on-looker provided that the viewed object has sublime qualities, I do not completely agree with Matthew C. Brennan’s judgment in “The ‘Ghastly Figure Moving at My Side’: The Discharged Soldier as Wordsworth’s Shadow” — which is informed by other respectable critics as well, such as Richard J. Onorato, whom Brennan quotes, — that the young poet’s “first reaction to the poor veteran is not sympathy but “specious cowardice” — he coldly “gawks at the miserable man as if he were a circus freak; and even when he does act charitably, he does so in a condescending, reproachful way” (p. 19), Brennan’s discussion of the soldier as Wordsworth’s shadowy “alter ego” in the terms of Jungian depth psychology is informative. However interesting this position is, I tend to see the soldier as an autonomous human being, whose image was shadowed upon the poet’s eye and then was stored in the poet’s memory.

11 Book IV, 440-44; italics mine.

12 Ibid., 444-46.

13 Ibid., 460-68.

14 Stoddard, p. 32.

15 Gary Harrison, in “Wordsworth’s Leech Gatherer: Liminal Power and the ‘Spirit of Independence,’” also discusses eighteenth- and nineteenth-century definitions of independence.

16 Beer, p. 203.

- 17 Ibid., p. 204.
- 18 Ibid., p. 206.
- 19 Ibid., p. 207.
- 20 *Romantic Horizons*, p. 62.
- 21 Beer, "Nature and Liberty: the Linking of Unstable Concepts," pp. 207-09.
- 22 *The Visionary Company*, p. 153.
- 23 *The Prelude*, Book I, 306-25.
- 24 Book I, 326-56.
- 25 Book I, 389-400.
- 26 Book I, 401-416.
- 27 Book I, 447-60.
- 28 See M. Wilson's relevant discussion of these lines in "Bodies in Motion: Wordsworth's Myths of Natural Philosophy," pp. 204-05.
- 29 Book I, 491-98.
- 30 Book I, 31-38.
- 31 Ibid., 554-58.
- 32 *Slavery and Freedom*, pp. 130-31.
- 33 *Slavery and Freedom*, p. 135.
- 34 Book II, 202-03.
- 35 Book II, 54-77.
- 36 Book II, 164-74.
- 37 Book II, 115-128.
- 38 Book II, 294-306.
- 39 *Slavery and Freedom*, p. 136.

- 40 Book II, 397-418.
- 41 Book XIV, 112-18.
- 42 *Slavery and Freedom*, p. 100.
- 43 *Slavery and Freedom*, p. 117.
- 44 Book III, 619-31.
- 45 Book III, 354-62.
- 46 *Ibid.*, 260-77.
- 47 *Slavery and Freedom*, p. 120.
- 48 Book III, 286-324.
- 49 *Slavery and Freedom*, p. 124.
- 50 *Slavery and Freedom*, pp. 124-25.
- 51 Book III, 496-505.
- 52 *Ibid.*, 58-63.
- 53 Book IV, 209-30.
- 54 *Slavery and Freedom*, p. 118.
- 55 Book IV, 323-48.
- 56 *Ibid.*, 353-69.
- 57 It is noteworthy that the Arab-Quixote has no definite *human* form; as for the geometric shapes of the stone and the shell he carries, their forms are sublime and perfect in another, not human, alien, way. That is why the poet does not transcend their strange fanciful “horizon”: the Arab-Quixote, his “books,” and the dream slip away.
- 58 Book V, 448-59.
- 59 *Slavery and Freedom*, p. 122.
- 60 *Slavery and Freedom*, pp. 122-23.



- 61 *Slavery and Freedom*, p. 123.
- 62 Book V, 364-97.
- 63 Ibid., pp. 115-16.
- 64 Book VI, 142-67.
- 65 Book VI, 23-35.
- 66 Ibid., 52-65.
- 67 *Slavery and Freedom*, p. 47.
- 68 Ibid., p. 48.
- 69 Book VIII, 476-502.
- 70 *Slavery and Freedom*, pp. 248-49.
- 71 Book IX, 67-73.
- 72 Book IX, 74-81.
- 73 Ibid., 509-518.
- 74 *Slavery and Freedom*, pp. 194-95.
- 75 Book X, 374-89.
- 76 Book XII, 315-26.
- 77 Book XIII, 80-84.
- 78 *Slavery and Freedom*, pp. 37-38.
- 79 Ibid., pp. 74-75.
- 80 Book XIII, 156-67.
- 81 Book XIII, 195-205.
- 82 *Slavery and Freedom*, p.112.

## CHAPTER 5: WORDSWORTH'S TRANS-FIGURATION ON MOUNT SNOWDON AND "GENUINE LIBERTY": CONCLUSION

In criticism concerned with Wordsworth's interest in Nature and landscape, the Snowdon vision is traditionally compared to the Simplon Pass passage or to the poet's Godlike hour, when he recognizes his vocation to be a "dedicated spirit." Thus, for Geoffrey Hartman, when he investigates how, in Wordsworth, Nature leads beyond itself, the comparison is with the Alpine Crossing, with the result that both spots of time present "a culminating evidence that imagination and the light of nature are one." In effect, Hartman advocates "the certainty that there is an imagination in nature analogous to that in man."<sup>1</sup> For M. H. Abrams, who is more concerned with Wordsworth's "crisis of identity," when reading *The Prelude* as "a poem which incorporates the discovery of its own *ars poetica*," the comparison is with the poet's Godlike hour of Book VI, when the young poet recognizes his vocation to be a "dedicated spirit." As for the Snowdon vision, Abrams continues, "What has been revealed to Wordsworth in this symbolic landscape is the grand locus of *The Recluse* which he announced in the Prospectus."<sup>2</sup> This last spot of time in *The Prelude* is so all-embracing and resolves so many issues brought up in the poem, that it is amenable to a variety of comparisons, depending on the critic's perspective.<sup>3</sup>

From my perspective, in which I trace the sublimation of the human form, the ascent of Snowdon epitomizes the vision of the spiry-rock shepherd. The reader, conditioned by Wordsworth through repetition of patterns, in which the human form becomes more shapely defined with almost each spot of

time, can recognize in the figure of the poet the same striding, sun-contoured, and “stationed above all height” human forms Wordsworth himself once discerned in the shepherds.

It was a close, warm, breezeless summer night,  
Wan, dull, and glaring, with a dripping fog  
Low-hung and thick that covered all the sky;  
But, undiscouraged, we began to climb  
The mountain-side. The mist soon girt us round,  
And, after ordinary travellers' talk  
With our conductor, pensively we sank  
Each into commerce with his private thoughts:  
Thus did we breast the ascent, and by myself  
Was nothing either seen or heard that checked  
Those musings or diverted, save that once  
The shepherd's lurcher, who, among the crags,  
Had to his joy unearthed a hedgehog, teased  
His coiled-up prey with barkings turbulent.  
This small adventure, for even such it seemed  
In that wild place and at the dead of night,  
Being over and forgotten, on we wound  
In silence as before. With forehead bent  
Earthward, as if in opposition set  
Against an enemy, I panted up  
With eager pace, and no less eager thoughts.  
Thus might we wear a midnight hour away,  
Ascending at loose distance each from each,  
And I as chanced, the foremost of the band;  
When at my feet the ground appeared to brighten,  
And with a step or two seemed brighter still;  
Nor was time given to ask or learn the cause,  
For instantly a light upon the turf  
Fell like a flash, and lo! as I looked up,  
The Moon hung naked in a firmament  
Of azure without cloud, and at my feet  
Rested a silent sea of hoary mist.<sup>4</sup>

Here, the giant shepherd, striding through the fog, with his sheep like “Greenland bears,” is writ large from the inner perspective. If not the sheep, another companion quadruped, the shepherd's lurcher, teasingly lurks in and whirls out from the white thickness of a mist. Meanwhile, the men keep

stalking up a mountain, surrounded by silence and sunk into their own hidden thoughts, as if into a fog itself. It is a measured and directed movement of the striding poet that singles him out from the mysterious background. The two other human figures, the guiding shepherd and Robert Jones, labor up in the same manner, and the poet makes the vision of the whole group sneak on the reader's eyes.

Suddenly, in symmetry with the sun-drenched shepherd whose form flashed upon the poet's eye in Book VIII, Wordsworth separates himself from the foggy group, revealing himself as "the foremost of the band" and brightened by the flashing light (34-39). Even syntactically, the poet positions himself between the reader and the source of light, which, at a glance, turns out to be the moon: "and lo! as I looked up, / The Moon hung naked in a firmament." First, in his address to the reader, he names himself, and only then, the moon. The poet is also poised between the moon, hanging above in the cloudless sky, and the obscurity of the hoary mist, curling below, "at his feet." Thus, a moon-contoured Wordsworth is stationed on top of the world, as the cross-like shepherd once was. The poet does not explicitly compare himself with the "aerial cross," but if the repeated pattern is to be completed, readers may take this comparison to its logical conclusion by creatively re-experiencing the previous spots of time in their minds. Then the poet's transfiguration, out of the "uncouth" fog-hidden form into the sublime index of delight, can be fulfilled.

As we see, up to this point, the rhythm and the pattern of the human sketches repeat that of the mounting shepherds in Book VIII. The difference is

that the human forms we perceive in the Snowdon passage are not abstract: they are definitely not portraits of unknown generic shepherds. Despite their universality, they do not look like abstracted types, because they are being discerned in the figure of a very real and known person, Wordsworth himself.

The concreteness of and close familiarity with the human beings of Book XIV is reinforced by Wordsworth from the very beginning of this Book. The shepherd, who is to be the “trusty guide” during the ascent of Snowdon, sounds like a friend or a good reliable acquaintance, rather than an unapproachable stranger. Also, unlike the Discharged Soldier or the Arab-Quixote, he is not frightfully and tenaciously “uncouth:” the threshold of his house is not uncrossable; his night rest is not imperative; the cheer of “refreshment” is not denied.

In one of those excursions (may they ne'er  
Fade from remembrance!) through the Northern tracts  
Of Cambria ranging with a youthful friend,  
I left Bethgelert's huts at couching-time,  
And westward took my way, to see the sun  
Rise from the top of Snowdon. To the door  
Of a rude cottage at the mountain's base  
We came, and roused the shepherd who attends  
The adventurous stranger's steps, a trusty guide;  
Then, cheered by short refreshment, sallied forth. <sup>5</sup>

Embarking on his literary walk with friends, Wordsworth would end it and the whole poem with dedications and gratitude to even more concrete and familiar friends of his who supported him in his poetic strivings: sister Dorothy, Calvert, Coleridge. Dorothy, he says, with her quiet and mild ways, strengthened him and motivated “to penetrate the lofty and the low” as does “one essence of

pervading light” (271-75). She also was his inspiration on the way towards his recognition “of more refined humanity:”

At a time  
When Nature, destined to remain so long  
Foremost in my affections, had fallen back  
Into a second place, pleased to become  
A handmaid to a nobler than herself,  
When every day brought with it some new sense  
Of exquisite regard for common things,  
And all the earth was budding with these gifts  
Of more refined humanity, thy breath,  
Dear Sister! was a kind of gentler spring  
That went before my steps.<sup>6</sup>

Raisley Calvert, the brother of one of Wordsworth’s school-friends, who in 1795, dying of consumption, left William a very handsome sum of £ 900 to continue writing poetry, is also cordially remembered: “He cleared a passage for me, and the stream / Flowed in the bent of Nature,” utters the poet thankfully (370-71).

The poet friend Samuel Taylor Coleridge, finally, is the one to whom *The Prelude* is lovingly dedicated. He is the “capacious Soul” (277), whose “kindred influence” to Wordsworth’s “heart of hearts / Did also find its way” (281-82). And Wordsworth exclaims:

beloved Friend!  
When, looking back, thou seest, in clearer view  
Than any liveliest sight of yesterday,  
That summer, under whose indulgent skies,  
Upon smooth Quantock’s airy ridge we roved  
Unchecked, or loitered ’mid her sylvan coombs,  
Thou in bewitching words, with happy heart,  
Didst chaunt the vision of that Ancient Man,  
The bright-eyed Mariner, and rueful woes  
Didst utter the Lady Christabel;  
And I, associate with such labor, steeped  
In soft forgetfulness the livelong hours,  
Murmuring of him who, joyous hap, was found,

After the perils of his moonlight ride,  
Near the loud waterfall; or her who sate  
In misery near the miserable Thorn;  
When thou dost to that summer turn thy thoughts,  
And hast before thee all which then we were,  
To thee, in memory of that happiness,  
It will be known, by thee at least, my Friend!  
Felt, that the history of a Poet's mind  
Is labor not unworthy of regard:  
To thee the work shall justify itself.<sup>7</sup>

In all three of Wordsworth's dedications, the love of humankind is that of concrete human beings. He invites Coleridge to see "in clearer view / Than any liveliest sight of yesterday" both themselves and their literary characters. Wordsworth does not need to paint gestalten for Coleridge: the creative mind can supply them all by itself, much as it was capable of bringing to life the Ancient Mariner, Geraldine, and Christabel. Wordsworth, on the other hand, also has graduated from the murmuring descriptions of the "uncouth" shapes of the Idiot boy and Martha Ray, lost and camouflaged in the mystified landscapes, to the clarified vision of the real people's gestalten, as they appear in the Snowdon episode.

For all their universality, the clear-cut sublime human shapes Wordsworth evokes directly — or by association with previous passages of *The Prelude* — are far from being abstract; they are concrete and particular. In that trick of linking the universal with the particular and concrete rather than with the general and abstract, Wordsworth again takes an "existentialist" stand, which Berdyaev articulates in philosophical theory.<sup>8</sup>

In Book XIV, the concrete poet has a concrete visual experience. And, unlike the shepherds of Book VIII, whose sublimity was prepared from without

by the Natural sublime, in Book XIV the poet's human form is made apparent first, and it sets the sublime tone before the Natural sublime comes into view. Only after we have envisioned the set of sketches of the climbing poet, only after he has been gestaltically stationed on top of the world, "above all height," reminding us of the aerial "index" of a shepherd, a shift in camera view occurs, and the poet tells what sublimity the cross-like shepherd might have projected onto the world while on his spiry rock. The Snowdon vision unfolds. Imagination usurps the vision, and other kinds of sublime "horizons" — beside the clearly outlined form of the poet — find way into the poet's description. Beyond those horizons the transcendent roars. They are Nature's etherial vault, the full-orbed moon, and, especially, the rift in the mist.

A hundred hills their dusky backs upheaved  
All over this still ocean; and beyond,  
Far, far beyond, the solid vapours stretched,  
In headlands, tongues, and promontory shapes,  
Into the main Atlantic, that appeared  
To dwindle, and give up his majesty,  
Usurped upon far as the sight could reach.  
Not so the ethereal vault; encroachment none  
Was there, nor loss; only the inferior stars  
Had disappeared, or shed a fainter light  
In the clear presence of the full-orbed Moon,  
Who, from her sovereign elevation, gazed  
Upon the billowy ocean, as it lay  
All meek and silent, save that through a rift —  
Not distant from the shore whereon we stood,  
A fixed, abysmal, gloomy, breathing-place —  
Mounted the roar of waters, torrents, streams  
Innumerable, roaring with one voice  
Heard over earth and sea, and, in that hour,  
For so it seems, felt by the starry heavens.<sup>9</sup>

Under this extreme condition, on the border of infinity (which sometimes is linked with the terror of death; sometimes, with the sublime), man



comes to perceive the core of his existence, his *existencia*. The poet is aware of the whole vision, and at the same time, he is conscious of his own presence and existence there, when he declares, “we stood.” The unity of subject and object, of the perceiver and of the world around and within him, as inseparably fused together but not defaced by each other, is existential. Reading the passage in an existential light, I see no dominated or dominator in this communion described by Wordsworth, unlike M. H. Abrams, who, drawing on the Fichtean and Hegelian alienation between master and servant, reads the Snowdon passage as continuous struggle of the mind against the outer world for supremacy. Mind and “not-mind,” in his reading, pull in different directions, with the result that at the moment of vision, a balance is achieved between those separate forces. In Abrams’s reading, the separateness of the mind from the outer things is never utterly transcended: autonomy on either side is never sacrificed. It is that autonomy which Abrams stresses when interpreting such phrases as “interchangeable supremacy,” and “mutual domination” of mind and Nature. And hence, Abrams glosses, “this sovereignty and peace, translated from the political state to the state of the perceiving mind, is the essential human freedom.”<sup>10</sup> In my existential reading, by contrast, the emphasis is on “interchangeable” rather than on “supremacy.”

The loving unity of the poet and the world modulates back into sublimity when the transcendent experience subsides. The poet is aware of the

visionary threshold again, and three reflecting human shapes, of all three fellow climbers reflect themselves upon the worthy eye:

When into air had partially dissolved  
That vision, given to spirits of the night  
And three chance human wanderers, in calm thought  
Reflected, it appeared to me the type  
Of a majestic intellect, its acts  
And its possessions, what it has and craves,  
What in itself it is, and would become.  
There I beheld the emblem of a mind  
That feeds upon infinity, that broods  
Over the dark abyss, intent to hear  
Its voices issuing forth to silent light  
In one continuous stream; a mind sustained  
By recognitions of transcendent power,  
In sense conducting to ideal form,  
In soul of more than mortal privilege.<sup>11</sup>

The emblem of the mind and the ideal form perceivable through senses is absolutely not without a human element for Wordsworth. Such a poet's attention to the human form is made overt in his latest and much revised version of *The Prelude*, for it is there that the poet adds the above passage. In the corresponding lines of the 1805 text, the human forms are not yet evident:

A meditation rose in me that night  
Upon the lonely mountain when the scene  
Had passed away, and it appeared to me  
The perfect image of a mighty mind,  
Of one that feeds upon infinity,  
That is exalted by an under-presence,  
The sense of God, or whatsoe'er is dim  
Or vast in its own being — above all,  
One function of such mind had Nature there  
Exhibited by putting forth, and that  
With circumstance most awful and sublime:  
That domination which she oftentimes  
Exerts upon the outward face of things,  
So moulds them, and endues, abstracts, combines,  
Or, by abrupt and unhabitual influence  
Doth make one object so impress itself  
Upon all others, and pervades them so,

That even the grossest minds must see and hear,  
And cannot chuse but feel.<sup>12</sup>

Returning to 1850, we note how Wordsworth describes the “glorious faculty / That higher minds bear with them as their own.” It is not the mind’s dominance I see him praising, but what Berdyaev a personalist would call, “communality that passes from within outward,” meaning that “Personality must be God-human, whereas society must be human.”<sup>13</sup> This personalistic insistence upon the creative and forming impulse of the “higher mind” that strives for emotional unity with the world leads to Wordsworth’s recognition of the “kindred mutations” abroad, rather than of those that should be overpowered.

This is the very spirit in which they [higher minds] deal  
With the whole compass of the universe:  
They from their native selves can send abroad  
Kindred mutations; for themselves create  
A like existence; and, whene’er it dawns  
Created for them, catch it, or are caught  
By its inevitable mastery.<sup>14</sup>

And further, yet another human-like gestalt singles itself out on the principle of common movement, angelically holding “fit converse with the spiritual world”:

Like angels stopped upon the wing by sound  
Of harmony from Heaven’s remotest spheres.  
Them the enduring and the transient both  
Serve to exalt; they build up greatest things  
From least suggestions; ever on the watch,  
Willing to work and to be wrought upon,  
They need not extraordinary calls  
To rouse them; in a world of life they live,  
By sensible impressions not enthralled,  
But by their quickening impulse made more prompt  
To hold fit converse with the spiritual world,

And with the generations of mankind  
Spread over time, past, present, and to come,  
Age after age, till Time shall be no more.<sup>15</sup>

“A like existence” is led by many human beings, in various epochs and places. Historical pessimism and renunciation of fragmented time, characteristic of both “disillusioned” romantics and of existentialists, leads to eschatology. Chronological, historical time is transcended by the poet again. “Genuine liberty,” in his view, becomes not the “ends” of social development or of violent revolution, but primarily the “means,” the process of personalistic growth itself. To know and practice such liberty is a feat and privilege, indeed.

Oh! who is he that hath his whole life long  
Preserved, enlarged, this freedom in himself?  
For this alone is genuine liberty:  
Where is the favoured being who hath held  
That course unchecked, unerring, and untired,  
In one perpetual progress smooth and bright?<sup>16</sup>

In keeping with that position, the note on which *The Prelude* ends parallels Berdyaev’s assertion that the “genuine” revolution aims to create not a free society, but a free man.<sup>17</sup> Likewise, Wordsworth’s ambition is, as he communicates to Coleridge, to facilitate through poetry that kind of genuine liberation by inspiring men to become inwardly beautiful, exalted, and hence, free:

Oh! yet a few short years of useful life,  
And all will be complete, thy race be run,  
Thy monument of glory will be raised;  
Then, though (too weak to tread the ways of truth)  
This age fall back to old idolatry,  
Though men return to servitude as fast  
As the tide ebbs, to ignominy and shame  
By nations sink together, we shall still  
Find solace — knowing what we have learnt to know,

Rich in true happiness if allowed to be  
Faithful alike in forwarding a day  
Of firmer trust, joint labourers in the work  
(Should Providence such grace to us vouchsafe)  
Of their deliverance, surely yet to come.  
Prophets of Nature, we to them will speak  
A lasting inspiration, sanctified  
By reason, blest by faith: what we have loved,  
Others will love, and we will teach them how;  
Instruct them how the mind of man becomes  
A thousand times more beautiful than the earth  
On which he dwells, above this frame of things  
(Which, 'mid all revolutions in the hopes  
And fears of men, doth still remain unchanged)  
In beauty exalted, as it is itself  
Of quality and fabric more divine.<sup>18</sup>

Revolutions, which are merely social, which do not have on their immediate agenda — right as they go — spiritual blossoming of as many individual human beings as possible, bring only “hopes and fears:” hopes — for the never-to-come happy future; fears — for the never-to-end horrible present. Personalistically, freedom should emanate from within. Existentially, under extreme conditions, every personality recognizes him- / herself as existence (the central concept of existentialism) rather than “punctual” essence and, through spiritual and physical efforts, makes a choice of his / her way in life. Existentialists recognize this choice and process of creative realization of vocation, of achieving loving union with the world, as genuine freedom.

In effect, narratively, in *The Prelude*, Wordsworth shows how his understanding of freedom and liberty evolved into an existential one, even though the word “existential” was not yet in use in his times. Visually, in the poem, Wordsworth makes apparent the gradual ennobling of the human form, proceeding from the “uncouthness” of the initial books to the sublimity and

concreteness of the last. In the finale, the perfect human gestalten discerned in concrete people lead to the natural sublime and then to the transcendent union of all: of subjects and objects.

If Wordsworth's understanding of freedom, of "genuine liberty" with its rebelliousness against the determinism from without, is quite similar to Kierkegaard's, the poet's treatment of time resembles and prefigures much in discussions of Henri Bergson (1859-1941) and other philosophers, who came to prominence at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Wordsworth's interest in individual forms, on the other hand, seems to prefigure the later Gestalt Psychology, based on the phenomenology of Husserl. All the above — Kierkegaard's theory, Bergson's studies, and phenomenology — contributed to the formulation of existentialism.<sup>19</sup> In this dissertation, via Berdyaev's developed existentialism, I have mostly focused on two aspects of Wordsworth's proto-existentialism in *The Prelude*: both of which look forward to Kierkegaard and to gestaltpsychology, fused so aptly by Berdyaev. I have discussed Wordsworth's treatment of time only in connection with human figures. Much remains to be said about Wordsworth's other poetry, as well as the poetry of other Romantics. How gestaltic are Keats's human shapes, for instance? Is Coleridge's Ancient Mariner perceived as "uncouth" or sublime? What part of Shelley's and Byron's poetry do gestaltic human figures comprise? Are such sketches produced by the "visionary company" linked with the notion of liberty, and in what way? Also, much remains to be said about connections between the English

Romantic poets and different existentialist philosophers of the twentieth century, be it of the religious strand (S. Kierkegaard, F. Dostoevsky, M. Buber, L. Shestov, N. Berdyaev, G. Marcel), the agnostic (K. Jaspers), or the atheistic (M. Heidegger, A. Camus, Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir). Individual comparative studies can prove illuminating.

*The Prelude* was never published during William Wordsworth's life. On Shakespeare's birthday, April 23, 1850, on the midnight stroke of the clock, Wordsworth expired. Later that year *The Prelude* saw print. There remained almost seventy years till Kierkegaard (1813-55) became influential, above all in Germany, half a century till Edmund G. A. Husserl (1859-1938) proposed his phenomenology, and existentialism, having incorporated all those strands, took shape as a movement. Revolutions, wars, and post-revolutionary terrors continued to shake Europe, making new generations of human beings ponder their personal existence. And almost a full twenty-four years after Wordsworth – who had posed many existential questions in his *Prelude* – closed his eyes for the last time, Berdyaev – who was destined to answer some of those questions philosophically – was born.

### **End Notes**

1 *Wordsworth's Poetry*, p. 60.

2 *Natural Supernaturalism*, p. 78.

3 For instance, when investigating the difference between poet and prophet and a poetics of prophesy, Hartman, in his *The Unremarkable Wordsworth*, compares the ascent of Snowdon with the spot of time alluding to the death of Wordsworth's father (pp. 168-73). "For prophet as for poet the ideal is 'timely utterance,' yet what we actually receive is a 'blast of harmony'" (p. 173).

4 *The Prelude*, Book XIV, 11-42.

5 Book XIV, 1-10.

6 Ibid., 256-66.

7 Book XVI, 394-416.

8 Compare how some socio-historians treat of the “universal,” “general,” “particular.” So, David Simpson, who does a socio-historical reading in his book, *Wordsworth and the Figurings of the Real*, has another definition of the “universal,” as imposed from the outside.

How can we agree about what constitutes the world of objects, or about what is important in it, if we are apparently not ‘seeing’ the same things? What influences determine what we see, and what we fail to notice? Are they historical, or universal? Do all minds share the same mechanism of selection or refraction in their choice of figures? . . .

[A]n examination of Wordsworth’s writing questions, I think, whether we can ever be immune from the influences of local and particular causes. What is ‘natural’ in the country is not so in the city. There may be no such society of “men in general,” since all social groups subsist in particular places. Thus, it may be that any consensus sufficiently complete to be called ‘universal’ would have to be thought of as something imposed by a dominant faction or subgroup. (xi / xvii)

9 Book XIV, 43-62.

10 *Natural Supernaturalism*, p. 372.

11 Book XIV, 63-77.

12 *The Prelude* 1805, Book XIII, 66-84.

13 *Slavery and Freedom*, p. 47.

14 *The Prelude* 1850, Book XIV, 91-97.

15 Ibid., 98-111.

16 Book XIV, 78-135.

17 *Slavery and Freedom*, p. 199.

18 Book XIV, 432-56.

19 See, for instance, T. Z. Lavine, *From Socrates to Sartre: The Philosophic*



*Quest*; Steven Galt Crowell, *Husserl, Heidegger, and the Space of Meaning: Paths toward Transcendental Phenomenology*; Walter Kaufmann, *Existentialism From Dostoevsky to Sartre*; Wesley Barnes, *The Philosophy and Literature of Existentialism*, etc.

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## VITA

Elena V. Haltrin Khalturina (in Russian, Елена Владимировна Халтурина) is a free-lance Russian poetess and translator. Born in Moscow in August 1970 into a family of scientific and engineering professionals, she lived her formative years in such diverse places as Moscow, Sevastopol, Yoshkar-Ola, Leningrad (now St. Petersburg) and Chernogolovka.

When eight years old, she began studying the practical art of dramatic recital of Russian poetry and prose under Yelena I. Chernaya, an actress of the Alexandrinsky (Pushkin) Academic Drama Theater of St. Petersburg. In 1979 Elena also entered school #51 with an advanced program in English as a second language; her interest in English literature was sparked.

In 1991 she graduated with Red Diploma (an equivalent of *summa cum laude*) from Moscow Pedagogical College #10 as entire-curriculum pre-school educator and teacher of the beginnings of foreign languages to children 3 to 7 years of age. Many of her translations from R. L. Stevenson belong to that period. Today, her select poetry and translations are featured in the Electronic Journal of Modern Russian Poetry, “Stihi.Ru,” <<http://www.stihi.ru/author.html?ekhalt1>>.

Years 1991-1994, a turbulent revolutionary period for Russia, saw Elena in native Moscow, studying as a top 10% student at the Linguistic department of Moscow Pedagogical University (former им. Крупской), and then taking lectures at Moscow University Touro, which offers American degree programs through affiliations with Touro College of New York and Dowling College of



New York. <<http://www.touro.ru/static/nintro.htm>>. She also was opening for herself Berdyaev's works, which began to see print in Russia again, and successfully run private individual courses in ESL.

In August 1994, having reunited with her parents in the United States, Elena entered the Master's program at the English Department of Louisiana State University, first on probation, and having completed it in 1996 with distinction, she got admission to continue there for doctoral studies. From 1998 to 2001, Miss Elena Haltrin held an Editorial and Graduate Teaching Assistantship at L.S.U. She contributed to the 17, 18, and 19 n.s. of *The Eighteenth-Century: A Current Bibliography* under Dr. Jim S. Borck. Elena also taught Freshman English (Engl 1001) and Survey of English and American Poetry (Engl 2027) to native English speakers, getting in 2000-2001 the student evaluation reports above the departmental average in all sections of the same levels of courses, and was promoted to Teaching Associate. While at L.S.U., Elena also delivered a number of conference papers, including one on the confidante as the heroine in Jane Austen's *Persuasion* (at the SCSECS convention, March 2000), and one on diminutive suffixes in Chekhov's "The Darling" and their impact on the story's translations (L.S.U. Graduate Student Conference on Languages and Literatures, February 1996).

Additionally, Elena is interested in fine arts, and some of her decorative paintings and projects were exhibited in Sevastopol (1981) and Moscow (1988-91). This interest contributed to her fascination with visual imagery employed by William Wordsworth and reflected in this dissertation. The dissertation was defended on March 12, 2002.