

THE PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF WORDSWORTH'S LANGUAGE

... Thirteen years
Or haply less, I might have seen when first
My ears began to open to the charm
Of words in tuneful order, found them sweet
For their *own sakes*—a passion and a power—
And phrases pleased me, chosen for delight
(*Prelude*, 1805, V, ll 575-580).

Like many before me, I have been intrigued by the impact and originality of Wordsworth's language. It occurred to me that it might be very interesting to look at and explicate some of the practical aspects of Wordsworth's language in an attempt to get closer to an understanding of how he achieves the particular resonance and density of his poetry. Hugh Sykes Davies makes the claim that Wordsworth developed his own 'idiolect' (1986:49) with very definite characteristics that can be identified and described. This chapter will attempt to do just that.

Possibly the most striking characteristic of Wordsworth's language is his use of tautology or repetition. This manifests itself in the repetition of certain words, sounds and phrases, not only in his poetry, but throughout his whole *oeuvre*.

Wordsworth himself had very definite views on the use of tautology or repetition: he regarded it as an enriching, if not essential, element in poetry in that it deepened, indeed almost materialized, the emotion evoked by the poetry and more successfully conveyed the passion felt by the character in the poem, or poet himself, to the reader. In the Note to 'The Thorn' he describes it as follows:

There is a numerous class of readers who imagine that the same words cannot be repeated without tautology: this is a great error: virtual tautology is much oftener produced by using different words when the meaning is exactly the same. Words, a Poet's words more particularly, ought to be weighed in the balance of feeling and not measured by the space they occupy upon paper. For the Reader cannot be too often reminded that Poetry is passion: it is the history or science of feelings: now every man must know that an attempt is rarely made to communicate impassioned feelings without something of an accompanying consciousness of the inadequateness of our own powers, or the deficiencies of language. During such efforts there will be a craving in the mind, and as long as it is unsatisfied the Speaker will cling to the same words, or words of the same character. There are also various other reasons why repetition and apparent tautology are frequently beauties of the highest kind. Among the chief of these reasons is the interest which the mind attaches to words, not only as symbols of the passion, but as *things*,

active and efficient, which are of themselves part of the passion. And further, from a spirit of fondness, exultation and gratitude, the mind *luxuriates in the repetition of words which appear successfully to communicate its feelings* [my emphasis] (*WW*, 1986:594).

Frances Ferguson points out that Wordsworth uses tautology and repetition not only as "significant forms of expression but as a form of argument and statement" (1977:12-13). Wordsworth creates a situation in which words become absorbing and interesting in their own right and provide an

example of the power of language to appear as *almost* [my emphasis] self-sufficient, the relationship between words and things and thoughts which underlies representational schemes of language shifts to become a relationship between things and word-things and thoughts because of Wordsworth's concern with the interest of the mind in words "as *things*, active and efficient". Words become themselves entities which the mind delights in, not mere vehicles through which the mind arrives at the entities or emotions of the world (1977:15-16).

Hugh Sykes Davies voices a similar thought when he refers to line 181 from the 'Immortality Ode': "Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower":

There is no point whatever in trying to deal with that last line by the methods of imagery analysis, by summoning up one's own impressions, however vivid, of grass and flowers. This 'splendour' and this 'glory' are not of vegetable origin; still less are they ironic. They are words which have become *things* in the long, impassioned meditations of Wordsworth's mind and feelings. And their repetition throughout the *Ode* confers on them the final fullness of their special power ... (1986:87).

The repetition in Wordsworth's poetry occurs in two ways. The first is a very obvious, overt way as one sees in 'Goody Blake and Harry Gill'

Oh, what's the matter? What's the **matter**?
 What is't ails young Harry Gill
 That evermore his teeth they **chatter**
Chatter, chatter, chatter still. (*ll* 1-4)
 His teeth they chatter, **chatter** still (*ll* 12, 16 and 126)
 Yet still his jaws and teeth they **clatter** (*l* 115).

Similarly, in 'A narrow girdle of rough stones and crags' the repetition is again obvious, although more emotionally charged:

Close to the surface of the lake that lay
 Asleep in a **dead calm**, ran closely on
 Along the **dead calm** lake, now here, now there, (*ll* 21-23)

The man using his skill to gain
 A pittance from the **dead unfeeling lake**
 That knew not of his wants (*ll* 70-72).

Many instances of repetition also occur in 'The Thorn':

There is a thorn **it looks so old** (*l* 1)
It looks so old and grey (*l* 4)

It stands erect, and like a stone
 With **lichens it is overgrown**
 Like rock or stone, it is **o'ergrown**
With lichens to the very top (*ll* 10-23)

Is like an **infant's grave** in size (*l* 52)
 An **infant's grave** was half so fair (*l* 55)
 That's like an **infant's grave** in size (*l* 61)
 The heap that's like and **infant's grave**, (*l* 93)

Now **wherefore** thus, by day and night (*l* 78)
 And **wherefore** does she cry?— (*l* 86)
 Oh **wherefore? Wherefore?** Tell my why (*l* 87)

to mention just some examples. The following lines almost act like a ballad's refrain throughout the poem, being repeated (with some variation) five times:

'Oh misery! Oh misery!
 'Oh woe is me! Oh misery' (*ll* 65-66).

To my mind Wordsworth's use of repetition has two main functions. In the first instance it intensifies, as he claims, the emotion depicted and evoked in the poem. In 'Goody Blake and Harry Gill' one can virtually feel Harry's shivering shaking the poem, and in the second example quoted a very strong feeling of the sick fisherman's lonely plight is conveyed by the repetition of "dead"—nature (the lake) is not only indifferent to his plight, but totally unaware of it, and thus totally unresponsive.

The second function of Wordsworth's use of apparent tautology is that it adds greatly to the unity of his poems—the repetition runs like a theme through the poems and binds

them into a tightly coherent whole. If one looks at 'The Thorn' this is particularly true. This hugely underrated poem (though very highly regarded by Wordsworth himself), seems deceptively simple, if not downright naive; it is, however, extremely original and a tightly fused unit. The three parts of the poem depict, respectively, the present (stanzas i-x), the past (stanzas xi-xvi) and the present again (stanzas xvii-xxiii), but this time the present coloured and informed by knowledge about the past. At first reading one might be inclined to think that the main interest in the poem is Martha Ray and her story. It is, however, the "aged thorn" that is the main character in the poem and references to it run like a *leitmotiv* through it, weaving it into whole cloth, as it were.

Wordsworth also employs repetition in a more covert and possibly even subversive way. This aspect lies in his marked preference for certain words that he employs over and over, in poem after poem, and even in his prose, so that the words become laden with traces and emotional resonances from previous usages. Wordsworth built up a lexicon of 'favourite' words that became central to his expression of thoughts, emotions and recollections. And when words had been used many times in

a kind of extended tautology, in poem after poem, in year after year, as his meditations eddied round in their circling progress, such word-*things* [my emphasis] would acquire a power in *his* vocabulary, in *his* poetry, quite out of proportion to their usual force in the language really spoken by men, even though they might well be a very common part of it. The 'selection', in fact, was made by this completely personal, individual process, and not by any general or philosophic principles whatever. And it was upon words thus selected that his highly individual poetry was based [in which some words came] to bear in it a weight, a power, greater than they usually carry (Davies, 1986:46-47). (This passage is more fully quoted on p.8.)

It is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to isolate all of Wordsworth's favourite words, but from my own reading I have noticed a high level of frequency in the occurrence of words like 'heart, joy, soul, abode, moon, dream, wind, love, passion, awe, power, abyss, motion, dark, water, breeze, stream, dream, truth, visionary, naked, weight, mountain, stars, gleam, solitude', and 'glory'. Many of these words also occur in their variants like 'darkness / darker / darksome / darken / darkly' (for dark), 'awful / awesome / awed / unawed' (for awe) and 'brook/streamlet/rill/river' as alternatives for 'stream'. Here are some examples to illustrate:

heart My heart is at your festival
 Yet in my heart of hearts I feel your might
 Thanks to the human heart by which we live (*Immortality Ode*, II 39, 193 and 203).

This was the bitter language of the heart
 ... My heart rebounded
 Meanwhile, the heart within the heart ...
 Not from the naked *Heart* alone of Man (*Excursion*, II 462, 726, 627, 979).

weight And custom lie upon thee with a weight ('*Immortality Ode*', I 130).

Of that perpetual weight which on her spirit lay ('*The Female Vagrant*', I 270).

... not for woes
 Which thou endur'st—that weight, albeit huge
 (*Prelude*, 1805, VIII, II 702-206).

... yet so it was:
 A weight of ages did at once descend
 Upon my heart—no thought embodied, no
 Distinct remembrances, but weight and power,
 Power growing with weight (*Prelude*, 1805, VIII, II 702-706)

Accumulated feelings pressed his heart
 With still increasing weight (*Excursion*, I, II 281-82)

In which the heavy and the weary weight
 Of this unintelligible world / Is lightened ('*Tintern Abbey*', I 40)

More extended quotes in this regard also appear on pp.9-11.

dark ... how awful in the gloom
 Of coming night, when sky is dark and earth
 Not dark, nor yet lightened ('*Home at Grasmere*', II 414-16).

By this dark hill, protected from the beams (*Excursion*, II, I 112).

Standing before the multitude, beset
 With dark events (*Excursion*, III, I 468).

... once I was brought
 While traversing alone yon mountain-pass
 Dark on my road ... (*Excursion*, V, II 734-36).

The darksome centre of a constant hope (*Excursion*, VI, l 249).

Of yon black Yew-tree, whose protruded boughs
Darken the silver bosom of the crag-,

.....
Like human life from darkness (*Excursion*, III, ll 26-35).

... how oft,
In darkness, and amid the many shapes
Of joyless day-light ('Tintern Abbey', ll 50-52).

Darkness before, and danger's voice behind—
Soul awful, if the earth hath ever lodged
An awful soul ... (*Prelude*, 1805, III, ll 286-88).

... The brook and road
Were fellow-travellers in this gloomy pass ...

.....
Black drizzly crags that spake by the wayside
.....
Tumult and peace, the darkness and the light
Were all like workings of one mind ... (*Prelude*, 1805, VI,
ll 554-68).

... We see but darkly
Even when we look behind us ... (*Prelude*, 1805, III,
ll 492-93).

Many words are often repeated in conjunction with other words. 'Dark' often occurs in conjunction with 'gloom' or 'gloomy' and 'black', as can be seen in the Simplon Pass episode quoted above. 'Naked' and 'bare' (or 'barren') often occur together, as do 'splendour' and 'glory', to mention but a very few.

... forthwith I left the spot
And, reascending the bare common, saw
A naked pool that lay beneath the hills (*Prelude*, 1805, XI, ll 301-03).

... and the waste
Of naked pools and common crags that lay
Exposed on the bare fell ... (*Prelude*, 1805, VI, ll 242-44).

Yet would I not be of such wintry bareness
But that some leaf of your regard should hang
Upon my naked branches ... (*Excursion*, III, ll 491-93).

The glory of times fading away—
The splendor .. (*Excursion*, II, ll 293-94).

... opened to my view
Glory beyond all glory seen

.....
Far sinking into splendour (*Excursion*, II, ll 831-38).

And of course, that resonating example from the 'Immortality Ode' referred to before:

Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower.

Wordsworth was very aware of the fact that words derive added meaning from their linguistic 'environment', and voiced some concern about it:

I am sensible that my associations must have sometimes been particular instead of general, and that, consequently, giving to things a false importance ... I may have written upon unworthy subjects; but I am less apprehensive on this account, than that my language may frequently have suffered from those arbitrary connections of feelings and ideas with particular words and phrases from which no man can altogether protect himself (*PLB*, 1991:268).

I do believe, however, that Wordsworth consciously exploited this aspect of language. As he developed his personal idiolect, he also developed very definite groups of words (Davies refers to these as "word-clusters" (see p.12 and 38) that derive meaning from each other and reinforce meaning throughout his work. This has the result that the words also gain added meaning from each other and 'colour' the most innocuous word(s) with echoes from previous usages. J.P.Ward perceptively refers to the "plurality of words jostling us with their connections" (1984:59). The reader is drawn into the scene by the cumulative weight of the words as they reinforce each other. This can be seen clearly in the following scene from *The Prelude* that interestingly is based on a real incident, the drowning of James Jackson, a school-master, on 18 June 1779:

Twilight was coming on; yet through the gloom
I saw distinctly on the opposite shore
A heap of garments, left, as I supposed
By one who was there bathing. Long I watched,
But no one owned them; meanwhile the calm lake
Grew dark, with all the shadows on its breast

And, now and then, a fish up-leaping, snapped
 The breathless stillness. The succeeding day—
 Those unclaimed garments telling a plain tale—
 Went there a company, and, in their boat
 Sounded with grappling irons, and long poles:
 At length, 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 even (V, ll 459-73).

Each noun and verb has at most one adjective or adverb but the adverbs and adjectives seem to leach over into other verbs and nouns, thus affecting their meaning as well. The calmness of the lake is subverted, as it were, by the darkness stealing over it; the peace of the scene is compromised by the leaping fish. And ultimately, the drowned man's "ghastly face" echoes the submerged horror of the event.

Hand in hand with the high frequency of use in Wordsworth's work of certain words, goes the predominance of certain sounds. J.P.Ward first drew my attention to this seemingly self-evident fact:

Impregnating all Wordsworth's work, certainly his most memorable work, is a lexicon based on the consonantal sounds which originate inwardly and emerge vibrantly through the nasal letters m, n, ng or combinations of them. These words include mind, man, mountain, meaning, murmur, mourn, thing, element, memory, moon, motion, mean, gleam, dream, living, haunt, gentle, moment, margin, imagine, time, calm, blend, theme, enchant, melancholy, eternity, end and many more. They occur in what are usually regarded as the most deeply felt passages, and often seem to embody the actual expression, the putting-out, of thought and feeling in the most natural union of mind and body possible (1984:39).

Often these sounds are interspersed with the sibilants s, ss, sh and the soft c, which not only avoids monotony, but strengthens the sound of the consonants. Here are some examples, firstly from the 'Immortality Ode':

There was a time when meadow, grove and stream
 The earth, and every common sight
 To me did seem
 Apparelled in celestial light
 The glory and the freshness of a dream (ll 1-5)

A single Field which I have looked upon
 Both of them speak of something that is gone:
 The pansy at my feet
 Doth the same tale repeat:
 Whither is fled the visionary gleam?
 Where is it now, the glory and the dream? (ll 52-57).

The opening lines of 'Tintern Abbey' also provide a good example:

Five years have passed: five summers, with the length
 Of five long winters! and again I hear
 These waters, rolling from their mountain-spring
 With a sweet inland murmur.—Once again
 Do I behold these steps and lofty cliffs
 Which on a wild secluded scene impress
 Thoughts of more deep seclusion (ll 1-7).

And some lines later:

 ... and wreathes of smoke
 Sent up in silence, from among the trees
 With some uncertain notice, as might seem,
 Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods,
 Or of some hermit's cave, where by his fire
 The hermit sits alone (ll 18-23).

Through the employment of these sounds in particular, I believe Wordsworth succeeds in creating a congruence of emotion and linguistic expression. This is clearly illustrated by the following passage from *The Prelude*,

 ... for many days my brain
 Worked with a dim and undetermined sense
 Of unknown modes of being. In my thoughts
 There was a darkness—call it solitude
 Or blank desertion—no familiar shapes
 Of hourly objects, images of trees,
 Of sea or sky, no colours of green fields,
 But huge and mighty forms that do not live
 Like living men moved slowly through my mind
 By day, and were the trouble of my dreams (ll 420-29).

The groping, tentative language, with the recurring sibilants and nasal sounds effectively evokes the emotion of confusion and instability that is so hauntingly depicted. Ward persuasively claims that

Many of Wordsworth's lines with which we are most familiar have this sibilant and nasal embodiment And many well-known poems have their openings of this kind as though Wordsworth really did begin by embedding himself in an emotion recollected, so that a sonorous kind of thinking acted as point of incubation for what was then expressed ... these sounds seem most to embody, to be, the human organism in sonorous, and potentially articulate activity most absorbedly. What matters is the connection of mind and materiality in both the mind and language of the poet, and his awareness of that fact Most of the very powerful 'spots of time' passages ... and the most valued shorter lyrics are saturated with and seem to stem from this meeting-place of feeling and linguistic utterance (1984:40,42,43).

This aspect of Wordsworth's language can be linked to the fact that I believe that there are strong onomatopoeic elements in his poetry. These can occur on an obvious level, like Harry Gill's chattering teeth, but also on a more covert and subtle level. If one thinks of the first stanza of 'A slumber did my spirit seal' one can almost discern a slumberous quality in the stanza with all the sibilants and gentle sounds. The second stanza has an altogether harsher quality with a much higher incidence of vibrating alveolars and fricatives bringing the language perfectly in line with the 'message' of the poem. The same point can be made regarding 'Michael'. The language enacts and concretises the 'action' of the poem—the starkness in the poem is embodied in and emphasised by the denuded quality of the language. Thomas McFarland believes that 'Michael'

... contains some of the most limpid verse Wordsworth ever composed, and constitutes possibly the finest realisation of his prosodic theories of simplicity and naturalness of diction. Furthermore, its charge of emotion is so strong that the pathos achieved is almost sublime—matched only, one thinks, if at all, by the pathos of "The Ruined Cottage" (1985:158).

The simplicity of the values depicted in the poem—honesty, hard work, fortitude—is mirrored in the language. There is an amazingly high incidence of monosyllabic words in the poem. I quote Michael's words to Luke regarding the sheepfold before Luke's departure:

... but it seems good
That thou should'st go'. At this the Old Man paused,
then, pointing to the Stones near which they stood,
Thus, after a short silence, he resumed:
'This was a work for us, and now, my Son
It is a work for me. But, lay one Stone—

Here, lay it for me, Luke, with thine own hands.
 I for the purpose brought thee to this place.
 Nay, Boy, be of good hope:—we both may live
 To see a better day. At eighty-four
 I still am strong and stout;—do thou thy part,
 I will do mine.—I will begin again
 With many tasks that were resigned to thee;
 Up to the heights, and in among the storms,
 Will I without thee go again, and do
 All works which I was wont to do alone,
 Before I knew thy face (*ll* 391-407).

The pared-down language also suggests and reinforces the denuded and bereft existence that is Michael's after Luke's defection. Michael does his daily work but the sheepfold, that was to have been a "covenant" between him and his son, is left "unfinished when he died" (*l* 48) seven years later. Wordsworth's language therefore operates on at least two levels here—the first 'tells the story' and states the emotions. The second level is far less obvious—in a submerged fashion it works towards the strengthening of the first level by covertly reinforcing it, by subtly emphasising the message of the poem and enacting the feelings that underlie it. So whereas I agree with Rabinowitz that Wordsworth does not postulate a mimetic theory of language (Rabinowitz, 1983:74), I do believe that there is a mimetic element in the language in that in 'enacts' the 'action' as it were. And to this can be added that other interesting level, namely that few authors are so strongly present in their text as Wordsworth—this is obviously true of *The Prelude* which is about the growth of his mind and imagination, but it is also true of the rest of his poetry. Antony Easthope perceptively refers to him as a "textual ghost" (1993:84) that is always present in his words.

In 'Michael', therefore, one seemingly sees Wordsworth's language in its most stripped-down and simple form in which a "truly great, unblunted imagination ... is better served by the minimum of valid suggestion than by the maximum" as Hartman so aptly puts it (1993:35). And yet, the word order diverges just enough from the natural order to give interest and emphasis to some of the lines; to in fact "give sinew to the line" (1993:36) as one sees in these examples:

But soon as Luke, full ten years old, could stand
 Against the mountain blasts, and to the heights,
 Not fearing toil, nor length of weary ways,
 He with his Father daily went ... (*ll* 204-07).

... Meantime Luke began
 To slacken in his duty, and at length
 He in the dissolute city gave himself
 To evil courses: ignominy and shame
 Fell on him, so that he was driven at last
 To seek a hiding-place beyond the seas (*ll* 451-56).

The Prelude is likewise filled with similar examples. There is firstly the marvellous and disquieting description in the boat-stealing incident when

... a huge cliff
 As if with voluntary power instinct,
 Upreared its head ...
 And, growing still in stature ...
 Rose up between me and the stars, and still
 With measured motion, like a living thing
 Strode after me ... (1805, I, *ll* 406-12).

And in Book IV:

Thus did I steal along that silent road,
 My body from the stillness drinking in
 A restoration like the calm of sleep,

 But sweeter far. Above, before, behind,
 Around me, all was peace and solitude;
 I looked not round ... (1805, IV, *ll* 386-90).

The same intriguing divergence from the natural word order also occurs in Wordsworth's lyrics. I quote the first and the third stanzas of 'I travelled among unknown Men', one of the 'Lucy' poems:

I travelled among unknown Men
 In lands beyond the Sea;
 Nor England! did I know till then
 What love I bore to thee

Among thy mountains did I feel
 The joy of my desire;
 And She I cherished turned her wheel
 Beside an English fire.

Regarding this poem I would like to just digress briefly. Hugh Sykes Davies, who contrary to popular opinion correctly assessed Wordsworth and his wife Mary's

relationship as a close, passionate and loving one as early as the 1960s, long before the discovery of their love letters (published by Beth Darlington under the title *My Dearest Love* in 1981), makes a fascinating claim about this poem. He says that:

It was, in its own intimate idiom, a kind of apology to her, as his first and earliest love, for the wanderings, for France, for Annette, and at the same time an assurance that he had indeed, and in every sense, 'come home' to her. All this does not of course, make it a particularly good poem. Its real significance is too much veiled, too reticent for that: it is too much in code, as it were. But when the decoding is done, it remains a very touching piece of writing, and a very valuable piece of evidence bearing on Wordsworth's courtship, on his marriage, and on the double role which his wife played at this crucial time in his development—as a woman, and as a symbol of their native region and their kin (1986:281).

I agree with Sykes Davies (if not his assessment of the poem!) the more so as it is the only poem Wordsworth ever personally transcribed in a letter to someone, in this case Mary. Wordsworth also says in the letter that the poem is to be read, after 'She dwelt among th' untrodden ways', another of the 'Lucy' poems. (Does this not quite persuasively establish the identity of Lucy that so many critics have pondered about?!)

The cliff coming to life and striding after the guilty boat-thief brings me to another characteristic of Wordsworth's poetry, namely that objects often acquire human characteristics or qualities that add an interesting emotional dimension to his language. By this device Wordsworth succeeds in loading his descriptions with added significance. It is also one of the ways in which Wordsworth so indelibly embeds his authorial presence in his text. At the opening of 'The Ruined Cottage' the poet is tired and irritated by the heat, and the landscape acquires and reflects these qualities. The "uplands feebly glared/Through a pale steam", the noise of the bursting gorse seeds is "tedious" and the "four naked walls" of the cottage "stared" almost confrontationally "upon each other" whilst the poet is with "thirsty heat oppressed" (ll 1-48). In 'Composed Upon Westminster Bridge' the poet's rare moment of appreciation of the city is voiced in terms of peace and restfulness that by implication evoke their opposites. The normally dirty, noisy and teeming city now wears the "beauty of the morning" like a garment, the river "glideth of his own sweet will", and the "very houses seem asleep"; indeed, so deep is the sense of calm that the "mighty heart" of the city has stopped beating. Shall I step into deconstructionist shoes here and claim that the poem subverts

its own meaning by claiming peace is only possible in death? Better not, but it does serve to illustrate this multilayered aspect of Wordsworth's language.

Surely the poet's delight in Nature informs the whimsical description of the wild rose standing "tip-toe upon hawthorne stocks" like a playful girl at a fair (l 5 from 'How sweet it is, when mother Fancy rocks'). In the sonnet 'With Ships the sea was sprinkled far and nigh' the "goodly vessel" that catches the poet's eye is described in vivid terms that express his admiration—she is depicted as beautiful, energetic, even commanding and purposeful:

A goodly Vessel did I then espy
Come like a Giant from a haven broad;
And lustily along the Bay she strode,
Her tackling rich, and of apparel high.
This ship was nought to me, nor I to her,
Yet I pursued her with a Lover's look;
This Ship to all the rest did I prefer:
When will she turn, and whither? She will brook
No tarrying; where she comes the winds must stir:
On went She, and due north her journey took.

Possibly there is even a wistful and yearning undertone to be detected in the words of the land-bound poet? However that may be, Duncan Wu points out that Wordsworth was "fascinated by the ability to generate alternative realities" (1996:3). He does this by subtly colouring his linguistic canvas by different emotional tones: Robert Mayo refers to the "modifying colours of Wordsworth's imagination" (1972:73).

This is particularly true of a poem like 'The Thorn'. Depending on one's interpretation, it is a poem about an abandoned woman and her (possibly) murdered baby, or about the supernatural, or about a talkative, credulous old sea-captain with a somewhat prurient imagination, or it is about a tree. Wordsworth's own statements of poetic intent give, I believe, valid directions for the reading of the poem. He told Isabella Fenwick that his writing of the poem

Arose out of my observing, on the ridge of Quantock hill, on a stormy day, a thorn which I had often passed in calm and bright weather without noticing it. I said to myself, "Cannot I by some invention do as much to make this Thorn an impressive object as the storm has made it to my eyes at this moment". I began the poem accordingly ... (WW, 1984:688).

In his advertisement to *Lyrical Ballads* (1798) he wrote that the poem "is not supposed to be spoken in the author's own person: the *character* [my emphasis] of the loquacious narrator will sufficiently shew itself in the course of the story" (*LB*, 1991:8). In the 1800 Note to 'The Thorn', after the severe criticism of the poem (mostly the result of 'misreadings' I believe), he wrote that he employed the "character of the loquacious narrator to exhibit some of the general laws by which superstition acts upon the mind", ie it is a depiction of the imagination under the stimulus of superstition. My personal feeling is that the poem succeeds brilliantly in the evocation of the uncanny, most notably by imbuing the "aged thorn" with such significance and, more overtly, by the shivering hill of moss, and by Martha Ray's repeated cries of woe. The first and last stanzas are quoted in full with some other significant excerpts from the intervening stanzas:

There is a thorn; it looks so old,
 In truth you'd find it hard to say.
 How it could ever have been young,
 It looks so old and gray.
 Not higher than a two-year's child,
 It stands erect this aged thorn;
 No leaves it has, no thorny points;
 It is a mass of knotted joints,
 A wretched thing forlorn.
 It stands erect, and like a stone
 With lichens it is overgrown.

And close beside this aged thorn,
 There is a fresh and lovely sight
 A beauteous heap, a hill of moss
 Just half a foot in height
 All lovely colours there you see (*ll* 34-38)

This heap of earth o'ergrown with moss, (*l* 49)

Is like an infant's grave in size (*l* 52)

For oft there sits, between the heap
 That's like an infant's grave in size (*ll* 60-61)

A woman in a scarlet cloak,
 And to herself she cries
 'Oh misery! oh misery!
 Oh woe is me! oh misery!' (*ll* 63-66)

'Tis now some two and twenty years
 Since she (her name is Martha Ray)
 Gave with a maiden's true good will
 Her company to Stephen Hill (*ll* 115-18)

But Stephen to another maid
 Had sworn another oath (*l* 124-25)

She was with child, and she was mad (*l* 139)

No more I know, I wish I did,
 And I would tell it all to you;
 For what become of this poor child
 There's none that ever knew: (*ll* 155-58)
 I cannot tell; but some will say
 She hanged her baby on the tree,
 Some say she drowned it in the pond,
 Which is a little step beyond
 But all and each agree
 The little babe is buried there
 Beneath that hill of moss so fair. (*ll* 214-20)

And some had sworn an oath that she
 Should be to public justice brought;
 And for the little infant's bones
 With spades they would have sought.
 But then the beauteous hill of moss
 Before their eyes began to stir;
 And for full fifty yards around
 The grass it shook upon the ground; (*ll* 232-39)

I cannot tell how this may be,
 But plain it is, the thorn is bound
 With heavy tufts of moss, that strive
 To drag it to the ground.
 And this I know, full many a time,
 When she was on the mountain high,
 By day, and in the silent night,
 When all the stars shone clear and bright,
 That I have heard her cry,
 'Oh misery! oh misery!
 O woe is me! oh misery!'

These excerpts do not do full justice to the amazingly evocative language that creates the atmosphere of the poem, but do serve to illustrate how the narrator's imagination

builds on the meagre facts of his tale. Stephen Parrish says that this much misunderstood poem is in fact

... a haunting and powerful study in social morality ... This reading of the poem [according to Wordsworth's own statement of poetic intent] ... alters the poem radically. It becomes not [only] a poem about a woman but a poem about a man (and a tree); not a tale of horror but a psychological study; not a ballad but a dramatic monologue ... The design of 'The Thorn' is revealed in the order in which the narrator associates ideas ... (1972:76,77).

Another very marked aspect of Wordsworth's language is his ability to use and control long and extremely complex sentences. This aspect manifests itself in a great deal of his poetry but most notably in *The Prelude* as the following extracts will show. The first is the famous skating scene from Book I, and the second is from Book III which deals with Wordsworth's residence at Cambridge. The first part of the skating scene describes the noisy fun that the young Wordsworth and his friends had during winter when "All shod with steel/We hissed along the polished ice" (*ll* 461-62) of the frozen lake. I quote the second part:

Not seldom from the uproar I retired
 Into a silent bay; or sportively
 Glanced sideways, leaving the tumultuous throng,
 To cut across the image of a star
 That gleamed upon the ice. 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,
 Behind me did they stretch in solemn train
 Feebler and feebler, and I stood and watched
 Till all was tranquil as a dreamless sleep (*Prelude*, 1805, I, *ll* 474-90).

This is an extremely successfully evoked scene both linguistically and metaphorically. Not only does it abound with vivid images—"to cut across the image of a star"; "given our bodies to the wind"—but it evokes the feeling of motion superbly. Fascinatingly this is in part an illusion—when the poet stops skating, the earth seems to wheel around him "as if the earth had rolled/With visible motion her diurnal round". This intriguingly

echoes that other memorable use of "diurnal" in 'A slumber did my spirit seal': "Rolled round in earth's diurnal course/With rocks and stones and trees". The ease with which the images follow each other also mimetically evoke the ease of the skater's progress across the ice and the intoxication of movement; even when the skater stops, the motion still continues. This seems to echo lines 349-50 of the earlier egg-stealing episode:

... the sky seemed not a sky
Of earth, and with what motion moved the clouds!

As a second example I quote lines 234-258 from Book III of *The Prelude* of 1805. This not only illustrates Wordsworth's mastery of long, complex sentences, but also shows the 'solitary Wordsworth' in an interestingly different light:

Yet could I only cleave to solitude	234
In lonesome places; if a throng was near	
That way I leaned by nature; for my heart	
Was social, and loved idleness and joy.	
Not seeking those who might participate	
My deeper pleasures—nay I had not once,	
Though not unused to mutter lonesome songs,	
Even with myself divided such delight,	240
Or looked that way for aught that might be cloathed	
In human language—easily I passed	
From the remembrances of better things,	
And slipped into weekday works of youth,	
Unburthened, unalarmed, and unprofaned.	
Caverns that were within my mind, which sun	
Could never penetrate, yet did there not	
Want store of leafy arbours where the light	
Might enter at will. Companionships,	
Friendships, acquaintances, were welcome all;	250
We sauntered, played, we rioted, we talked	
Unprofitable talk at morning hours,	
Drifted about along the streets and walks,	
Read lazily in lazy books, went forth	
To gallop through the country in blind zeal	
Of senseless horsemanship, or on the breast	
Of Cam sailed boisterously, and let the stars	
Come out, perhaps without one quiet thought.	258

The final ten lines are a masterly depiction of care-free, unworried, unhurried student life; I particularly like "Read lazily in lazy books" and "let the stars/Come out, perhaps without one quiet thought". Perhaps it was somewhat surprising that Wordsworth did in

fact manage "to close his undistinguished University career with a BA on 21 January 1791!" (Gill, 1989:50).

Hugh Sykes Davies claims that Wordsworth's ability to control these long and often very complicated sentences constitute one of Wordsworth's

... greatest technical powers, that of controlling the rise and fall of fairly long and complex sentences, with a sureness and flexibility ... They have freedom and sweep and variety, but no looseness, no encouragement to faltering reproductions of those combinations of pause, pitch and stress which were designed to link words together. No doubt he was much helped in attaining this quality by his habit of oral composition, and his tenacious verbal memory (1986:95).

What strikes me most strongly about this aspect of Wordsworth's language usage is the sureness of touch and almost infallible choice of the 'right' word. If one attempts to substitute other words or synonyms for his words, they are never as effective or suitable. An intrinsic part of Wordsworth's verbal control can be found in what Michael O'Neill refers to as his "cunning manipulation of tenses and moods" (1996:15). This can be clearly seen in two well-known passages from Book XI of *The Prelude* of 1805. The first is the 'mystery of man' passage and the second is the first 'spot of time':

Oh mystery of man, from what a depth
 Proceed thy honours! I am lost, but see
 In simple childhood something of the base
 On which thy greatness stands—but this I feel,
 That from thyself it is that thou must give,
 Else never canst receive. The days gone by
 Come back upon me from the dawn almost
 Of life: the hiding-places of my power
 Seem open; I approach, and then they close;
 I see by glimpses now; when age comes on,
 May scarcely see at all, and I would give,
 While yet we may, as far as words can give,
 A substance and a life to what I feel:
 I would enshrine the spirit of the past
 For future restoration (*ll* 329-343).

At a time
 When scarcely (I was then not six years old)
 My hand could hold a bridle, with proud hopes

I mounted, and we rode towards the hills:
 We were a pair of horsemen—honest James
 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. 290
 The gibbet-mast was 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 writing was engraven
 In time long past, and still from year to year
 By superstition of the neighbourhood
 The grass is cleared away; and to this hour
 The letters are fresh and visible.
 Faltering and ignorant where I was, at length 300
 I chanced to espy those characters inscribed
 On the green sod: forthwith I left the spot
 And, reascending the bare common, saw
 A naked pool that lay beneath the hills,
 The beacon on the summit, and more near,
 A girl who bore a pitcher on her head
 And seemed with difficult steps to force her way
 Against the blowing wind. It was, in truth,
 An ordinary sight; but I should need
 Colours and words that are unknown to man 310
 To paint the visionary dreariness
 Which, while I looked all round for my lost guide,
 Did at that time invest the naked pool,
 The beacon on the lonely eminence,
 The woman, and her garments vexed and tossed
 By the strong wind.

In the 'spot of time' passage Wordsworth moves smoothly from the past tense—he led his horse; he saw the letters carved in the turf; he left the place; it was an ordinary sight—to the conditional mood when he says that he "should need" (l 309) unknown words and colours to convey the "visionary dreariness" (l 311) and loaded significance of the simple objects depicted: the naked pool, the beacon and the girl with her clothes buffeted by the strong wind.

In the first passage Wordsworth gropes towards an understanding of the 'mystery of man'. There is a questing present tense reaching towards understanding and discovery

that is intensified by a tentative reference to the past and an even more tentative and conditional reference to the future (*ll* 335-43). O'Neill makes the extremely perceptive comment that, in both these passages

Wordsworth communicates precisely by stressing the incommunicable nature of what he wishes to present. The poem's [*The Prelude's*] self-consciousness shows itself ... in a baffled yet artful awareness of not quite knowing what moves it to utterance (1996:15).

This comment is not only valid regarding *The Prelude* but much of the rest of Wordsworth's poetry, certainly the 'Immortality Ode' and 'Tintern Abbey'. O'Neill also refers to *The Prelude's* "anxious trust in intuitions that may be merely subjective" which reminds me strongly of the "vanishings" and "Fallings from us" and the "Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears" (*ll* 146 and 206) of the 'Immortality Ode' (also of course referred to as in fact the 'Intimations Ode') and the "sensations sweet/Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart" and the "many recognitions dim and faint" (*ll* 29 and 60) of 'Tintern Abbey'.

Wordsworth also often uses what can be referred to as the exclamatory mode. This includes vocative and apostrophising, exclaiming, ejaculating and questioning. These will be illustrated and discussed briefly.

Wordsworth frequently addresses somebody or something in his poetry. This can be a person—Milton, Coleridge, Matthew, Dorothy, Mary, himself, a traveller, 'statesmen' or the reader—or some object, bird, flower, butterfly or animal, even an allegorical figure or a geographical location or feature. Here are just a few randomly selected examples:

... —Statesmen! [small landowners] ye
Who are restless in your wisdom ('The Old Cumberland Beggar', *ll* 67-68).

'Why William, on that old grey stone,
Thus for the length of half a day
Why William, sit you thus alone,
And dream your time away? ('Expostulation and Reply', *ll* 1-4).

Now, Matthew, let us try to match
This water's pleasant tune: ('The Fountain', *ll* 9-10).

Up with me! up with me into the clouds!
 For thy song, Lark, is strong ('To a Sky-Lark, ll 1-2).

O Cuckoo! shall I call thee Bird,
 Or but a wandering Voice? ('To the Cuckoo', ll 3-4).

Fair Star of Evening, Splendor of the West
 Star of my country ('Composed by the Sea-Side, near Calais', ll 1-2)

Stern Daughter of the Voice of God!
 O Duty! ... ('Ode to Duty', l 1-2).

Milton! thou should'st be living at this hour:
 England hath need of thee: ('London', ll 1-2).

Here are some first lines that are also titles, and further illustrate the point:

'Beloved Vale' I said, 'when I shall con'
 Brook, thou hast been my solace days and weeks
 England! the time is come when thou should'st wean.

Wordsworth often uses questions to emphasise a point, emotion, important issue or sentiment. The best-known examples are probably from the opening lines of the First Part of the Two-Part *Prelude*:

Was it for this
 That one, the fairest of all rivers, loved
 To blend his murmurs with my nurse's song, (ll 1-3).

Beloved Derwent, fairest of all streams,
 Was it for this that I, a four years' child
 A naked boy, among thy silent pools
 Made one long bathing of a summer's day (ll 16-19).

(These lines are also used, with some alteration, in Book I of the 1805 and 1850 versions of *The Prelude*, ll 271-290.) The question that Wordsworth is in fact asking here is whether he had received all this bounty, as it were, in order to fail at beginning the important philosophical part of *The Recluse*, his proposed *magnum opus* to which *The Prelude* was only to have been an 'ante-chapel'. Similarly fraught questions occur in the 'Immortality Ode' with its pervading sense of loss and underlying tone of grief:

Whither is fled the visionary gleam?
Where is it now, the glory and the dream? (*ll* 56-57).

Wordsworth also uses questions in a more light-hearted fashion:

Who fancied what a pretty sight
This Rock would be if edged around
With living snowdrops? ('Who fancied what a pretty sight', *ll* 1-3).

Sometimes the question conveys a vague sense of sadness, possibly nostalgia:

Will no one tell me what she sings?
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
For old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago ('The Solitary Reaper', *ll* 17-20).

Or the question can emphasise the awesome power of Nature:

How art thou named? In search of what strange land
From what huge height, descending? Can such force
Of waters issue from a British source,
Or hath Pindus fed Thee, where the band
Of Patriots scoop their freedom out, with hand
Desperate as thine? Or come the incessant shocks
From that young stream, that smites the throbbing rocks
Of Viamala? ... ('To the Torrent at the Devil's Bridge, North Wales', *ll* 1-8).

Wordsworth's exclamatory mode is an important device in conveying emphasis, or surprise, amazement or some other strong emotion. In 'Composed Upon Westminster Bridge' the penultimate line serves the purpose of underlining the unusual aspects of seeing the city in such a beautiful state and is a fitting introduction to the powerful final line:

Dear God! The very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

'The world is too much with us' contains a very similar use of this device. In this poem it serves to underline Wordsworth's disgust with what amounts to humanity's treachery to Nature, and his rejection of the world's "sordid boon":

For this, for every thing, we are out of tune;
It moves us not—Great God! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;

So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
 Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
 Have sight of Proteus coming from the sea;
 Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn ('The world is too much with us',
 // 8-14).

A more light-hearted, but nonetheless deeply felt, sentiment is expressed in the charming 'To a Butterfly' ('Stay near me—do not take thy flight!') that illustrates the contrast between the poet's boisterous attempts to catch a butterfly, while Dorothy is fearful of inflicting the slightest harm:

Oh! pleasant, pleasant were the days,
 The time, when in our childish plays
 My sister Emmeline and I
 Together chaced the Butterfly!
 A very hunter did I rush
 Upon the prey:—with leaps and springs
 I followed on from brake to bush;
 But She, God love her! feared to brush
 The dust from off its wings.

Closely allied to these aspects of Wordsworth's poetry is what J.P.Ward describes as "uttering" (1984:147). This can be linked to Wordsworth's use of the monosyllabic word and entails what can be described as a pure unadorned statement, seemingly simple but with immense underlying significance and meaning. The best example of this is probably the well-known 'My heart leaps up when I behold' (also sometimes referred to as 'The Rainbow'). The poem's significance is underscored by the fact that Wordsworth used lines 7-9 as an epigram to his great 'Immortality Ode'. I quote the short poem in full:

My heart leaps up when I behold
 A Rainbow in the sky:
 So was it when my life began;
 So is it now I am a Man;
 So be it when I shall grow old,
 Or let me die!
 The Child is Father of the Man;
 And I could wish my days to be
 Bound each to each by natural piety.

Interestingly, Edwin Stein refers to the rainbow as one of the four recurring images identified by Mary Moorman in Wordsworth's poetry (1988:42). He describes the significance of the rainbow as follows:

The rainbow is at once a natural event and a supernatural sign, and looked at either way its significance for human life is essentially the same. As a natural sign, it means the return of the sun and a restoration of equilibrium among the elements after a rainstorm; a supernatural sign, it is a pledge by God not to interrupt again until the end of time the natural history of the earth and the development of the human culture the earth supports. It is this doubly affirmative, natural-supernatural strength of the rainbow as a sign of renewal which makes the poet's heart leap up and wish his days might be bound together by natural piety (1988:43-44).

This poem is not only an example of almost pure, virtually monosyllabic utterance, but it voices the very important Wordsworthian issues of continuity, memory and spiritual and mental growth. I also believe that it echoes and builds on earlier expressed sentiments in 'Expostulation and Reply' and 'The Tables Turned':

The eye it cannot chuse but see,
We cannot bid the ear be still;
Our bodies feel, where'er they be,
Against, or with our will.

Nor less I deem there are powers
Which of themselves our minds impress
That we can feed this mind of ours,
In a wise passiveness.

Think you, 'mid all this mighty sum
Of things for ever speaking,
That nothing of itself will come,
But we must still be seeking? ('Expostulation and Reply', ll 17-28).

Come forth, and bring with you a heart
That watches and receives ('The Tables Turned', ll 31-32).

I believe that in these poems Wordsworth uttered his conviction that life should be a continuous process of growth, mentally, emotionally and spiritually and that this process will be facilitated by opening one's mind and heart to the beneficent influences of nature and the Divine. It is of course a moot point whether the loss of "youth's golden

gleam" (*Prelude*, 1805, VI, l 245) is amply recompensed by the gaining of wisdom and maturity, but I think Wordsworth tries hard to convince himself that it is, and 'My heart leaps up' is probably his most convincing articulation thereof.

Another notable aspect of Wordsworth's language is his skilful and effective use of negation—he employs negatives and even double negatives. This has the interesting effect of the opposite of what is being said, being evoked or conjured up in a shadowy, though tantalising form. One often encounters the formula of 'not this or this but that' or 'not for these but for those' which frequently imparts a subtle and hidden emphasis. Some of the best known examples come from the 'Immortality Ode':

Not in entire forgetfulness
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come (*ll* 62-64).

Not for these I raise
The song of thanks and praise (*ll* 142-143).

But for those first affections,
Those shadowy recollections, (*ll* 151-152).

... truths that wake,
To perish never;
Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavour
Nor Man nor Boy
Nor all that is at enmity with joy,
Can utterly abolish or destroy! (*ll* 158-163).

Also in *The Prelude* one encounters many instances of this stratagem; I will quote two:

... it grieves me for thy state, O man,
Thou paramount creature, and thy race, while ye
Shall sojourn on this planet, not for woes
Which thou endur'st—that weight, albeit huge,
I charm away—but for those palms atchieved
Through length of time, by study and hard thought,
The honours of thy high endowments; there
My sadness finds it's fuel (1805, V, *ll* 3-10)

I was benighted heart and mind, but now
On all sides day began to reappear,
And it was proved indeed that not in vain

I had been taught to reverence a power
 That is the very quality and shape
 And image of right reason, that matures
 Her processes by steady laws, gives birth
 To no impatient or fallacious hopes,
 No heat of passion or excessive zeal,
 No vain conceits, provokes to no quick turns
 Of self-applauding intellect, but lifts
 The being into magnanimity, (1805, XII, ll 21-32).

It also occurs in *The Excursion*. I quote from Book I that offers an excellent extended example:

Far and wide the clouds were touched,
 And in their silent faces could he read
 Unutterable love. Sound needed none, 205
 Nor any voice of joy; his spirit drank
 The spectacle: sensation, soul, and form,
 All melted into him; they swallowed up
 His animal being; in them did he live,
 And by them did he live; they were his life. 210
 In such access of mind, in such high hour
 Of visitation from the living God,
 Thought was not; in enjoyment it expired.
 No thanks he breathed, he proffered no request;
 Rapt in still communion that transcends 215
 The imperfect offices of prayer and praise,
 His mind was a thanksgiving to the power
 That made him; it was blessedness and love!

A Herdsman on the lonely mountain-tops,
 Such intercourse was his, and in this sort 220
 Was his existence oftentimes *possessed*.
 O then how beautiful, how bright, appeared
 The written promise! Early had he learned
 To reverence the volume that displays
 The mystery, the life which cannot die; 225
 But in the mountains did he *feel* his faith.
 All things, responsive to the writing, there
 Breathed immortality, revolving life,
 And greatness still revolving; infinite:
 There littleness was not; the least of things 230
 Seemed infinite; and there his spirit shaped
 Her prospects, nor did he believe,—he *saw*
 What wonder if his being thus became
 Sublime and comprehensive! Low desires,
 Low thoughts had there no place; 235

This passage is also a very good example of Wordsworth's preoccupation with the need for humanity to grow and ascend in an intellectual, spiritual and moral sense. But because Wordsworth was cognisant of the dark side of life, he has to voice the opposites too—low desires do exist, prayer is but an imperfect tool. As such it makes an interesting companion piece to the lines from Book V of *The Prelude* that I quoted just before it, although that would have been written about ten years before *The Excursion*.

Sometimes this device even suggests a sense of mystery, often by implying absence. At the end of 'Lucy Gray' (not to be confused with the Lucy of the so-called 'Lucy' poems) Lucy's footprints in the snow are tracked onto the bridge where they cease abruptly in "the middle of the plank/And further there were none". This suggestion of the supernatural cunningly sets the scene for the last two stanzas that maintain that Lucy, who has always been solitary, may still be alive in the "lonesome" wilderness. I quote the last haunting stanzas:

Yet some maintain that to this day
She is a living Child
That you may see sweet Lucy Gray
Upon the lonesome Wild.

O'er rough and smooth she trips along,
And never looks behind;
And sings a solitary song
That whistles in the wind.

(Does this not bear the most evocative echoes of 'The Solitary Reaper'?)

This is also the case regarding the last couplet of 'A slumber did my spirit seal':

Rolled round in earth's diurnal course
With rocks and stones and trees.

All the characteristics of the living have been removed from 'Lucy'. This seemingly simple poem has always evoked much and differing critical responses and debates. J.B. Thompson claims that the final lines "brings home to one the full horror of death". With reference to F.W. Bateson's analysis of the poem, Thompson writes as follows:

But what Bateson misses is a fundamental *linguistic link* [my emphasis] between all these seemingly diametrically opposed features of the poem, a

subtle ambiguity of formulation that enables the same set of words (in lines 3 and 4) to describe precisely, both sides of the opposition with a grim sardonic irony: "She *seemed* a thing that could not feel/The touch of earthly years", so intensely alive was she and now she indubitably *is* a thing, precisely and literally, as much as a rock or a stone or a tree By a grim turn of fate she has turned out to be exactly what Wordsworth naively imagined her to be—but in a sense that strikes one as almost a sick joke, as if fate deals in black humor. This is not what one expects of Wordsworth, conditioned as we are by history of literature classes. But it is a feature of genius, if not its essence, to be unpredictable.

The diction employed by the poet to describe the dead Lucy is that of the scientific textbook—"no motion", "no force", "diurnal"—and the point of this, dispassionate and rational as it must sound, and as it in fact is, is paradoxically an intensely emotional one. For to speak of a human being, and especially of a vital, exuberant one, as if she were a mere laboratory object or "thing" brings home to one the full horror of death. And that, I submit, was, if I may still use the word, the intention of the author (1995:11).

What this very perceptive and insightful commentary also does is bring home to one the full linguistic mastery of Wordsworth and the subtlety of his technique. By stripping Lucy of all her living qualities and making her literally a part of the earth, the poet powerfully evokes the utter shock of her death and the utter completeness of his loss—she really is totally and irrevocably lost to him.

There is, however, also another and often lighter side to Wordsworth's usage of negation—J.P.Ward refers to it as his "exuberant exaggerations" (1984:139). These manifest in statements couched in the superlative. Here are a few examples:

Never did fifty things at once
Appear so lovely, never, never
The woods how sweetly do they ring
To hear the earth's sweet murmuring,
Thus could I hang for ever ('Peter Bell', ll 61-65).

Three years she grew in sun and shower,
Then Nature said, 'A lovelier flower
On earth was never sown ('Three years she grew in sun and shower', ll 1-3).

Sir Walter wiped his face, and cried, 'Till now
Such sight was never seen by living eyes:
Three leaps have borne him from this lofty brow,
Down to the very fountain where he lies ('Hart-Leap Well', ll 53-56).

And possibly the best known example of all:

Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendor valley, rock or hill
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep! ('Composed Upon Westminster
Bridge', // 9-11).

This device imparts vigour and vitality to the lines and reinforces the unusual quality that the poet ascribes to the subject of his poem. Ward claims that the exaggeration or "extremity of utterance" is successful in bringing to the poem

... a strain of emotion, and an impulsiveness, that makes us want to respond to the intensity expressed, rather than any remotely literal interpretation to be placed on the actual words used (1984:132).

Ward also makes a further very valid point which goes some way I believe towards explaining the extremely powerful reaction some readers have to Wordsworth's poetry, among whom I obviously include myself. Through his usage of exaggeration, Wordsworth is trying to impart, with honesty and conviction, the strength of his emotions and feelings. Indeed, he tries to include his readers in the emotion—it is an emotional 'reaching-out' to the reader:

To exaggerate ... is then to offer one's strongest feelings to others in an exposure. It is *to offer relationship* [my emphasis] (Ward, 1984:133).

Wordsworth also employs contrast to very good effect. This is admirably illustrated by the ascent of Snowdon episode referred to before but which will be quoted here as well, as it is so apposite:

... I panted up
With eager pace, and no less eager thoughts
Thus might we wear perhaps an 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 had I time to ask the cause of this,
For instantly a light upon the turf
Fell like a flash: I looked about, and lo!
The moon stood naked in the heavens, at height
Immense above my head, and on the shore
I found myself of a huge sea of mist,

Which meek and silent rested at my feet.
 A hundred hills their dusky backs upheaved
 All over this still ocean, and beyond,
 Far, far beyond, the vapours shot themselves,
 In headlands, tongues, and promontory shapes,
 Into the sea, the real sea, that seemed
 To dwindle and give up its majesty,
 Usurped upon as far a sight could reach.
 Meanwhile, the moon looked down upon this shew
 In single glory, and we stood, the mist
 Touching our very feet; and from the shore
 At distance not the third part of a mile
 Was a blue chasm; a fracture in the vapour,
 A deep and gloomy breathing-place, through which
 Mounted the roar of waters, torrents, streams
 Innumerable, roaring with one voice.
 The universal spectacle throughout
 Was shaped for admiration and delight,
 Grand in itself alone, but in that breach
 Through which the homeless voice of waters rose,
 That dark deep thoroughfare, had Nature lodged
 The soul, the imagination of the whole (*Prelude*, 1805, XIII, ll 31-65).

This passage (as already discussed on pp.18-20) is virtually a study in contrast, most notably between light and dark, but also between the nature of the verbs, adverbs and adjectives. On the one hand one has the images of light associated with the glorious moon being contrasted with the "deep and gloomy breathing-place" of the chasm—that "dark deep thoroughfare". There also seems to be two linguistic environments—a very vigorous one and a much quieter one. The first contains words like 'panted, flash, shot, upheaved, huge, fracture, roar, roaring' and 'breach'. The second one contains much quieter words: 'stood, meek, silent, rested, still, mist' and 'vapour'. By creating these contrasting linguistic *milieus*, Wordsworth succeeds in strengthening and emphasising both aspects of his scene—in a sense he enriches the various qualities by highlighting opposite qualities, as it were. Which all serves to make the whole episode more tantalising and evocative, both intellectually and emotionally.

Wordsworth was obviously very aware of the role of contrast and antithesis and even wrote a poem entitled 'A Character' in what he termed (tongue-in-cheek, I believe) "the antithetical manner":

I wonder how Nature could ever find space
 For the weight and the levity seen in his face:
 There's thought and no thought, and there's paleness and bloom,
 And bustle and sluggishness, pleasure and gloom (*ll* 1-4).

Wordsworth claimed that the poem referred to his lifelong friend, Robert Jones. Coleridge (dare one say predictably?) thought it referred to some superficial characteristics of his own (*WW*, 1984:700). Whatever the case may be, the poem conveys a sense of warm, unstinting affection and acceptance.

Wordsworth's use of contrast often takes the form of an oxymoron or paradox in which words or figures of speech are brought together in what would seem unlikely or unusual combinations, but that succeed in loading the words with added, albeit sometimes elusive, significance. These are sometimes fairly overt, but sometimes much more subtle and insinuating:

Here are a few examples:

In *An Evening Walk* (Wordsworth's first publication, 1793) Wordsworth refers to the rooster that "Sweetly ferocious round his native walks,/Gazed by his sister-wives, the monarch stalks" (*ll* 129-130). Wordsworth acknowledges in his notes to this poem that this is a translation of Tasso's description "Dolcemente feroce". In the sonnet 'Composed by the side of Grasmere Lake' (also known as 'Clouds, lingering yet, extend in solid bars'), line 11 contains the phrase "calm fires". Book VI of the 1805 *Prelude* contains many oxymorons. In the evocative Simplon Pass episode the following occur:

... The immeasurable height
 Of woods decaying, never to be decayed
 The stationery blasts of waterfalls (*ll* 55-58).

Tumult and peace, the darkness and the light (*l* 567).

In 'A Morning Exercise' a superb, if rather chilling line occurs: "Blithe ravens croak of death" (*l* 7). In Book III of *The Excursion*, line 908 contains the phrase "the secret of a poignant scorn". In Book IV, line 87 the teasingly evocative phrase "the anarchy of dreaming sleep" occurs. And in the First Part of the Two-Part *Prelude*, lines 225-27 read as follows:

... Meanwhile abroad
 The heavy rain was falling, or the frost
 Raged bitterly with keen and silent tooth.

All these examples give glimpses, in true Wordsworthian fashion, of other "dim and undetermined" (*Prelude*, 1805, I, l 420) meanings that inform and qualify the surface meanings of Wordsworth's words, and highlight an extremely important device in Wordsworth's linguistic arsenal—by placing his words in the context of paradox and contradiction, he very often succeeds in suggesting a half-stated and tantalising alternative dimension that enriches his overtly stated meaning. Surely there is even a little of Keats's negative capability here?

A link can be seen here to what J.P.Ward describes as a "pleasurable tension" that exists in Wordsworth's writing. Wordsworth puts together things that are different "but as though friendly to each other" (1984:70). This can in turn be linked to Sykes Davies's point regarding Wordsworth's repeated use of word-clusters (like the so-called 'gleam' cluster (briefly discussed on p.8 and expanded on p.38) that function as part of a linguistic community, as it were. Ward is also aware of this aspect of Wordsworth's language and identifies the effect of the "unifying enrichment" that these words bestow on each other in that "they are already communally close" (1984:71). This can clearly be seen in the 'Immortality Ode' that constitutes an extended use of the gleam-cluster to achieve its haunting effect of loss and possible recompense. The repeated usage in this poem of ordinary words like 'light', 'dream', 'glory' and 'splendour' (to mention but a very few) load these words and their linguistic fellows with such significance that the thoughts embedded in the poem do not only "lie too deep for tears" (l 206) but in fact lie too deep for mere language to capture.

This struggle to capture in language these elusive and often only half-comprehended thoughts has as a result that Wordsworth returns, again and again, to the same ground and the same words. Many critics have identified this phenomenon. Geoffrey Hartmann mentions the phenomenon of "centroversion in Wordsworth: how his mind circles and haunts a particular place" (1987:137). J.P.Ward refers to "this compulsive circling" (1984:127) that forms an inextricable part of Wordsworth's language usage and style. In his fascinating, albeit I believe controversial, structuralist reading of Wordsworth's 'Yew-Trees', Michael Riffaterre claims that Wordsworth uses "kernel" words or statements

that he then expands into descriptive sentences that build on a "chain of derivations" so that "each word is generated by positive or negative conformity with the preceding one" (1990:111-12). In this way the idea of growth literally and figuratively permeates the poem with its description of "intertwisted fibres serpentine/Up-coiling and inveterately convolved" to create a "natural temple" (another oxymoron) with "altars undisturbed of mossy stone" (*Il* 17-18 and 29-30). I accept this particular point in Riffaterre's analysis, but I find the references to darkness far more intriguing. The first yew-tree, the "pride of Lorton Vale", "stands single, in the midst/Of its own darkness" (*Il* 2-3). It is of "vast circumference and gloom profound" (*l* 9). The four intertwined yew-trees at Borrowdale have a "sable roof" and stand in "pillared shade" so dense that "ghostly shapes" could meet there at midday—indeed these yew-trees are "not uninformed with Phantasy" (*Il* 23,20,25 and 19). Now one must remember that 'darkness' is another one of those loaded Wordsworthian words already discussed (see p.77). It is after all in "the mystery of words that *darkness makes abode*" [my emphasis] and that "the host/of shadowy things do work their changes" so that objects are only "recognized/In flashes, and with a glory scarce their own" (*Prelude*, 1805,V, *Il* 621-29). If one further considers this passage in conjunction with the passage on the imagination (Book VI, *Il* 525-48) and the Simplon Pass episode (Book VI, *Il* 550-77), Wordsworth's loaded idiolect becomes so obvious as to be incontrovertible: It is, Wordsworth says, in the rising of the power of the imagination, when "the *light* [my emphasis] of sense/Goes out in flashes that have shewn to us/The invisible world, [that] *greatness make abode* [again my emphasis]. And in the powerful Simplon Pass episode Wordsworth concludes that it is in contradiction, in the incomprehensible and the ungraspable, possibly even the unknowable, certainly the unsayable, that eternity and the universal mind are lodged:

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 apocalypse¹
The types and symbols of eternity,
Of first, and last, and midst, and without end (*Prelude*, 1805,VI, *Il* 565-72).

¹ In Wordsworth's time the geological theory current held that all but the highest Alpine peaks had been formed by the retreating waters of the Flood, the first great apocalyptic event.

This is further confirmed and emphasised in the equally powerful ascent of Snowdon episode in Book XIII of 1805, // 65-84, with its strong emphasis on light and darkness in truly tumultuous prose. Wordsworth concludes that in the "dark deep thoroughfare" of the chasm

... had Nature lodged
The soul, the imagination of the whole.

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 and 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
Exert upon the outward face of things,
So moulds them, and endues, abstracts, combines,
Or by abrupt and unhabitual influence
Doth make one object to impress itself
Upon all others, and pervades them so,
That even the grossest minds must see and hear,
And cannot chuse but feel ...

In the 1850 version (Book XIV, // 71-77) the mind

... 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.

I believe that the above proves that for Wordsworth light and darkness, imagination, mind and language are so inextricably entwined that even if not explicitly mentioned, they all evoke echoes of each other. Would it therefore be too fanciful to say that the analogy of the yew trees' "intertwisted fibres serpentine" that are "inveterately convolved" can be extended to Wordsworth's language and language usage as a whole?

Possibly, but surely 'Yew-Trees' powerfully evokes the phenomenality of words. Here Wordsworth's words have truly become "*things*, active and efficient" in themselves (Note to 'The Thorn', *WW*, 1984:594). I also believe that here, as throughout his *oeuvre*, Wordsworth deliberately employs and exploits the network of echoes, associations and connections that his words have come to acquire through repeated and intensive usage.

This logically leads to another aspect of Wordsworth's language, namely his use of compound words, like "under-presence" in the Snowdon passage above (*l* 82). This is another way, in which Wordsworth attempts to suggest another or hidden meaning underlying his words. This is particularly true as regards his use of 'under' in conjunction with other words, usually nouns. Many instances occur in *The Prelude* of 1805.

In Book III, line 540, Wordsworth refers to his "under-soul" that lay dormant as it were during his stay at Cambridge. In Book VI, line 236, he refers to Mary Hutchinson's "placid under-countenance" that first endeared her to him. This is particularly interesting, if read with 'She was a Phantom of delight' in mind. In that poem Wordsworth also describes Mary first in light-hearted fashion as a pretty young girl who is like a "moment's ornament", then, with growing maturity as a woman "not too bright or good/For human nature's daily food" and finally, when he sees "the very pulse of the machine" he praises her as the "perfect woman: nobly planned", with strength, endurance, foresight and skill, with the ability to "warn, to comfort, and command". One almost wants to believe that Wordsworth sensed these qualities in the summer of 1787 when he first met her!

In Book VI, line 489, Wordsworth refers to a troubling "under-thirst" that underlay his enjoyment of his and Robert Jones's Alpine walking tour in 1790. Douglas Kneale speculates that this could possibly have been an intimation of the limitations of language revealed during what one can describe as the onslaught of the imagination during the Simplon Pass episode described in this Book (1984:118-19). Likewise, in London (Book VII, *l* 721), Wordsworth has an "under-sense" that if one looks "in steadiness" at the fractured chaos of the city, some wholeness could be detected.

The final example to be discussed of Wordsworth's use of 'under' in a compound word is a very significant one. In this passage from *The Prelude* Wordsworth possibly states and explicates his poetic creed. In this extract he refers to men of a contemplative frame of mind (like Michael) who use language as it should be used. Rabinowitz writes about this passage as follows:

... Wordsworth's expressive theory of poetic language represents an attempt to show that language, used genuinely, is a way of recovering and affirming the power and vitality of the sympathetic imagination. [The "heart/that watches and receives", I believe, of the final lines of 'The Tables Turned'.] In his portrayal of language as an incarnation of thought, and as an instinctive and intuitive mental faculty, Wordsworth ... regards the creative coalescence of language and memory [and, I believe, the mind and the emotions] as the basis of his poetic imagination (1983:161).

It seems apposite to quote the passage referred to fairly extensively:

Men may be found of other mold than these,
 Who are their own upholders, to themselves
 Encouragement, and energy and will,
 Expressing liveliest thoughts in lively words
 As native passion dictates. Others, too,
 There are among the walks of homely life
 Still higher, men for contemplation framed,
 Shy, and unpractised in the strife of phrase,
 Meek men, whose very souls perhaps would sink
 Beneath them, summoned to such intercourse:
 Theirs is the language of the heavens, the power,
 The thought, the image, and the silent joy;
Words are but under-agents in their souls; [my emphasis]
 When they are grasping with their greatest strength
 They do not breathe among them: this I speak
 In gratitude to God, who feeds our hearts
 For his own service, knoweth, loveth us
 When we are unregarded by the world (*Prelude*, 1805, XII, ll 260-77).

Jonathan Wordsworth makes the point that the "them" of line 274 refers back to the "words", and that Wordsworth probably had in mind here Michael and his brother John, "the silent poet" (*Prelude*, 1805, XII, note 6). I regard this as a further claim for Wordsworth's belief that language and mind are inextricably linked, or should be inextricably linked to the world and nature in a reciprocal relationship of mutual benefit and enrichment.

Many other examples of unusual compound words can be found in Wordsworth's poetry and virtually all of them reinforce or emphasise the emotion or sentiment expressed. Quite a few in fact deal with 'heart'. In Book III of *The Excursion*, the Solitary experiences "keen heart-anguish" when his beloved dies. In the poem that concludes the third of the *Essays upon Epitaphs* (PrW, 1974:95) Wordsworth refers to "Heart-sorrow rendered sweet by gratitude". In Book IV, line 166, of *The Excursion* the Vicar tells a tale of unrequited love in which the rejected man suffered from "A mind in all heart-mysteries unversed". Another interesting example comes from *The Prelude* again—Wordsworth perceives a dawning "human-heartedness about my love/For objects". In Book VI, line 44, Wordsworth ruefully acknowledges that his "over-love/Of freedom" hampered his studies at Cambridge. There are many more examples, but these will serve to illustrate the point. By putting his sometimes unusual combination of words together, Wordsworth taps into the many layers of "enigmatic meaning" (Ragland-Sullivan, 1984:382) that reside in often quite ordinary words and brings these meanings or echoes of these meanings, to the fore. In a fascinating tabular analysis of Wordsworth's favourite words, with reference to the Thorndike-Lorge list, Hugh Sykes Davies also makes the point that Wordsworth often uses the more unusual or uncommon meanings of words. For example 'naked', one of Wordsworth's very high frequency words, is never used to indicate 'undressed' or 'unclothed', but always the less common meaning of 'bare' or 'unadorned' (1986:70).

Another notable characteristic of Wordsworth's language, is his use of the 'I have' present perfect construction. In fact, it is so synonymous with him that one hardly notices it and is astonished at the frequency with which it occurs when one starts looking for it. J.A. Alford even claims that Wordsworth made it a convention of the lyric and

imbued it with a set of associations which survive in the work of later poets as disparate as Arthur Symonds, Ezra Pound, Robert Frost, Theodore Roethke, and others, many of whom rejected — or thought they rejected — his influence (1972:119).

Because the present perfect is such a suggestive grammatical structure, it is perfectly suited to Wordsworth's poetry of "unsharp abstractions" (Ward, 1984:91). Here are a few examples:

Him from my childhood have I known, and then
 He was so old, he seems not older now ('The Old Cumberland Beggar',
ll 22-23).

I have heard of one, a gentle soul
 Though giv'n to sadness and to gloom ('Peter Bell', *ll 875-76*).

Festivals have I seen that were not names:
 This is young Buonoparte's natal day ('Calais', *ll 1-2*).

Dear Native Brooks your ways have I pursued
 How fondly
 Nor have I been your follower in vain (Dear Native Brooks, your ways have
 I pursued', *ll 1-2 and 9*).

When I have borne in memory what has tamed
 Great Nations ... (*ll 1-2*).

The things which I have seen I now can see no more ('Immortality Ode',
l 9).

'Tintern Abbey' is most notable for the employment of this construction:

 Though absent long,
 These forms of beauty have not been to me
 As is a landscape to a blind man's eye:
 But oft in lonely rooms, and mid the din
 Of town and cities, I have owed to them,
 In hours of weariness, sensations sweet (*ll 24-29*).

 ... how oft
 In darkness, and amid the many shapes
 Of joyless daylight; when the fretful stir
 Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,
 Have hung upon the beatings of my heart,
 How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee
 O sylvan Wye! (*ll 51-57*).

 ... For I have learned
 To look on nature, not as in the hour
 Of thoughtless youth, but hearing oftentimes
 The still, sad music of humanity (*ll 89-92*).

 ... And I have felt
 A presence that disturbs me with the joy
 Of elevated thoughts ... (*ll 94-96*).

Wordsworth frequently uses 'oft' or 'often' in conjunction with this construction—this not only emphasises the importance of the object or the episode, but establishes the poet's credentials as it were—he is speaking with the authority of repeated personal experience (Alford, 1972:123). It is also Wordsworth's way of authenticating the power of memory and of underlining the powerful and modifying presence of the past in the present. In this way the memories of nature from the poet's youth, have often strengthened him in less pleasant circumstances. This device not only evokes temporal distance, however—it also serves to indicate actual distance or a different geographical location. In 'The Last of the Flock' the first line reads: "In distant countries I have been/And yet I have not often seen", and in 'Composed in the Valley, near Dover' (ll 6-7) Wordsworth writes: "Oft have I looked round/With joy in Kent's green vales".

The indeterminacy that is such a prevalent characteristic of Wordsworth's language has often been referred to. J.A. Alford makes a very illuminating and apposite comment in this regard in the current context. He claims that

The "I have" construction, both for itself and for the kind of language associated with it, serves to place much of Wordsworth's poetry in the *twilight of meaning* [my emphasis] to induce a sense of half-conscious perception in the reader, and, not least, to suggest that great arch of Time whereby the ordinary events may be "thrown to finer distance" (1972:129). [The final quote is from *The Excursion*, Book I, l 17.]

This echoes and underlines comments from many other critics (already discussed in Chapter 1) that the reader of Wordsworth's poetry has an important role to play. It is also an extremely rewarding one if performed diligently.

As has been previously discussed I have long been aware that one often comes across words in Wordsworth that strongly obtrude themselves on one's attention. One but has to think of 'diurnal' in 'A slumber did my spirit seal' and the 'unfathered' vapour of the passage on the imagination from *The Prelude* (1805, Book VI, ll 527, 595 in the 1850 version). I was therefore extremely interested to read that J.P. Ward also refers to words in Wordsworth that leap out at you (1984:96). Although Ward's focus here is narrower and more particular than mine, I would like to quote him as the 'message' conveyed is similar to mine. He writes that these words

... come again and again, and their feature is the little moment or lurch of recognition one suspects most people feel on seeing them, as they jump out of no matter what context to our attention. These words include *shock*, *flash*, *gleams*, *bliss*, *vexed* and *naked*, and less sharply and more thoughtfully *admonishment*, *profitless*, *inland* and *blend* (1984:96).

These are words that Ward very validly claims evoke a "moment of intellectual recognition" (1984:97). I agree with him but must add that there is a significantly larger number of these words that have become so laden with meaning through repeated usage that they impinge powerfully on the reader's attention. A further point that should be made is that I suspect that one is treading on highly subjective ground here—possibly every Wordsworthian reader will have her or his own 'significant Wordsworthian words'. Possibly these words carry an emotional charge rather than an intellectual one? Many of these typically Wordsworthian words have been mentioned before in the previous chapters, but I would like to add just a few more to illustrate.

'Feeling(s)' has to be one of these words along with 'emotion' and 'passion'. After all, did Wordsworth himself not say in his Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* that in these poems "the feeling therein developed gives importance to the action and situation and not the action and situation to the feeling" (*PLB*, 1991:248)? Wordsworth believed that the poet, by evoking and conveying emotion "binds together by passion and knowledge the vast empire of human society, as it is spread over the whole earth, and over all time" (*PLB*, 1991:259). Very often the word 'feeling' occurs in conjunction with 'mind', 'power', 'heart' and 'soul' (those other typically Wordsworthian words) as in the following examples from *The Prelude*:

And not alone
In grandeur and tumult, but no less
In tranquil scenes, that universal power
And fitness in the latent qualities
And essences of things, by which the mind
Is moved by feelings of delight, to me
Came strengthened with a superadded soul (1805, II, ll 342-47).

Even then [in childhood] the common haunts of the green earth
With the ordinary human interests
Which they embosom—all without regard
As both may seem—are fastening on the heart
Insensibly, each with the other's help.

So that we love, not knowing that we love,
And feel, not knowing whence our feeling comes (1805, VIII, ll 166-72).

Long afterwards, I roamed about
In daily presence of this very scene,
Upon the naked pool and dreary crags,
An on the melancholy Beacon, fell
The spirit of pleasure and youth's golden gleam;
And think ye not with radiance more divine
From these remembrances, and from the power
They left behind? So feeling comes in aid
Of feeling, and diversity of strength
Attends us, if but once we have been strong (1805, XI, ll 318-27).

'Mystery', is another loaded word in Wordsworth's lexicon. His usage of the word is perfectly in line with and apposite to his language of indeterminacy. I will refer to his two best-known usages of the word, namely in the so-called 'mystery of man' passage (already quoted on p.28, but repeated here for ease of reference) and the 'mystery of words' passage, also previously referred to and quoted below. The 'mystery of man' passage comes from Book XI of *The Prelude* of 1805:

Oh mystery of man, from what a depth
Proceed thy honours! I am lost, but see
In simple childhood something of the base
On which thy greatness stands—but this I feel,
That from thyself it is that thou must give
Else never canst receive. The days gone by
Come back upon me from the dawn almost
Of life; the hiding-places of my power
Seem open, I approach, and then they close;
I see by glimpses now, when age comes on
May scarcely see at all; and I would give
While yet we may, as far as words can give,
A substance and a life to what I feel:
I would enshrine the spirit of the past
For future restoration (ll 328-42).

This passage is relevant not only on the grounds of its powerful poetic voice, but also because it reiterates Wordsworth's premise that 'the child is father of the man'. It also contains many haunting echoes from 'Tintern Abbey' and the 'Immortality Ode', like memory and the past containing 'food' for future years, loss and recompense. It is a very 'human' passage, showing the poet's vulnerability, especially in view of the fact that, in a literal sense, Wordsworth feared that he would go blind, due to constant eye problems.

This passage stands in interesting juxtaposition to the 'mystery of words' passage (*Prelude*, 1805, V, ll 620-29), extensively referred to before:

Visionary power
Attends upon the motions of the winds
Embodied in the mystery of words;
There darkness makes abode, and all the host
Of shadowy things do work their changes there
As in mansion like their proper home.
Even forms and substances are circumfused
By that transparent veil with light divine,
And through the turnings intricate of verse
Present themselves as objects recognized
In flashes and with a glory scarce their own.

In this passage we are told about the power of words and it has powerful echoes of that other well-known passage (quoted more extensively on p.4) from the third of Wordsworth's *Essays upon Epitaphs* (*PrW*, 1974:84) that starts with the famous words; "Words are too awful an instrument for good or evil to be trifled with: they hold above all other external powers a dominion over thoughts". In the 'mystery of man' passage Wordsworth speaks about the limitations of language—"as far as words can give". This echoes another line in Book V (*l* 185) where the poet asks "Why call upon a few weak words to say/What is already written in the hearts/Of all that breathe ...?" I find that this ambiguity that Wordsworth had towards language often creates an interesting tension and duality in his work. Possibly another aspect of the different voices in his work? Thomas Weiskel, an extremely perceptive critic of Wordsworth, makes the following comment (also referred to on p.iv) regarding specifically the 'mystery of words' passage, but that I believe can be extended over all Wordsworth's poetry:

Wordsworth had a gift of phrasing that defies analysis ... [this] passage is evoking the penumbra of words, the power inherent not in *what* they mean but in *that* they mean; [my emphasis] or, in what they are, independent of their meaning—in an earlier language, the *how* and not the *what* of sublimity. When a "form" or a "substance" is taken up by a signifier, it receives a super-added power and a divine glory immanent in the circumfusing veil of the signifier. Power inheres not in the perceptual form but in language or symbolicity itself ... (1985:106-107).

In the 1850 version of the 'mystery of words' passage a very interesting and telling oxymoron occurs. Wordsworth writes that "Visionary power/Attends the motions of the

viewless winds/Embodied in the mystery of words" (ll 595-97). Is Wordsworth not saying here that language can evoke that which is beyond sight? That that is in fact the mystery of words? I believe so. Alison Phinney writes as follows about this passage and succeeds in giving a virtually perfect summation of Wordsworth's linguistic ambiguity:

Language is here presented simultaneously as transparent embodiment and cloaking veil, a place of darkness and a source of light, pure presentation of things in themselves, and as a radiant addition to them. The very duplicity of Wordsworth's metaphors suggests a hesitation between the two views of language. While he wants language to be pure transparence, it would seem to be the very obscurity of language that constitutes its brilliant sublimity (1987:70).

And it is in Wordsworth's capacity to exploit these aspects of language that much of his brilliance lies. In Wordsworth's ability to evoke "the unsaid that inheres in the said" (Phinney, 1987:71), his 'greatness makes abode', to borrow one of his own inimitable phrases.

Wordsworth also uses the word 'moon' or the moon image extremely frequently. I will refer to just a few instances to illustrate how evocatively and indeed intriguingly he does this. Early in *The Prelude* (1805, Book II, ll 196-99) Wordsworth admits that

... the moon to me was dear;
For I would dream away my purposes
Standing to look upon her, while she hung
Midway between the hills as if she knew
No other region but belonged to thee,
Yea, appertained by a peculiar right
To thee and thy grey huts, my darling vale.

In the 'Immortality Ode' the lovely lines "The moon doth with delight/Look round her when the heavens are bare" (ll 12-13) occur. Other similar images of the moon are frequent in *The Prelude*. In Book XIII, line 41, the moon "stood naked in the heavens at height/Immense" above the poet's head; a few lines further "the moon looked down upon this shew/In single glory". In Book IV, lines 77-85 the poet describes how he often lay awake on windy nights

... to watch
 The moon in splendour couched among the leaves
 Of a tall ash that near our cottage stood
 Had watched her with fixed eyes while to a fro
 In the dark summit of the moving tree
 She rocked with every impulse of the wind.

In 'A Night-Piece' the following description occurs:

... He looks around, the clouds are split
 Asunder, and above his head he views
 The clear moon and the glory of the heavens.
 There in a black-blue vault she sails along
 Followed by multitudes of stars, that small
 And bright, and sharp along the gloomy vault
 Drive as she drives (*ll* 8-14).

In *An Evening Walk* Wordsworth describes the moon-rise: "She lifts in silence up her lovely face;/Above the gloomy valley flings her light". The contrast between the vigorous verb 'flings' and the silence of the moon's first appearance is very effective. It also acts as a precursor to the moonrise in the ascent of Snowdon (Book XIII of *The Prelude*) when the moon's light falls on the turf "like a flash" (*l* 40).

And then, just when one comes to believe that the moon is always a thing of beauty to Wordsworth, one begins to detect traces of a different *ambience*. In one of the Lucy poems "Strange fits of passion I have known", (also referred to on p.44), the moon is mentioned no fewer than five times (once by the word 'planet')—the poet rides to Lucy's cottage "Beneath the evening moon", he keeps his eye fixed on the moon, the moon descends towards the roof of Lucy's cottage and he still keeps his eyes fixed on "the descending moon". And, significantly, it is as the moon disappears abruptly behind the roof "When down behind the cottage roof/At once the planet dropped" that the fearful image of Lucy dead comes into the poet's mind. In Book II (The Solitary) of *The Excursion*, the character experiences a loss of faith and attaches himself to a "false philosophy" that is "spread like a halo round a misty moon/Widening its circle as the storms advance" (*ll* 260-63). In Book IV the moon is even more threatening—it "Burns/ like an unconsuming fire of light,/In the green trees" (*ll* 1065-66). The effect is heightened, I believe, by the Biblical echo of the burning bush. And finally, in Book VI

of *The Prelude*, when the poet and Robert Jones find themselves lost in the Alps at night, the moon image is even more powerful and disquieting:

... We left the town
Of Gravedon with this hope, but soon
Were lost, bewildered among the woods immense
Where, having wandered for a while, we stopped
And on a rock sate down to wait for day.
An open place it was and overlooked
From high the sullen water underneath,
On which a dull red image of the moon
Lay bedded, changing oftentimes its form
Like an uneasy snake (*ll* 629-38).

This line brings Hartman's memorable description irresistibly to mind, namely that under the often ordinary subject matter that Wordsworth deals with in his poetry "the fantasy within stirs like a coiled snake" (1987:212). Wordsworth imbues even the moon with the mood that he wishes to create, and in doing so succeeds in emphasising that mood or emotion appreciably and evocatively.

Allied to this aspect of Wordsworth's language is the way in which he employs verbs to energise and invigorate his poetry. Ward refers to Wordsworth's use of the vigorous or energised verb (1984:104-11). In his use of the verb one clearly sees Wordsworth's engagement and involvement with his world, and it is crucial to his creation of mood and emotion. This usage can be joyous and boisterous, as in his description of his summer vacation in Book IV of *The Prelude* of 1805,

I bounded down the hill, shouting amain
A lusty summons (*ll* 5-6)
I looked at him, and smiled, and smiled again (*l* 46),

or in the memorable stanza from 'The Idiot Boy' that I can never read without smiling

She looks again—her arms are up—
She screams—she cannot move for joy;
She darts as with a torrent's force,
She almost has o'turned the horse,
And fast she holds her idiot boy.

Wordsworth's verb usage can also contribute to the creation of a more thoughtful tone, as in the following excerpt from Book VII of *The Prelude*,

... Scenes different there are,
 Full-formed, which take, with small internal help,
 Possession of the faculties; the peace
 Of night, for instance, the solemnity
 Of nature's intermediate hours of rest,
 When the great tide of human life stands still,
 The business of the day to come unborn,
 Of that gone by, locked up as in the grave;
 The calmness, beauty, of the spectacle,
 Sky, stillness, moonshine, empty streets, and sounds
 Unfrequent as in deserts; at late hours
 Of winter evenings when unwholesome rains
 Are falling hard, with people yet astir,
 The feeble salutation from the voice
 Of some unhappy Woman, now and then
 Heard as we pass; when no one looks about,
 Nothing is listened to (*ll* 626-42).

In the 'Immortality Ode' and in 'Tintern Abbey' the verb usage is absolutely central to the underlying sense of sadness and loss. From the 'Immortality Ode' first:

But yet I know, wher'er I go
 That there hath passed away a glory from the earth (*ll* 17-18).

Both of them speak of something that is gone:
 The Pansy at my feet
 Doth the same tale repeat:
 Whither is fled the visionary gleam?
 Where is it now, the glory and the dream? (*ll* 53-57).

What though the radiance which once so bright
 Be now for ever taken from my sight,
 Though nothing can bring back the hour
 Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower (*ll* 178-81).

And just one example from 'Tintern Abbey':

... That the time is past,
 And all its aching joys are now no more.
 And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this
 Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur: other gifts
 Have followed, for such loss, I would believe,
 Abundant recompence. For I have learned
 To look on nature, not as in the hour
 Of thoughtless youth, but hearing oftentimes
 The still, sad music of humanity (*ll* 84-92).

Wordsworth also employs his verbs to create "urgent rhythms" that sweep the reader forwards as Antony Easthope puts it (1993:82). This is particularly true of the Simplon Pass episode referred to before (see pp.5 and 29) with its tumultuous prose and tempestuous verbs, but it also occurs in many other poems, like 'Nutting' with its almost onomatopoeic impact:

Then up I rose
And dragged to earth both branch and bough, with crash
And merciless ravage; and the shady nook
Of hazels, and the green and mossy bower,
Deformed and sullied, patiently gave up
Their quiet being ... (ll 39-44).

There is an interesting change of pace, in the final three lines quoted that is almost analogous with the 'calm after the storm' idea. Wordsworth also extremely successfully evokes an almost apocalyptic sense of threat in the following lines from *The Prelude*, 1805, Book X that refers to the French Revolution and the impact of its excesses on Wordsworth:

... The fear gone by
Pressed on me almost like a fear to come.
I thought of those September massacres,
Divided from me by a little month,
And felt and touched them, a substantial dread
(The rest was conjured up from tragic fictions,
And mournful calendars of true history,
Remembrances and dim admonishments):
'The horse is taught his manage, and the wind
Of heaven wheels round and treads in his own steps,
Year following year, the tide returns again,
Day follows day, all things have second birth;
The earthquake is not satisfied at once'².
And in such way I wrought upon myself,
Until I seemed to hear a voice that cried,
To the whole city, 'Sleep no more!' To this
Add comments of a calmer mind—from which
I could not gather full security—
But at the best it seemed a place of fear,
Unfit for the repose of night,
Defenceless as a wood where tigers roam (ll 62-82).

²

I hear irresistible echoes of this scene in Yeats's 'The Second Coming' and cannot help wondering whether Yeats was familiar with these lines!

The skilful choice and usage of the verbs add to the nightmarish quality of those lines. One must remember that Wordsworth had been a fervent supporter of the ideals of the French Revolution—his sense of horror at the bloody betrayal of these ideals also informs these lines.

Ward makes the perceptive comment that Wordsworth's use of the verb is so effective, because his verbs are truly felt and emotionally charged:

This is because the copulative verb in Wordsworth is [a] real verb, from his own mind and feelings, and not merely the arranger of outerly characters or objects. The poet himself incessantly uses, loves, engages with and gets excited about those things (1984:192).

And herein lies the secret of that other art that Wordsworth has mastered so convincingly, namely that of narration. This is most comprehensively to be seen in that disgracefully undervalued poem 'The Thorn'. The language of the garrulous narrator with his somewhat lurid imagination is so perfectly apposite and 'right' that the story is told in an irresistible yet tantalisingly halting fashion that continually spurs the reader on to get to the end. Which end, of course, is in typically Wordsworthian fashion, open-ended and indeterminate. The reader does not know at the end whether any of the story is in fact true—at the end there are only the aged thorn, the little pond, the moss, and a haunting sense of some elusive truth or moral or significance that has evaded us.

Which brings me to the final point to be discussed in this chapter. All the above contribute to what Hugh Sykes Davies refers to as Wordsworth's subtle yet often deceptively simple style—as one sees in some of the lyrics and the ballads, most notably in poems like 'Michael', 'The Thorn', 'We are Seven' and 'Lucy Gray'. Davies also says that Wordsworth's best poetry has a remarkable density (1986:165). The latter points are particularly applicable to *The Prelude* and the 'Immortality Ode' with their many passages of loaded significance. To do justice to the subtle style and language of Wordsworth's poetry one needs a new approach to Wordsworth's poetry that is

capable of focusing on the structure of experience and on language insofar as it is both the medium and itself an intentional object (Marshall, 1987:xvii)

of Wordsworth's poetry. Wordsworth's subtle style and subtle language usage in fact demand from his readers no less than an ability or willingness to "sense [another] word" under his words (Hartman, 1987:29) and a "breaking or softening at the boundaries of each word" (Ward, 1984:53) so that their meanings diffuse through the poetry. M.W. Robson refers to both Wordsworth's language 'skills' and the changed perceptions about Wordsworth and his literary significance when he says that Wordsworth

... does extraordinary things with language. In syntax, he is a verbal Houdini. Things that once seemed "faults" now seem essential to the magic of his verse. (By "magic" I mean what is ultimately unanalysable,) ... in the end, Wordsworth stands or falls as a poet, a master of the language (1980:864).

In conclusion of this chapter, I would like to quote a sonnet (that Robson also refers to) that the young Sidney Keyes wrote in tribute to Wordsworth. It is simply entitled 'William Wordsworth' and was written in 1941:

No room for mourning: he's gone out
 Into the noisy glen, or stands between the stones
 Of the gaunt ridge, or you'll hear his shout
 Rolling among the screes, he being a boy again.
 He'll never fail or die
 And if they laid his bones
 In the wet vaults of iron sarcophagi
 Of fame, he'd rise at the first summer rain
 And stride across the hills to seek
 His rest among the broken lands and clouds.
 He was a stormy day, a granite peak
 Spearing the sky; and look, about its base
Words flower like crocuses in the hanging wood,
 Blank through the dalehead and the bony face

[My emphasis in the penultimate line.]

And it is in these 'word flowers', if they are carefully picked and arranged, that the powerful but elusive Wordsworthian magic can be garnered.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER INVESTIGATION

I learnt a good many things during the research for and writing of this dissertation. Two points, however, emerged above all else. The first is that Wordsworth's language and language usage constitute a fascinating field of study—in many ways I feel that I have barely scratched the surface here. The second point is that in dealing with Wordsworth and his poetry and prose one is dealing with a truly formidable intellect with a vision so radically unique that one is continually being brought up short with that "sudden shock of mild surprise" that Wordsworth himself referred to in 'There was a Boy'. And nowhere does this unique vision manifest itself more strongly than in Wordsworth's unique language usage and idiolect.

Many critics have contributed to my perception of Wordsworth and his work, but three stand out particularly. The first is Geoffrey Hartman who first verbalized for me the teasing ambiguity that I had sensed in Wordsworth for a long time. The second is Hugh Sykes Davies who brought home to me that this elusive Wordsworthian magic was located in Wordsworth's language and highly individualized language usage. The third is J.P. Ward who elucidated many of the practical aspects of Wordsworth's language through the employment of which Wordsworth achieves his unique linguistic effects.

In his foreword to Geoffrey Hartman's *The Unremarkable Wordsworth*, Donald Marshall claims that Hartman's innovative Wordsworthian criticism marked a new epoch in the study of Wordsworth and Romanticism as a whole. Hartman's achievement lies therein that he succeeded in moving beyond Formalism and in opening an "interchange between contemporary currents [in literary theory] and Wordsworth" (1987: viii). For me Hartman succeeded in opening my eyes and ears to the "qualities of a peculiar kind which inhabit" Wordsworth's poetry "like the power of thought itself". He drew my attention to the fact that so much of Wordsworth's poetry demonstrates "an openness to and resonance with" other bits of his poetry so that his style "works in a borderland between ordinary language and extraordinary language" (1987: pp.ix-x). In view of these insights Hugh Sykes Davies's perceptive views on Wordsworth's language made a great deal more sense to me, ie. his use of repetition and word-clusters. In their thought-provoking and insightful introduction to Davies's book *Wordsworth and the Worth of Words* Jonathan Wordsworth and John Kerrigan say that Davies's analysis of the "verbal hiding-places of Wordsworth's

achievement" in fact lies in "the realm of inspiration". I agree with this and owe a huge debt to his fascinating book with its remarkable insights—all the more remarkable in view of the fact that he was a friend of I.A.Richards and William Empson and a *protégé* of T.S.Eliot, whose negative criticism of Wordsworth is well-known. Davies believed that Wordsworth was not eccentric or idiosyncratic but that he in fact stands central in a Romanticism that still pervades and informs European culture to this day (1986: vii).

Which brings me to a further point that emerged from my research, namely that there has been a veritable renaissance in Wordsworthian studies and criticism over the last forty years or so. A large number of critics now acknowledge Wordsworth's influence and the revolutionary impact he had, and still has, on the world of literature. Harold Bloom, another very unique mind, writes as follows about Wordsworth's powerful influence:

There are musicologists who assert that the three great innovators in our musical history were Monteverdi, Bach and Stravinsky, although the assertion is disputable. Western canonical lyric poetry seems to me to have only two such figures : Petrarch, who invented Renaissance poetry, and Wordsworth, who can be said to have invented modern poetry ... Wordsworth inaugurated the blessing/curse of poetry in the Democratic/Chaotic Eras, which is that poems are "about" nothing. Their subject is the subject herself or himself, whether manifested as a presence or as an absence.

Petrarch invented what John Freccero termed the poetry of idolatry; Wordsworth started anew on a tabula rasa of poetry, as William Hazlitt observed, and filled that blank slate with the self, or more precisely with the memory of self ... Wordsworth ... is a beginning, though like all great writers he was haunted by heroic precursors, Milton and Shakespeare beyond all others (1994: 239-40).

As John Williams points out in his introduction to *New Casebooks: Wordsworth* what has emerged in the last forty years of Wordsworthian criticism is that Wordsworth was a profoundly complex, indeed even a contradictory personality. These aspects are also strongly manifested in his poetry and his language which add a challenging and intriguing dimension to the study of his work. And this is, I believe, the first point that has to be accepted when reading Wordsworth—the poetry can never just be taken at face value. As John Williams puts it (with regard to 'Resolution and Independence', also known as 'The Leech Gatherer') what is of significance in Wordsworth is that which "exists beyond language; an experience that in any commonly conceived notion of what is 'real', exists beyond knowing" (1993: 12-13). And when Wordsworth is read with an

acknowledgement and acceptance of this aspect, the poetry gains immeasurably in power and evocative energy.

During my writing of this dissertation, many areas for further investigation suggested themselves. The first is that it would probably be an extremely interesting (though very challenging) task to try and trace Wordsworth's influence on later poets like Yeats, Hopkins and possibly Wallace Stevens. Another rewarding field of study could be to assess Wordsworth's poetry psychanalytically—very interesting work has already been done here by Richard Onorato, Richard McGhee and Richard Matlak. Somebody who was statistically inclined, could probably very fruitfully do a comparison between the vocabularies of Wordsworth, Shakespeare and other prominent literary figures (James Joyce?!), building on the interesting work already done here by Hugh Sykes Davies and others. Some critics have identified Wordsworth as a forerunner of seminal thinkers like Freud and Lacan—this could probably be incorporated into a psychoanalytical study, or be investigated on its own. For somebody of a more philosophical bent a fruitful field of study could be the many areas of convergence between Wordsworth, Wittgenstein and Hegel.

I found my study of Wordsworth extremely rewarding. Not only have I come to a much more informed appreciation of Wordsworth's poetry, but I have also become much more aware of the linguistic ambiguities that lurk in the most ordinary seeming utterances and writing. I indeed feel that literature as a whole has gained an added dimension for me. And for this enrichment I primarily have to thank William Wordsworth.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Text

- BRETT, R.L. & JONES, A.R., eds. 1991. *Lyrical Ballads*. London: Routledge. 346p.
- DE SELINCOURT, E. & DARBISHIRE, H. 1949. *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth. The Excursion*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 498p.
- GILL, S. 1984. *William Wordsworth: A Critical Edition of the Major Works*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 752p.
- OWEN, W.J.B. & SMYSER, J.W., eds. 1974. *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth (Vols. I-III)*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 415p, 465p, 475p.
- WORDSWORTH, J, ABRAMS, M.H. & GILL, S., eds. 1979. *William Wordsworth: The Prelude 1799, 1805, 1850*. New York: W.W. Norton. 683p.

Secondary Texts

- AARSLEFF, H. 1982. *Locke to Saussure*. London: Athlone Press Ltd. 422p.
- ABRAMS, M.H. 1953. *The Mirror and the Lamp*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 406p.
- ABRAMS, M.H., comp. 1972. *Wordsworth: A Collection of Critical Essays*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc. 214p.
- ALFORD, J.A. 1972. Wordsworth's Use of the Present Perfect. *Modern Language Quarterly*, 33:119-29.
- ALTIERI, C. 1976. Wordsworth's "Preface" as Literary Theory. *Criticism*, 18(2):122-46, Spring.
- ARMSTRONG, I. 1981. Wordsworth's Complexity: Repetition and Doubled Syntax in The Prelude Book VI. *The Oxford Literary Review*, 4(3):20-42.
- BARRELL, J. 1993. The Uses of Dorothy: 'The Language of the Sense' in 'Tintern Abbey'. (In Williams, J., ed. *New Casebooks: Wordsworth*. London: Macmillan. p.142-71.)
- BERNHARDT-KABISCH, E. 1965. Wordsworth: The Monumental Poet. *Philological Quarterly*, 44:503-18.
- BIRCH, D. 1989. *Language, Literature and Critical Practice*. London: Routledge. 214p.
- BLOOM, H. 1972. The Myth of Memory and Natural Man. (In Abrams, M.H., comp. *Wordsworth: A Collection of Critical Essays*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc. p.95-106.)
- BLOOM, H., ed. 1985. *Modern Critical Views: William Wordsworth*. New York: Chelsea House Publishers. 206p.
- BLOOM, H. 1994. *The Western Canon*. London: Macmillan. 578p.
- BORCK, J.S. 1978. "The Bitter Language of the Heart" in Wordsworth's *The Excursion*. *The Wordsworth Circle*, 9:182-87.
- BRADLEY, A.C. 1972. Wordsworth. (In Abrams, M.H., comp. *Wordsworth: A Collection of Critical Essays*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc. p.13-21.)
- BRIGHAM, L.C. 1992. Frail Memorials: "Essays upon Epitaphs" and Wordsworth's Economy of Reference. *Philosophy and Literature*, 16:15-31.
- BUTLER, M. 1981. *Romantics, Rebels and Reactionaries*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 215p.
- BYATT, A.S. 1997 (first published 1970). *Unruly Times*. London: Vintage. 288p.

- CHRISTIE, W. 1983. Wordsworth and the Language of Nature. *The Wordsworth Circle*, 14(1):40-47.
- CLAMPITT, A. 1991. The Anxious Author. *Parnassus: Poetry in Review*, 16(2):185-200.
- COLERIDGE, S.T. 1990. Biographia Literaria (*In* Weinberg, A.M., *comp.* Poetics and Criticism, Vol II. Pretoria: University of South Africa. p.462-532.)
- CULLER, J. 1976. Saussure. London: Fontana Press. 143p.
- DANBY, J.F. 1972. "The Idiot Boy": Wordsworth's Narrative and Dramatic Voices. (*In* Abrams, M.H., *comp.* Wordsworth: A Collection of Critical Essays. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc. p.85-94.)
- DAVIES, H.S. 1986. Wordsworth and the Worth of Words. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 324p.
- DE MAN, P. 1985. International Structure of the Romantic Image. (*In* Bloom, H., *ed.* Modern Critical Views: William Wordsworth. New York: Chelsea House Publishers. p.23-35.)
- EASTHOPE, A. 1993. Wordsworth Now and Then. Buckingham: Open University Press. 153p.
- FERGUSON, F. 1977. Wordsworth: Language as Counter-Spirit. New Haven: Yale University Press. 263p.
- FERRY, D. 1972. Some Characteristics of Wordsworth's Style. (*In* Abrams, M.H., *comp.* Wordsworth: A Collection of Critical Essays. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc. p.35-44.)
- FINCH, G.J. 1985. Romantic Poetry and the Limits of Explication. *Ariel: A Review of International Literature*, 16(1):27-42.
- FOUCAULT, M. 1990. The Order of Discourse. (*In* Young, R., *ed.* Untying the Text. London: Routledge. p.49-78.)
- GILL, S. 1989. William Wordsworth: A Life. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 525p.
- GILL, S. 1992. Wordsworth, Scott, and Musings near Aquapendente. *The Centennial Review*, 36(2):221-30, Spring.
- GLENN, J. 1995. The Child is Father of the man: Wordsworth's Ode: Intimations of Immortality and His Secret Sharers. *Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, 50: 383-97.
- GOODSON, A.C. 1983. Coleridge on Language: A Poetic Paradigm. *Philological Quarterly*, 62(1):45-68.
- HANLEY, K. 1998. Wordsworth's Revolution in Poetic Language. *Romanticism on the Net* [Available on Internet:] <http://users.ox.ac.uk/scat0385/revolutionLB.html> Date of access: Feb.9].
- HARTMAN, G.H. 1972. The Via Naturaliter Negativa. (*In* Abrams, M.H., *ed.* Wordsworth: A Collection of Critical Essays. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc. p.145-155.)
- HARTMAN, G.H. 1985. The Romance of Nature and the Negative Way. (*In* Bloom, H., *ed.* Modern Critical Views: William Wordsworth. New York: Chelsea House Publishers. p.37-53.)
- HARTMAN, G.H. 1987. The Unremarkable Wordsworth. London: Methuen. 247p.
- HARTMAN, G. 1993. Wordsworth's Poetry: The Major Lyrics 1801-1807. (*In* Williams, J., *ed.* New Casebooks: Wordsworth. London: Macmillan. p.33-50.)
- HEIDEGGER, M. 1978. Being and Time. Translated by John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson. Oxford: Basil Blackwell. 589p.
- HOBBS, T. 1968. (first published 1651). Leviathan. London: Penguin Books. 728p.

- HOPKINS, B. 1994. Wordsworth's Voices: Ideology and Self-Critique in *The Prelude*. *Studies in Romanticism*, 33:281-90, Summer.
- JACOBUS, M. 1979. Wordsworth and the Language of the Dream. *English Literary History*, 46:618-44.
- JOHNSON, D. 1988. The Grief Behind the Spots of Time. *American Imago*, 45(3):287-307, Fall.
- JOHNSTON, K.R. 1987. The Triumphs of Failure: Wordsworth's Lyrical Ballads of 1798. (In Johnston, K.R. & Ruoff, G.W., eds. *The Age of William Wordsworth*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press. p.133-59.)
- JOHNSTON, K.R. & RUOFF, G.W., eds. 1987. *The Age of William Wordsworth*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press. 390p.
- KHARBUTLI, M.K. 1989. Locke and Wordsworth. *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 25(3):225-37, July.
- KNEALE, J.D. 1984. *The Rhetoric of Imagination in "The Prelude"*. *Ariel: A Review of International Literature*, 15:111-27.
- KNEALE, J.D. 1986. Wordsworth's Images of Language: Voice and Letter in *The Prelude*. *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, 10(3):351-61, May.
- KRISTEVA, J. 1984. *Revolution in Poetic Language*. Translated by M.Waller with an Introduction by L.S.Roudiez. New York: Columbia University Press. 269p.
- LOCKE, J. 1947 (first published 1690). *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. London: J.M.Dent. 355p.
- LURIE, Y. 1992. Culture as a Human Form of Life: A Romantic Reading of Wittgenstein. *International Philosophical Quarterly*, 32:193-204, June.
- MARSHALL, D.G. 1987. Wordsworth and Post-Enlightenment Culture. (In Hartman, G. *The Unremarkable Wordsworth*. London: Methuen. p.vii-xxiii.)
- MATLAK, R.E. 1978. Wordsworth's Lucy Poems in Psychobiographical Context. *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, 93:46-65.
- MAYO, R. 1972. The Contemporaneity of the Lyrical Ballads. (In Abrams, M.H. *comp.* *Wordsworth: A Collection of Critical Essays*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc. p.67-75.)
- McFARLAND, T. 1976. Creative Fantasy and Matter-of-Fact Reality in Wordsworth's Poetry. *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 75:1-24.
- McFARLAND, T. 1985. The Wordsworthian Rigidity. (In Bloom, H., ed. *Modern Critical Views: William Wordsworth*. New York: Chelsea House Publishers. p.151-71.)
- McGAVRAN, J.M. 1977. The "Creative Soul" of *The Prelude* and the "Sad Incompetence of Human Speech". *Studies in Romanticism*, 16:35-49, Winter.
- McGHEE, R.D. 1993. *Guilty Pleasures: William Wordsworth's Poetry of Psychoanalysis*. Troy, New York: The Whitson Publishing Company. 351p.
- O'NEILL, M. 1996. The Words He Uttered ...": A Reading of Wordsworth. *Romanticism on the Net* [Available on the Internet:] <http://users.ox.ac.uk/~scat0385/uttered.html> Date of access: Aug 3].
- ONORATO, R.J. 1971. *The Character of the Poet*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 435p.
- PAGE, J.W. 1989. "A History/Homely and Rude": Genre and Style in Wordsworth's "Michael". *Studies in English Literature*, 29(4):621-36.

- PARRISH, S.M. 1972. "The Thorn": Wordsworth's Dramatic Monologue. (In Abrams, M.H., comp. Wordsworth: A Collection of Critical Essays. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc. p.76-84.)
- PARRISH, S.M. 1987. Wordsworth as Satirist of His Age. (In Johnston, K.R. & Ruoff, G.W., eds. The Age of William Wordsworth. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press. p.21-38.)
- PERKINS, D. 1994. Wordsworth, Hunt, and Romantic Understanding of Meter. *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 93(1):1-17, Jan.
- PFAU, T. 1993. "Elementary Feelings" and "Distorted Language": The Pragmatics of Culture in Wordsworth's Preface to Lyrical Ballads. *New Literary History: A Journal of Theory and Interpretation*, 24(1):125-46.
- PHINNEY, A.W. 1987. Wordsworth's Winander Boy and Romantic Theories of Language. *The Wordsworth Circle*, 18(2):66-72, Spring.
- RABINOWITZ, I.A. 1983. Workings of One Mind: Unity of Purpose in the Poetry and Poetics of William Wordsworth. Pretoria: UNISA. (Thesis-D.Litt. et Phil.) 292p.
- RAGLAND-SULLIVAN, E. 1984. The Magnetism between Reader and Text: Prolegomena to a Lacanian Poetics. *Poetics*, 13:381-406.
- REED, A. 1984. Romanticism and Language. London: Methuen. 327p.
- RIFFATERRE, M. 1990. Interpretation and Descriptive Poetry: A Reading of Wordsworth's 'Yew-Trees'. (In Young, R., ed. Untying the Text. London: Routledge. p.103-31.)
- ROBSON, M.W. 1980. Ordinary Sights and Visionary Gleams. *The London Times Literary Supplement*, 1 Aug.1980. p.864.
- SAMPSON, D. 1984. Wordsworth and the Deficiencies of Language. *English Literary History*, 51(1):53-68.
- SEAMON, D. 1984. Emotional Experience of the Environment. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 27(6):757-70, Aug.
- SHARP, M.T. 1995. Re-membering the Real, Dis(re)membering the Dead: Wordsworth's "Essays Upon Epitaphs". *Studies in Romanticism*, 34(2):273-92, Summer.
- SIMPSON, D. 1982. Wordsworth and the Figurings of the Real. London: The Macmillan Press Ltd. 183p.
- SIMPSON, D. 1993. Wordsworth's Historical Imagination: 'Simon Lee', the Poet as Patron. (In Williams, J., ed. New Casebooks: Wordsworth. London: Macmillan. p.62-79.)
- STEIN, E. 1988 Wordsworth's Art of Allusion. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press. 262p.
- THOMPSON, J.B. 1995. Wordsworth's 'A slumber did my spirit seal'. *Explicator*, 54(1):9-11, Fall.
- TRILLING, L. 1972. Wordsworth and the Iron Time. (In Abrams, M.H., comp. Wordsworth: A Collection of Critical Essays. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc. p.45-66.)
- TYLER, L. 1995. Big Brother is Watching you: Dorothy Wordsworth's Alfoxden and Grasmere Journals. *University of Dayton Review*, 23(2):87-98, Spring.
- WARD, J.P. 1984. Wordsworth's Language of Men. Brighton: The Harvester Press. 235p.
- WEISKEL, T. 1985. Wordsworth and the Defile of the Word. (In Bloom, H., ed. Modern Critical Views: William Wordsworth. New York: Chelsea House Publishers. p.98-111.)

- WILLIAMS, J. 1993. *New Casebooks: Wordsworth*. London: Macmillan. 216p.
- WINBERG, C. 1991. A Poet's Prose: The Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*. *Unisa English Studies: Journal of the Department of English*, 29(2):18-28.
- WOLFSON, S. 1978. The Speaker as Questioner in *Lyrical Ballads*. *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 77:546-68.
- WOODMAN, R. 1993. Wordsworth's Crazy Bedouin: The Prelude and the Fate of Madness. (In Williams, J., ed. *New Casebooks: Wordsworth*. London : Macmillan. p.112-141.)
- WORDSWORTH, J. 1969. *The Music of Humanity*. London: Nelson. 293p.
- WORDSWORTH, J. 1972. The Ruined Cottage as Tragic Narrative. (In Abrams, M.H., ed. *Wordsworth: A Collection of Critical Essays*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc. p.123-132.
- WORDSWORTH, J. & GILL, S. 1973. The Two-Part *Prelude* of 1798-99. *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 72:503-25.
- WORDSWORTH, J. 1987. Two Dark Interpreters: Wordsworth and De Quincey. (In Johnston, K.R. & Ruoff, G.W., eds. *The Age of William Wordsworth*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press. p.214-38.
- WORDSWORTH, J. 1991. Wordsworthian Comedy. *The Wordsworth Circle*, 12(3):141-150, Summer.
- WU, D. 1990. Wordsworth's Poetry of Grief. *The Wordsworth Circle*, 21:114-17.
- WU, D. 1994. Wordsworth and Helvellyn's Womb. *Essays in Criticism: A Quarterly Journal of Literary Criticism*, 44(1):6-25.
- WU, D. 1996. Tautology and Imaginative Vision in Wordsworth. *Romanticism on the Net* [Available on Internet:] <http://users.ox.ac.uk/~scat0385/tautology.html> Date of access: May 2].
- YOUNG, R. 1979. The Eye and Progress of his Song: A Lacanian Reading of *The Prelude*. *Oxford Literary Review*, 3(3):78-98.
- YOUNG, R. 1990. *Untying the Text*. London: Routledge. 326p.
- ZEPP, E.H. 1982. The Criticism of Julia Kristeva: A New Mode of Critical Thought. *Romantic Review*, 73(1):80-97.