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WORDSWORTH AND RUSKIN

ASPECTS OF RELATIONSHIP AND INFLUENCE

by
Hazel Louise Jackson Harvey

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
(English Language and Literature)
in The University of Michigan
1972

Doctoral Committee:

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page
Introduction		1
Chapter		
I.	The Forming Time	7
II.	A Long Apprenticeship to Nature . . .	22
III.	The Imagination	64
IV.	"People, Be Good!"	106
V.	One Mighty Torrent	162
Conclusion		188
Notes		193
Bibliography		215

INTRODUCTION

Derrick Leon, citing Ruskin as the great Victorian, has said that the minds of great men are seldom formed by academic education; nor do the influences which most deeply shape their thoughts and determine their future work often come through any determined channel.[1] This is particularly true of Ruskin, who read voraciously and expressed himself on so many different subjects, who wrote voluminously and changed his mind, or at least revised his opinions, on many of these subjects. Yet one can, I think, ascertain one "determined channel" in the thought of Ruskin, a channel that reveals the considerable influence of Wordsworthian thought. There are numerous aspects of direct Wordsworthian influence evidenced in Ruskin's works, as well as significant parallels born of a relationship occasioned by a shared sensibility to natural phenomena.

It was inevitable that Ruskin's destiny should become inextricably bound up with that of Wordsworth because of this shared sensibility to the external world. Such a sensibility resulted in an exalted personal experience which prompted both to articulate the experience for others, each becoming, in turn, a master. "Upon many poets of his own and later days," writes William Rossetti, "[Wordsworth's] influence has been apparent; but perhaps it is a prose

writer, Ruskin, who preaching Wordsworth with conviction and fervency, has most availed to reimpart, diffuse, and fertilize his teachings."[2] Ruskin's "preaching" of Wordsworth must be gleaned from critical remarks that are often made incidental to other topics, from a few sustained literary comments, and from a kind of style and tone of authority, and even "arrogance," which he, like Wordsworth, attributed to his "having walked with nature and offered far as frailty would allow [his] heart a daily sacrifice to truth."[3] The gleaned "preaching" points up the aspects of relationship and influence treated in this study, aspects which are attested to in general by the many references to Wordsworth in Ruskin's works, and the almost constant use of his writings as a source of illustrative material.

Ruskin's active interest in Wordsworth spans some fifty years and marks him as an admirer during a period noted for the vicissitudes of Wordsworth's reputation. The actual time span becomes increasingly important as one assesses the nature and extent of the Wordsworthian influence, since Ruskin came to modify his early rather unqualified praise of Wordsworth. Given the Argus-like quality of Ruskin's mind and the fact that he was wont to alter positions on all subjects, there is small wonder that he came to revise his opinion even of his mentor. His harshest criticism occurs in Fiction, Fair and Foul, but there remains beneath the carping a core of respect that calls

to mind his positive estimates elsewhere and provides for the discerning reader a measure of consistency. William Knight has noted that typically in Ruskin one finds the germs of his later teaching in some of his earliest opinions, and fragments of his youthful judgments surviving in his final sayings, but all of them expanded, modified and at times transfigured. Therefore, what many call an inconsistency is really a sign of the opposite, with the added evidence of development.[4] In a similar vein, R. G. Collingwood points out that Ruskin's attitude toward the logical problem of contradiction shows his kinship to Hegel. The idea that truth may be many-sided and self-contradiction a mark of strength rather than of weakness thus gives rise to a comprehensive view of things rather than "the one-sided consistency" of the logicians.[5]

Ruskin himself was often concerned with the problem of his own inconsistency since he was often criticized because of it. "To be truly alive," he says, "a man must be capable of nourishment and therefore of change; but in the case of a consistent life and a strong character, the change is that of a tree, not of a cloud."[6] Addressing himself to the same problem, in his Cambridge Inaugural Lecture he says:

> Perhaps some of my hearers this evening may occasionally have heard it stated of me that I am rather apt to contradict myself. I hope I am exceedingly apt to do so. I never met with a question yet, of any importance, which did not need for the right solution of it, at least

> one positive and one negative answer, like an equation of the second degree. Mostly, matters of any consequence are three-sided, or four-sided, or polygonal; and the trotting round a polygon is severe work for people any way stiff in their opinions. For myself, I am never satisfied that I have handled a subject properly till I have contradicted myself at least three times.[7]

He succinctly sums up his attitude toward the criticism of inconsistency in his later career and in so doing suggests the underlying emphasis of this study. In his comments in the Epilogue to the Arrows of the Chace written at Amiens in 1880, he says, "The multiplicity of subject and opposite directions of investigations, which have so often been alleged against me, as if sources of weakness, are in reality, as the multiplied buttresses of the apse of Amiens, as secure in allied result as they are opposed in direction."[8]

These assessments, especially Ruskin's own, are significant when one examines the nature of the Wordsworthian influence. Ruskin's revision of his estimate of Wordsworth in no way negates the influence. It rather shows a more rounded appraisal of an author by whom Ruskin was "continually taught and influenced." "I should be very sorry," he once wrote, "if I had not been continually taught and influenced by the writers whom I love; and am quite unable to say to what extent my thoughts have been guided by Wordsworth, Carlyle, and Helps; to whom (with Dante and George Herbert, in olden time) I owe more than to any other writers."[9] Throughout the long span of

Ruskin's career, one finds considerable evidence that he was, indeed, continually taught and influenced by Wordsworth.

By 1880, Ruskin was more explicit in acknowledging his indebtedness; he was able to say to what extent his thoughts had been guided by Wordsworth. He wrote

> I happen myself to have used Wordsworth as a daily text-book from youth to age and have lived, moreover, in all essential points according to the tenor of his teaching.[10]

Although many earlier comments qualify this acknowledgement, it, nevertheless, remains essentially true and points up for the modern reader the many aspects of relationship and influence that connect Wordsworth and Ruskin, and which are clearly evident in much of Ruskin's major writings. This study examines those aspects which I consider of paramount importance in the Wordsworth-Ruskin connection, and which give substance to Ruskin's statement. The statement itself may serve as a buttress for my discussion by insuring an underlying consistency in the "essential points" selected. I have characterized these points as threefold: a shared concept of spiritualized nature; similar basic ideas on the imagination and the role of the creative person; and an intense moral concern which is closely related to the edifying and purifying ideal of nature.

In both writers, the love of nature and contemplation of its beauties leads to concern for a theory of how to get from fact to art. This concern, in turn, prompts

close consideration of the relationship of the Creator to the created and grows into increased moral awareness. The moral bent comes to assume a certain community of man, of a man speaking to men, and is supported by autobiographical emphases. Thus all of these aspects are concentrically related since they grow out of a concept of nature as a core of basic concern. In the following pages, I have sought to show this concentricity of interest by noting the salient points in Wordsworth's works on a given aspect, and discussing Ruskin's works against this backdrop. Such discussion is followed in each case by some assessment of the relationship revealed. The autobiographical chapter serves as a capstone for the study since it enhances the personal element so prominent in the works of both writers, and lends emphasis to the aspects of relationship and influence treated.

CHAPTER I

THE FORMING TIME

> Youth is properly the forming time--
> that in which a man makes himself, or
> is made, what he is forever to be.
> Ruskin, Fors Clavigera

Wordsworth was already a leading figure in the literary world and was almost fifty years old when Ruskin was born in 1819. Yet the young Ruskin was destined to become a Wordsworthian disciple, since from early youth he, too, was predisposed to that unique sensibility nurtured by nature of which Wordsworth was the high priest. Ruskin was to term this shared sensibility "the landscape-instinct,"[1] a feeling which both experienced in its full intensity only in youth. His general indebtedness to Wordsworth is clear in his admission that he used Wordsworth as a daily textbook from youth to age. It is an admission that especially emphasizes the interweaving of their lives and thought during Ruskin's youth--his "forming time."

Ruskin was born into a family of means, so he was from the outset a privileged soul whose sensibility and youthful experiences were broadened by travel and watchful, if overzealous, care. In Praeterita, the long look back

at his past, he notes the "favourable conditions" which surrounded his life and the "impressionable quietness of its temper."[2]

> It is not possible to imagine, in any time of the world, a more blessed entrance into life, for a child of such a temperament as mine. True, the temperament belonged to the age: a very few years,--within the hundred,--before that, no child could have been born to care for the mountains, or for the men that lived among them, in that way. Till Rousseau's time, there had been no "sentimental" love of nature . . .[3]

And he might have added that had it not been for the influence of Wordsworth this sentimental love of nature might never have become so widespread. Because his parents were well-to-do, Ruskin's upbringing was not typical for a child of the city. His father traveled frequently in connection with his wine business and was able to take his family with him. He was careful to arrange scenic trips that would enrich the experiences of his precocious son; thus Ruskin's love of landscape was nurtured from early youth; it only remained to be enhanced as he grew older. When just a toddler his summers were spent in Hampstead or Dulwich, then "the country," and as early as his fourth summer he was taken to Scotland to visit.[4] Upon returning home in the fall and sitting for a portrait, he was asked what he would choose for a background. His reply, "blue hills," marked him at that young age as a likely candidate to be an admirer of Wordsworth.

When his parents moved to Herne Hill in 1823, the home they chose was one surrounded by spacious gardens and situated in green fields with "rich undulating country to the south, and looking across London toward Windsor and Harrow."[5] It was an Eden for the young Ruskin, if only in seeing and feeling since his mother forbade him many of the pleasures common to children his age. His mother, like Hannah, had dedicated his life to God before he was born. Perhaps her dedication may help explain her solicitous care and her restrictions, so many of which he recalls with a kind of wistful sadness in his autobiography.

> My mother's general principles of first treatment were, to guard me with steady watchfulness from all avoidable pain or danger; and, for the rest to let me amuse myself as I liked, provided I was neither fretful nor troublesome. But the law was, that I should find my own amusement . . . I soon . . . could pass my days contentedly in tracing the squares and comparing the colours of my carpet;--examining the knots in the wood of the floor, or counting the bricks in the opposite houses; with rapturous intervals of excitement during the filling of the water-cart, through its leathern pipe, from the dripping iron post at the pavement edge; or the still more admirable proceedings of the turncock, when he turned and turned till a fountain sprang up in the middle of the street. But the carpet, and what patterns I could find in bed covers, dresses, or wallpapers to be examined, were my chief resources, and my attention to the particulars in these were soon so accurate, that when at three and a half I was taken to have my portrait painted by Mr. Northcote, I had not been ten minutes alone with him before I asked him why there were holes in his carpet.[6]

This kind of observation helped develop Ruskin's power to observe detail and his analytic power, and was, of course, fundamentally different from Wordsworth's experience. But it also helped increase his intense awareness of natural phenomena, since he observed natural objects with the same rapturous attention. It was of necessity a solitary pleasure; thus one discovers throughout Praeterita and in many of his other writings passages which record his visual ecstasy in a wide range of objects, from those noted above to heightened scenes of natural phenomena, so that in later years he could describe the Rhone in ornate prose, but with the Wordsworthian sense of really seeing its beauty.

In certain sections of Fors Clavigera, later incorporated into Praeterita, Ruskin categorizes the advantages and "calamities" of his early upbringing. "For the best and truest beginning of all blessings," he writes, "I had been taught the perfect meaning of peace, in thought, act, and word."[7] He cites as an advantage also the fact that he never did any wrong that he knew of except that he occasionally failed to memorize what had been assigned him so that he might watch "a wasp on the window pane, or a bird in the cherry tree."[8] Recorded, too, as an advantage was his attainment of obedience and faith. Offsetting these advantages was his greatest calamity, that of not really knowing love. Looking back over his life he writes:

> My parents were--in a sort--visible powers of nature to me, no more loved than the sun and the moon: only I should have been annoyed and puzzled if either of them had gone out; . . . still less did I love God; not that I had any quarrel with Him, or fear of Him; but simply found what people told me was His service, disagreeable; and what people told me was His book, not entertaining . . . The evil consequence of all this was not, however, what might perhaps have been expected, that I grew up selfish or unaffectionate; but that, when affection did come, it came with violence utterly rampant and unmanageable, at least by me, who never before had anything to manage.[9]

This lack of love forced him to continue to seek solitary pleasures and served to sharpen and accentuate his powers of observation, and in so doing, as a necessary corollary, heightened his interest in his natural surroundings. His interest was also piqued by his parents' tourist preoccupation with the scenic and the picturesque. Since their travels were usually connected with business trips, they developed a narrow, utilitarian concern in what Frederic Harrison called their <u>égoisme à trois</u> as they passed through many areas without ever actually sharing the life of those they encountered.[10] It was in this fashion that the precocious youngster was introduced to the Lake District. Because of his mother's restrictions, he did not have the freedom to "bound like a roe" through nature's delights as Wordsworth did, but he, too, arrived at that state of perfect harmony with nature that links him unalterably with the older writer. His poet-scientist enthusiasm for nature was kindled by the strong impressions

he received in these early youthful encounters. Something quickened in him at his first glimpse of the many-chronicled delights of the district which echoes the intense love felt by Wordsworth before him. "The first thing which I remember as an event in life," he writes, "was being taken by my nurse to the brow of Friar's Crag on Derwentwater; the intense joy mingled with awe, that I had in looking through the hollows in the mossy roots, over the crag, into the dark lake, has associated itself more or less with all twining roots of trees ever since."[11]

His first trip to the Lake District was in 1824 when he was only five years old. Subsequent visits over the next sixteen years made him so familiar with the area that in 1840 he could exhort a college friend to take a walking tour of the district, noting that the view of Derwentwater and Skiddaw from Keswick is "the best piece of composition" and outlining other points of scenic interest.[12] Thus it is altogether fitting that his introduction to the literary world was as a writer of verse and that his first published poem was entitled "On Skiddaw and Derwentwater," written when he was no more than nine, and published when he was eleven. Significant also is the fact that Ruskin got his first glimpse of Wordsworth on one of his visits to the Lake District. He was eleven when he saw Wordsworth on July 4, 1830. On the previous Sunday he had seen Southey who "looked extremely like--a poet." But when he saw Wordsworth at Rydal Mount, he

and his young cousin "were rather disappointed in this gentleman's appearance. He appeared asleep the greatest part of the time," they write, "and he possesses a long face and a large nose."[13] Recording his impressions of the 1830 tour in the poem "The Iteriad; or Three Weeks Among the Lakes," Ruskin includes a couplet that tells

> . . . of old Mr. Wordsworth at chapel of Rydal
> Whom we had the honor of seeing beside all.[14]

In spite of the initial disappointment at Wordsworth's appearance, one senses here a muffled sense of awe and respect for the older poet's position.

Such was Ruskin's first glimpse of the man who was to influence him so greatly in later life. It is not known how familiar Ruskin was with Wordsworth's poetry at this time. One can assume, however, that he had read a representative number of poems from the sense of respect in the lines cited above, and from the fact that he had a particular interest in poetry which was encouraged by his doting father. His father was not an avid Wordsworthian; if he had been, perhaps there would be considerably more evidence to support the early Wordsworthian influence. In the absence of recorded comments, one must rely on similarities in expression and feeling that suggest a Wordsworthian bent in the early poems of Ruskin. Though much of the poetry is of the usual quality of such writing, several poems reveal a marked similarity to those of Wordsworth in the response to nature revealed. It is noteworthy that at the age of eight Ruskin was already classifying

his work, with Wordsworthian method, under groupings such as "Poetry Discriptive" [sic].[15] Those facets that can be isolated as Wordsworthian in these early poems are often interwoven with others that reflect some additional poetic interest. Since Ruskin was impressionable and widely read for his age, his first efforts are naturally eclectic. As will be seen, the Wordsworthian influence becomes a sustained one largely because of Ruskin's love of nature and his natural kinship to Wordsworth.

Typical of those poems that reveal some similarity to Wordsworth is "Glen of Glenfarg," written when Ruskin was about seven. Here one sees some preview of the moralization of landscape which became so characteristic in his later works. He speaks of the stones in a stream that bear the rushing torrent because they accept God's will; of a cottager whom the polestar guides on his way, and who is admonished to look to the stars for guidance.[16] The poem strongly suggests Wordsworth's giving a moral life "to every natural form, rock, fruit, or flower / Even the loose stones that cover the highway" (Prelude, III, 127-128). In "The Sun," written when he was eight, he suggests something of Wordsworth's idea of repose. After he describes a typical day in which he walked with "dear Mama beside me to watch the flowers growing," he tells of "the evening dark in which all nature quiet still remains."[17]

One of the more striking evidences of Wordsworthian influence in these early poems is the attribution of joy

to natural phenomena. It is unlikely that the parallels are not studied. For the modern reader, Wordsworth's more familiar statements are, perhaps, in The Prelude, but I have included here several of those which were available to the young Ruskin. In "I Wandered Lonely As a Cloud," the sparkling waves reflect joy for Wordsworth, but the daffodils "outdid the sparkling waves in glee" (1. 14). In "Three Years She Grew in Sun and Shower," Lucy, a child of nature, is to manifest nature's joyous life:

> She shall be sportive as the fawn
> That wild with glee across the lawn
> Or up the mountain springs.
> (11. 13-15)

To him the daisy is "a cheerful flower" and is alert and gay ("To a Daisy," 1802, 11. 57-58). In The Excursion, he speaks of the "joyful tree" that had become symbolic in its valley (VI, 832), and asks what has more joy than a vernal flower (III, 439). And finally he declares as a kind of necessary implication of his firm belief that things have a spiritual life that he has "faith that every flower enjoys the air it breathes ("Lines Written in Early Spring," 11. 11-12).

In like fashion, joy exudes from Ruskin's early poems. In "The Song of the Southern Breeze," written when he was thirteen, Ruskin speaks of "the clouds from the golden west where the sun delights to die."[18] And in "My Father's Birthday," at the age of fourteen, he chronicles his love for the month of May because it is his father's

"natal day" and because it throws a "laugh so light . . . o'er all the face of nature."

> I love it for the laugh so light
> It throws o'er all the face of nature,
> A something gladdening and bright
> That glistens on her every feature.
> I see it where the grass grows green
> On daisied mead, by sparkling stream;
> I hear it in the roundelay
> The birds pour forth at dawn of day,
> The brook that to and fro meanders
> Bears gladness in its crystal springs;
> There's gladness in the wind that wanders
> Among the hawthorn-blossomings.[19]

This poem is significantly reminiscent of Wordsworth's "Lines Written in Early Spring" where he says

> The birds around me hopped and played,
> Their thoughts I cannot measure:--
> But the least motion which they made,
> It seemed a thrill of pleasure.
>
> The budding twigs spread out their fan,
> To catch the breezy air;
> And I must think, do all I can
> That there was pleasure there.
> (11. 13-20)

Ruskin's tour of the continent when he was fourteen produced the poem "The Black Forest" in which he describes hills, "those miniature Alps, all smiling with a morning sun." The mood of joy continues as

> . . . . . All between
> The frontlets of the fair, fresh hills
> Leaped merrily the glad, young rills,
> Smiling in silver as they sprang,
> And merry were the notes they sang:
> For they were joyful at their birth
> From the cold prisons of the earth
> To the warm sun, and open sky;
> And their song was all of liberty.[20]

The mention of liberty in nature here suggests Wordsworth also. In The Excursion, Wordsworth had spoken of "the

peace and liberty of nature" (I, 353). The same tour occasions Ruskin's effusions on "The Arve at Chamouni" where "every ripple lent his plash to the mountain stream and joyful sung his morning hymn," and so merry was the laughing light "that stream and bird and breeze and tree for very joy sang merrily."[21] All of these aspects of "joy in widest commonalty spread" (The Excursion, "Prospectus," l. 18) certainly give substance to Ruskin's strong affinity with Wordsworth. One also becomes aware of the Wordsworthian concept of spirit in nature. Nowhere in Ruskin's early writings is there a statement that suggests this idea more succinctly than the following lines, written when he was fourteen:

> And if thou ne'er hast felt as if
> The ocean had a mind
> Nor held communion with the deep
> And converse with wind,
> When broad, black waves before it roll
> I would not think thou hadst a soul.[22]

The interest in Wordsworth evidenced in these early poems was heightened by Ruskin's second encounter with the poet. If the first was uneventful, the second, in 1839, made up for it in ceremony and auspiciousness of occasion. Ruskin's poem "Salsette and Elephanta" won the Newdigate Prize at Oxford, and he had the honor of reciting it to a large gathering. "There were 2000 ladies and gentlemen to hear it," records Ruskin's father proudly, "and he was not at all nervous, and it went all very well off. The notice taken of him is extraordinary."[23] The elder Ruskin was justly proud of his son because Wordsworth himself was

in that audience since he was to receive an honorary degree. Notwithstanding the father's natural pride, one must conclude that the aging poet was the center of attention. Wordsworth's biographer, William Knight, records some memories of the eventful day. "The outburst of enthusiasm which greeted Wordsworth in the Sheldonian Theatre that day," he writes, "has been referred to by many as almost unexampled."

> Lord Coleridge says he "received in the theatre an enthusiastic welcome, a cordial, reverent homage which I at least have never seen equalled, and an honour the highest which the University can bestow . . . Mrs. Arnold wrote thus of the Oxford Ceremonial . . . The thundering applause, from all quarters, when the name of Wordsworth was heard, and his venerable form was seen advancing in the procession, I cannot at all describe. It was really delightful to see such a tribute to such a man. It was the public voice for once harmoniously joining to pay homage to goodness, and to talent, consistently employed in promoting the real happiness of his fellow-creatures.[24]

Though Ruskin is somewhat reticent in recording his memory of the event, it is likely that he, too, was deeply moved. His mingled awe and respect for Wordsworth, added to the privilege of reading his poem in the older poet's presence, must have culminated in a moving experience for the young Ruskin. As has been seen, Wordsworth had exerted considerable influence on him, directly or indirectly, in the preceding years. Wordsworth, in turn, was kind to the young poet. He met father and son, and

the elder Ruskin records, "We were asked to meet Wordsworth . . . and getting next to him . . . had a delightful hour."[25] It was a memorable time, and to celebrate the occasion, as had become James Ruskin's custom for a number of years, he presented his son with another Turner water-color. It may be added that in the Turner paintings the Wordsworthian influence was working obliquely. Turner is said to have passed through something akin to a Words-worthian period, so Ruskin must have seen a kinship in the nature poetry and Turner's landscapes.[26]

Ruskin was twenty years old at the time of this second encounter. Already the seeds of the Wordsworthian influence had struck fertile soil. The influence was to flourish in the immediate years and come to full fruition in a flowering of powerful descriptions of nature and a wealth of quotations and illustrative material from Words-worth's writings in the first volumes of Modern Painters. Among the events that led to this flowering was Ruskin's special kind of conversion, one of his own "spots of time" (Prelude, XII, 208) that he significantly relates to Wordsworth. In 1840, he became ill and had to withdraw from Oxford. His parents took him abroad for his health, and in the shadows of the Alps, "the seen walls of lost Eden," he found his life again, he says, all the best of it.[27] He experienced such a spiritual rejuvenation that he says his destiny was decided for him, and it is important to note that he chooses a line from The Excursion to express

his feelings:

> What good of religion, love, admiration or hope, had ever been taught me, or felt by my best nature, rekindled at once; and my line of work, both by my own will and the aid granted to it by fate in the future determined for me. I went down thankfully to my father and mother, and told them I was sure I should get well.[28]

Wordsworth had also dedicated himself in much the same fashion. Amidst a panorama of nature where he watched the sun rise in "memorable pomp" and saw the mountains ahead "drenched in empyrean light," his vows were made.

> My heart was full; I made no vows, but vows
> Were then made for me; bond unknown to me
> Was given, that I should be, else sinning greatly,
> A dedicated Spirit. On I walked
> In thankful blessedness, which yet survives.
> (Prelude, IV, 334-338)

Thus, both Ruskin and Wordsworth felt a special calling, and they viewed their intense response to nature as a sign of special grace, which carried with it a responsibility to share it with others. And, as will be seen, this responsibility adds significantly to the aspects of relationship and influence treated in the following chapters.

Because of the early Wordsworthian influence, Ruskin experienced a deeper bond to nature that strengthened the confidence and tone of authority in his writings. The justification for his confidence is expressed in the passage from the fourth book of The Excursion which Ruskin placed on the title page of every volume, in every edition, of Modern Painters.[29]

> . . . . . Accuse me not
> Of arrogance . . . . . .
> If, having walked with nature,
> And offered, far as frailty would allow,
> My heart a daily sacrifice to Truth,
> I now affirm of Nature and of Truth,
> Whom I have served, that their Divinity
> Revolts, offended at the ways of men,
> Philosophers, who, though the human soul
> Be of a thousand faculties composed,
> And twice ten thousand interests, do yet prize
> This soul, and the transcendent universe,
> No more than as a mirror that reflects
> To proud Self-love her own intelligence.
> (11. 978-990)

The choice of this passage points up the influence of Wordsworth, "the giant," on Ruskin, "the great Victorian," during his forming time. The forming time for Ruskin stretched from early youth to young manhood; it was the time that he made himself, or was made, what he was forever to be.

CHAPTER II

A LONG APPRENTICESHIP TO NATURE

> . . . [the poet and the prophet] are fundamentally the same; in this most important respect especially, that they have penetrated both of them into the sacred mystery of the Universe: what Goethe calls "the open secret." "Which is the great secret?" asks one-- "The open secret,"--open to all, seen by almost none! That divine mystery which lies everywhere . . . of which all Appearance, from the starry sky to the grass of the field, but especially the Appearance of Man and his work is but the vesture, the embodiment that renders it visible.
>
> Carlyle, Heroes and Hero Worship

A concept of nature is at the heart of Wordsworth's influence on Ruskin. Ruskin, like Wordsworth, viewed his long apprenticeship to nature as the greatest single force in the formation of his thought.[1] In Praeterita, he writes

> The living inhabitation of the world . . . the spiritual power of the air, the rocks, the waters, to be in the midst of it, and rejoice and wonder at it . . . this was the essential love of nature in me, this is the root of all that I have usefully become and the light of all that I have rightly learned.[2]

Earlier, in The Eagle's Nest, he had written: "The beginning of all my own right art work in life depended not on my love of art, but of mountains and sea."[3] He made the

first comprehensive statement of his "own right art work" in Modern Painters, the first volume of which was published in 1843 when he was twenty-four years old. By the time it appeared, the love of nature evidenced in his early work had been strengthened by constant observation, by travel, by increased interest in art, and by what must have been a rather intensive reading of Wordsworth, since it is Wordsworth whom he quotes more than any other writer as he expresses his views. It is noteworthy that the Wordsworthian influence is at its strongest in suggestion and quotation in the first two volumes. Ruskin begins to be more critical of Wordsworth in the third volume, a tendency which becomes more frequent in subsequent years. But it is the freshness and wonder of nature that he emphasizes in the first volumes and he, of course, found incomparable expression of these responses in Wordsworth's nature poetry. He saw a kinship in the poetry to his own predilection to close observation. He attributed his judgement in art to his constant habit of always "looking for the subject principally, and for the art only as the means of expressing it."[4] "The greatest thing a person can do," he wrote, "is to see something and tell what he saw in a plain way."[5] These comments strongly suggest Wordsworth's "Preface to the Second Edition of Lyrical Ballads" where he writes

> I do not know how to give my Reader a more exact notion of the style in which it was my wish and intention to write, than by informing him that I have at all times endeavored to look steadily

> at my subject; consequently, there is, I hope, in these poems little falsehood of description, and my ideas are expressed in language fitted to their respective importance.[6]

Ruskin saw a parallel between Wordsworth's ability to tell what he saw and felt in a plain way and Turner's method of painting, so that to him both expressed truth to nature. Noting that Wordsworth illustrates Turner in all points, he calls him "the keenest-eyed of all modern poets for what is deep and essential in nature."[7] Thus in his greatest work nature was for him a central term, as it was with Wordsworth;[8] and the starting point for both was the same, a keenness of perceptive ability and a unique emotional response to natural phenomena.

The term "nature" in any philosophical context has a variety of meanings, and so it has with both Wordsworth and Ruskin. Neither uses the term in a definite, fixed manner, but in ways which reflect the complexity of its tradition. In their early careers, both writers essentially meant skies, mountains, rivers, plants and trees when they spoke of nature, or what Beach calls the objects and phases of the external world, as distinguished from man and his works--or most simply the out-of-doors world as opposed to the indoor world, the country as opposed to the town.[9] This simpler aspect of reference was to give place to a deeper meaning as increased experience broadened into concern for man in relation to nature in various contexts. And in all of its larger implications,

the term reflects the results of the personal experiences of both writers. The meaning is always concentric, however, since the core of basic reference is the shared sensibility to natural phenomena.

Ruskin called this sensibility the landscape-instinct and gave a six point description of it in Modern Painters III. His discussion has links to the picturesque tradition, however slight, in the suggestion of "wild" scenery and the romantic associations of the past; but, more importantly, it relates him significantly to Wordsworth. He emphasizes that his feeling for landscape was wholly instinctive and that it was closely related to the perception of the sanctity of the whole of nature. These ideas alone clearly establish the Wordsworthian connection, but there are other implications that add to it as well. The intense feeling was a mode of goodness since it precluded all evil thoughts, and it had inherent in it some concern for a simple mode of life.[10] Commenting on the feeling in later years, Ruskin writes in Praeterita that

> It is a feeling only possible to youth, for all care, regret, or knowledge of evil destroys it; and it requires also the full sensibility of nerve and blood, the conscious strength of heart and hope; not but that I suppose the purity of youth may feel what is best of it even through sickness and the waiting for death; but only in thinking death itself God's sending.
>
> In myself, it has always been quite exclusively confined to wild, that is to say, wholly natural places, and especially to scenery animated by

> streams, or by the sea. The sense of the freedom, spontaneous, unpolluted power of nature was essential to it . . . but the feeling cannot be described by any of us who have it. Wordsworth's "Haunted me like a passion" is no description of it, for it is not like, but is, a passion; the point is to define how it differs from other passions,--what sort of human, pre-eminently human, feeling it is that loves a stone for a stone's sake, and a cloud for a cloud's . . . I was different . . . not so much in the actual nature of the feeling, but in the mixture of it. I had, in my little clay pitcher, vialfuls, as it were, of Wordsworth's reverence, Shelley's sensitiveness, Turner's accuracy, all in one. A snowdrop was to me, as to Wordsworth, part of the Sermon on the Mount.[11]

This sensibility, this "strange delight in natural influences"[12] became the basis for the shared ideas on nature which are treated in this chapter. They are, of course, closely interwoven, but I have isolated them somewhat for discussion in the following manner: interest in close observation as a starting point for art; the idea of a spiritual quality in nature; the pathetic fallacy; the attitude of joy in nature; and the complementary postures of repose and vitality in nature.

Ruskin notes in Modern Painters III that as the reflective and practical power increased, and the cares of the world gained upon him, the landscape-instinct faded gradually away, in the manner described by Wordsworth in the "Ode: Intimations of Immortality."[13] It is significant as a parallel that for him, as for Wordsworth, there was "abundant recompense" ("Tintern Abbey," l. 88).

Both learned

> To look on nature, not as in the hour
> Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes
> The still, sad music of humanity,
> Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
> To chasten and subdue.
> ("Tintern Abbey," 11. 88-93)

Perhaps Wordsworth sums up the result more succinctly in the "Ode: Intimations of Immortality" when he says

> Though nothing can bring back the hour
> Of splendor in the grass, of glory in the flower;
> We will grieve not, rather find
> Strength in what remains behind.
> (11. 187-190)

In both writers, there is a gradual change in their attitude toward nature from that evidenced in the "springtime of their genius" to that in "sober autumn,"[14] and, as will be seen, there follows a corresponding change in their emphasis as writers of nature and writers of man. Though the change begins in early maturity, the intense response to nature still remains evident in much of their writings, even in old age.

I

When one begins to characterize Wordsworth's concept of nature, the implication of which gives substance to the force of his influence, a comment by Walter Pater provides an illuminating focus. Pater says that

> . . . those who have undergone [Wordsworth's] influence, and followed his difficult way, are like people who have passed through some initiation, a <u>disciplina arcani</u>, by submitting

> to which they become able constantly to distinguish in art, speech, feeling, manners, that which is organic, animated, expressive, from that which is only conventional, derivative, inexpressive.[15]

The intensity of Wordsworth's experiences in nature and the depth of emotion evidenced in his sharing of them led to this disciplina arcani. He records in The Prelude and many of the other poems a variety of these experiences which helped shape his sensitivity. They were born of a certain freedom of access to the beauties of nature which he enjoyed during school and vacations. He describes rowing, skating, fishing, and a host of other activities that allowed him a constant intercourse with nature. Most important, however, was his sense of communing with all things which developed into the mystical quality of a life in all things and linked man's life to nature. The beauty of the areas he describes did much to develop to the fullest extent his natural gift of an eye and an ear attuned to nature. His poet-artist sensibility was heightened by "a long apprenticeship to nature"[16] in the Lake District, a region he felt was particularly blessed with a kind of grandeur in natural forms that had a lasting effect on him and his Victorian successor.

In reading Wordsworth's poetry, one is always aware that he has observed his subject matter carefully, that he has actually watched daffodils and that he has seen the lined face of a shepherd sustained by the strength of love. One is constantly reminded that he, like Ruskin after him,

wrote "with his eye on the object."[17] Alec King points out that Wordsworth's early poetry is particularly preoccupied with seeing, seeing objects, landscapes, scenes, people, actions. Thus he notes that it is altogether characteristic that one of his most moving poems, "The Solitary Reaper," should begin with the words "Behold her," and that after the richly romantic images that follow, he should say again, "I saw her," as if this primary and simple act was of special importance in the poem.[18] Characteristically, too, the Wanderer not only felt when he was surrounded by the wonders of nature, he not only believed--"he saw!"[19] Throughout Wordsworth's poetry, one finds this emphasis on observation and the expression of a closeness to nature and homely subjects as well as a special poignancy of spiritual experience which suggest a close sense-spirit connection. In "Tintern Abbey," Wordsworth says that he recognized

> In nature and the language of the sense
> The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse
> The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
> Of all my moral being.
>
> (11. 108-111)

While emphasizing the sense-spirit connection, the quoted passage also obliquely suggests what was a cornerstone in Wordsworth's concept of nature, that nature is somehow more than insensate, inert matter. He felt that it was imbued with an all-pervading spirit. Sometimes he describes this spirit as a kind of universal presence permeating all things, and at other times he seems to

conceive of things as having an individual spirit, or soul, of their own. It is generally agreed that Wordsworth produced his greatest work during his "early period" when he was most keenly aware of this spirit which "rolls through all things" ("Tintern Abbey," l. 102). For him, all living things were concrete manifestations of this all-pervasive spirit. Supporting this view, he records in The Prelude and The Excursion the spiritual powers of nature that nurtured and fashioned his mind. These spiritual powers intermingled with the emotions noted--joy, guilt, fear--and all served to heighten Wordsworth's sensibility to experience. And underscoring this sensibility was his belief that

> . . . the forms
> Of nature have a passion in themselves
> That intermingles with those works of man
> To which she summons him; although the works
> Be mean, have nothing lofty of their own.
> (The Prelude, XIII, 290-294)

Closely related to the concept of spirit in nature are joy and love, pervasive qualities in an essentially benevolent nature. Nature is highly prized, too, for its infinite variety, and for the complementary postures of repose and animation. These qualities are translated into ethical values and become increasingly important as Wordsworth's emphasis shifted to man. The spiritual aspect of his attitude toward nature had tremendous import for Ruskin, becoming, in turn, fundamental to his own concept of nature. As has been generally seen, Wordsworthian ideas are reflected in Ruskin's delineation of

the landscape-instinct. Wordsworth, too, had "a strange delight in natural influences," and in the surprise offered by nature's variety; he also felt an intuitive response to nature and was aware of an indefinite sense of awe; and he was particularly concerned with the sanctity of the whole of nature, as well as with the moral overtones implicit in nature.

This brief sketch represents something of the legacy of a concept of nature which Ruskin inherited from Wordsworth. These aspects will be amplified in the next section as I explore Ruskin's indebtedness. From these and related ideas, Ruskin was to shape much of his work, though in his hands the legacy was to be revitalized and made consistent with the "temper" of the Victorian times. He, like Wordsworth before him, through a kind of "super-natural naturalism" muted the Christian dichotomy separating the perfection of the Creator from the creation and brought a kind of pagan adoration to his concept of nature.[20]

II

Ruskin never really formulates a systematic view of nature, or his avowed "universal system of nature,"[21] at least in the sense that Wordsworthian scholars have been able to abstract one from the body of Wordsworth's writings. Ruskin does, however, treat aspects of nature throughout his works. In his introductory comments on

Modern Painters I, and in his comments therein on Turner, he reaffirms his general interest in nature and sets the stage for the working out of his youthful ideas. Against a backdrop of art and a host of related, and unrelated, subjects, his ideas unfold and lead the reader through years of "oscillations of temper" and "progressions of discovery."[22] Of Modern Painters he writes,

> I should not have spoken so audaciously had I not been able to trace, in my education, some grounds for supposing that I might in deed and in truth judge more justly of him [Turner] than others can. I mean, my having been taken to mountain scenery when a mere child, and allowed, at a time when boys are usually learning their grammar, to ramble on the shores of Como and Lucerne; and my having since, regardless of all that usually occupies the energies of the traveller,--art, antiquities, or people,--devoted myself to pure, wild, solitary, natural scenery; with a most unfortunate effect of course, as far as general or human knowledge is concerned, but with a most beneficial effect on that peculiar sensibility to the beautiful in all things God has made, which is my present aim to render more universal.[23]

He reiterates this emphasis in a letter to Osborne Gordon in 1844, explaining that "the love and knowledge [he] would communicate [were] not technicalities and fancies of men, but the universal system of nature--as interpreted and rendered stable by art."[24] In his effort to communicate such a system, man is admittedly given a secondary role since the emphasis is on the forms of nature themselves. Much of the content of the early volumes of Modern Painters constitutes a graphic detailing of what the artist ought

to see in landscape. The text, then, is a kind of treatise on realism of forms of nature in landscape art, a realism which is to offset the idealism of the grand style. Yet what he suggests is an idealism of sorts. In effect he says that natural forms coupled with a true intuitive response can reveal the ideal in the actual. His compromise is a claim that a knowledge of facts, of carefully observed natural phenomena, is necessary before the artist can present aesthetic ideas.

As has been noted, Ruskin's preoccupation with this interest of really seeing the forms of nature has a characteristically Wordsworthian cast. Wordsworth had said in the "Essay Supplementary to the Preface of 1815" that it was remarkable that during the period intervening between the publication of Paradise Lost and "The Seasons" no poetry contains a single new image of external nature,

> . . . and scarcely presents a familiar one from which it can be inferred that the eye of the poet had been steadily fixed upon his object, much less that his feelings had urged him to work upon it in the spirit of genuine imagination.[25]

In a similar vein, in a prose note to his poem "An Evening Walk," he tells of seeing an oak tree with its "darkening boughs and leaves" that so impressed itself upon his senses that it gave him extreme pleasure and from that experience he says

> I date . . . my consciousness of the infinite variety of natural appearances which had been unnoticed by the poets of any age or country, so far as I am acquainted with them; and I made a

> resolution to supply, in some degree, the deficiency.[26]

Significantly, Ruskin also "sees" a tree. As he sketched an aspen tree, he says, "The beautiful lines insisted on being traced . . . With wonder increasing every instant, I saw that they "composed" themselves, by finer laws than any known of men. At last, the tree was there, and everything that I had thought before about trees, nowhere."[27] His experience was as important as that of Wordsworth in the development of his aesthetic views. Wordsworth's rallying cry for poetry was a kind of truth occasioned by accurate observation. "I have been told," he writes, "that

> Aristotle . . . has said that poetry is the most philosophic of all writing: it is so: its object is truth . . . truth which is its own testimony, which gives competence and confidence to the tribunal to which it appeals, and receives them from the same tribunal. Poetry is the image of man and nature.[28]

The fact that poetry is an image occasions for him the same contradiction that Ruskin was to face, in fact, the problem faced by aesthetic theorists in general. Wordsworth explains that "there is no necessity to trick out or to elevate nature":

> And the more industriously the poet applies this principle, the deeper will be his faith that no words, which <u>his</u> fancy or imagination can suggest, will be to be compared with those which are the emanations of reality and truth.[29]

This statement suggests the "truth" of the subject as it is in nature before the poet, or artist, begins to embellish it. It carries with it, too, as a corollary, the suggested

idea of art as serving a photographic function. The mere suggestion even is a far cry from the creative view of the imagination which became so important in romantic aesthetic thought. Though the main difficulty Wordsworth is describing here is the insufficiency of language, he, nevertheless, pinpoints the contradiction that he and Ruskin faced in their evolving attitudes toward nature, and toward the recognition of the creative sensibility that "half perceives and half creates" ("Tintern Abbey," 11. 106-107).

Relating the painter and the poet, Ruskin says in Modern Painters I, that in the final analysis it is not by the mode of representing and saying, but by what is represented and said, that the respective greatness of either is to be finally determined, and that the dignity of any composition is in exact proportion to its independency of language or expression. In this connection, he cites two general principles respecting ideas of truth: the induction into the spectator's mind of the faithful conception of natural objects, and the guiding of the mind so that the spectator becomes aware of the thoughts and feelings with which the artist regarded them. He continues as follows:

> . . . Though I consider the second as the real and only important end of art, I call the representation of facts the first end; because it is necessary to the other and must be attained before it. It is the foundation of all art; like real foundations it may be little thought of when a brilliant fabric is raised on it; but it must be there . . . though we want the thought and feelings

> of the artist as well as the truth,
> yet they must be thoughts arising out
> of the knowledge of truth and feelings
> raising [sic] out of the contemplation
> of truth. We do not want his mind to
> be as badly blown glass . . . that
> distorts what we see through it; but
> like a glass of sweet and strange
> colour, that gives new tones to what
> we see through it; and a glass of rare
> strength and clearness too, to let us
> see more than we could ourselves, and
> bring nature up to us and near to us.
> Nothing can atone for the want of truth,
> not the most brilliant imagination, the
> most playful fancy, the most pure feeling
> . . . Not the most exalted conception,
> nor the most comprehensive grasp of
> intellect can make amends for the want
> of truth.[30]

The above passage is strongly suggestive of passages from The Prelude. Wordsworth says much the same elsewhere but nowhere, perhaps, with the force and vigor of the passages cited here.[31] In Book XIII he says,

> From Nature doth emotion come, and moods
> Of calmness equally are Nature's gift:
> This is her glory; these two attributes
> Are sister horns that constitute her strength.
> Hence Genius, born to thrive by interchange
> Of peace and excitation, finds in her
> His best and purest friend; from her receives
> That energy by which he seeks the truth,
> From her that happy stillness of the mind
> Which fits him to receive it when unsought.
> (The Prelude XIII, ll. 1-10)

And

> If they partake the animating faith
> That Poets, even as Prophets, each with each
> Connected in a mighty scheme of truth
> Have each his own peculiar faculty,
> Heaven's gift, a sense that fits him to perceive
> Objects unseen before, thou wilt not blame
> The humblest of this band who dares to hope
> That unto him hath also been vouchsafed
> An insight that in some sort he possesses,
> A privilege whereby a work of his,

> Proceeding from a source of untaught things,
> Creative and enduring, may become
> A power like one of nature's.
> (The Prelude, XIII, 11. 300-312)

As John D. Rosenberg points out, they both realized that to perceive the animate artistry of nature, the poet-artist had to lose his awareness of self and become a "mirror of truth . . . passive in sight, passive in utterance." Rosenberg emphasizes that in this respect Ruskin is faithful both to his unique personal experiences and to his Romantic heritage, to Wordsworth's "wise passiveness" or Keats' "negative capability," the capacity to submit to experience in order to record it more accurately and richly. The necessary corollary to wise passiveness was, to use Wordsworth's expression, the ability to cast "a certain colouring of imagination" over what was observed, "a light that never was on sea and land."[32]

For both Wordsworth and Ruskin, then, observation of nature became a cardinal principle of their ideas. As already noted, Ruskin based his admiration of Turner on this fact. He likewise used this somewhat personal yardstick in his deprecation of Poussin, Claude Lorrain and other artists. In The Stones of Venice, for example, he comments on the lack of observation in Renaissance artists. He depicts them as being too preoccupied with personal and mundane matters to really acquaint themselves with objective fact, or "truth."[33] Thus their art suffers because it lacks that kind of truth that a close view of

nature assures a sympathetic heart, that is to say a heart attuned to nature. The idea of a sympathetic heart is an important link between the two writers also. Ruskin's artist, like Wordsworth's poet, was a man among men and speaking to men, but who possessed an instinctive response to truth, or nature. Thus nature is at once the raw material of the creative process, the inspirational focus and the imaged creation. The emphasis of both Wordsworth and Ruskin reflects the nineteenth century "world view" and the means of expressing that view, which involved to some degree sense qualities and their importance to the creative process.

One facet of this expression was the attribution of feeling to objects of nature, the incorrect use of which Ruskin was to label the pathetic fallacy. Josephine Miles, in tracing this attribution of feeling, has shown that it was a tendency that permeated the intellectual outpourings of the period, and was by no means restricted to the nineteenth century, having had some degree of usage previously, and having extended into the twentieth century.[34] In Wordsworth and Ruskin the concept of feeling in things becomes central to their thought, although their views diverge at some points. Their general ideas parallel exactly the end result of what Miles describes as the process of the dramatic tensions of the seventeenth century giving way to the eighteenth century poetry of associated object and emotion, and these standard "universal" associa-

tions giving way in turn to the aspects stressed here--a closer look at the object, a sight of its structure and proportion, and a consequent less stable definition of response, moving eventually into realms and problems of the unconscious.[35] The problems and realms of the unconscious are together the problem of getting from fact to art, the province of the succeeding chapter on the imagination. It is clear that Ruskin follows Wordsworth in insisting on close observation of nature as the initial step in the creative process. The seeming divergence of opinion after this fact can be attributed in part to some difference in their general outlook, to the general climate of opinion during the time they wrote, and to a gradual decline in the use of the attribution of feeling as a means of expressing the relation of the individual to concrete reality, or the relation between self and object.

III

The larger concern of which the pathetic fallacy was an offshoot, was a shared metaphysical concept of nature, the idea that the world of natural forms is endowed with spirit. In its essential characteristics, the spirit is one of benevolence and joy and is supported by the idea of repose or animation in natural objects.

Wordsworth's feeling of joy and delight in nature was grounded on a predisposition to goodness, or a spirit of love in the universe. Thus he stresses the educative

power of nature since the mind of man and nature are so "exquisitely fitted" (The Excursion, "Prospectus," 11. 63, 66) to each other that man reacts to the universal spirit

> . . . and fitness in the latent qualities
> And essences of things, by which the mind
> Is moved by feelings of delight.
> (The Prelude, II, 11. 344-347)

The procession of our fate, he says, is ordered by

> . . . a Being
> Of infinite benevolence and power
> Whose everlasting purposes embrace
> All accidents, converting them to good.
> (The Excursion, IV, 11. 14-17)

This being, or universal spirit, flows through all things. It is an active principle assigned to every form of being:

> . . . it subsists
> In all things, in all natures; in the stars
> Of azure heaven, the unenduring clouds,
> In flower and tree, in every pebbly stone
> That paves the brooks, the stationary rocks,
> The moving waters, and the invisible air,
> Whate'er exists hath properties that spread
> Beyond itself, communicating good,
> A simple blessing, or with evil mixed;
> Spirit that knows no insulated spot,
> No chasm, no solitude; from link to link
> It circulates, the Soul of all the worlds.
> (The Excursion, IX, 11. 4-15)

The spirit, Wordsworth says, is "reverenced least, and least respected in the human mind, its most apparent home" (The Excursion, IX, 11. 18-20). His task, then, like Ruskin's, was to emphasize the educative potential of nature and the qualities in man which could make him perceptive to this potential. The ability of man to perceive truth through external nature becomes the basis for their developing attitudes toward confidence in man and the moral emphases which follow. Man must become aware of the joy and benevolence

which are so much a part of nature. Wordsworth records aspects of this love throughout The Prelude as well as in the shorter poems. In "The Prospectus" to The Excursion, the work which Ruskin so admired, he lists among the topics to be treated the theme of "joy in widest communalty spread," as well as truth, beauty, love, and hope (11. 14, 18). He describes the Wanderer as having

> . . . felt the power
> Of nature, and already was prepared
> By his intense conceptions, to receive
> Deeply the lesson deep of love which he,
> Whom Nature, by whatever means, has taught
> To feel intensely, cannot but receive.
> (The Excursion, I, 11. 191-196)

The scene he depicts next is so characteristic of many that Ruskin was to describe that one must posit a definite influence in tone and content, since Wordsworth was the first great proponent of the intuition inspired in the poet-artist by mountain scenery. Wordsworth says of the Wanderer:

> What soul was his, when, from the naked top
> Of some bold headland, he beheld the sun
> Rise up, and bathe the world in light! He looked--
> Ocean and earth, the solid frame of earth
> And ocean's liquid mass, in gladness lay
> Beneath him:--Far and wide the clouds were touched,
> And in their silent faces could he read
> Unutterable love. Sound needed none,
> 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.
> 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 into still communion that transcends
> The imperfect offices of prayer and praise,

> His mind was a thanksgiving to the power
> That made him; it was blessedness and love!
> (The Excursion, I, 11. 198-218)

Similarly, Ruskin chronicles his lifelong fascination for mountains and their effect on him. In the chapter, "Mountain Glory," in Modern Painters IV, for example, he admits that for him mountains are the beginning and end of all natural scenery. "My affections," he says, "are wholly bound up [in them]."

> . . . the slightest rise and fall in the road,-- a mossy bank at the side of a crag of chalk, with brambles at its brow, overhanging it,-- a ripple over three or four stones in the stream by the bridge,-- above all, a wild bit of ferny ground under a fir or two, looking as if, possibly, one might see a hill if one got to the other side of the trees, will instantly give me intense delight, because the shadow, or the hope, of the hills is in them.[36]

The intensity of his feeling was heightened by his idea that the mountains brought one closer to the Creator, that they "are the appointed memories of the light of His mercy."[37] His "mountain glory" is an important part of his aesthetics, and as has been seen, to him the Alps were "the seen walls of lost Eden."[38]

Ruskin likewise is concerned with the joy principle and the benevolence of nature. To him joy in the pleasures of sight is an important principle that leads to what he calls the highest kind of perception, theoria, which he makes the basis of his entire aesthetic. His idea that all nature is beautiful and God's handiwork implies a deep

sense of benevolence. He said in Modern Painters IV that

> . . . the whole heart of nature seems thirsting to give, and still to give, shedding forth her everlasting beneficence with a profusion so patient, so passionate, that our utmost observance and thankfulness are but, at last, neglect of her nobleness and apathy to her love.[39]

Later, in Modern Painters V, he traces conditions that reveal that the earth has been prepared for man's existence. Here he explains that the vegetation of the earth is but an imperfect soul given in order to meet the soul of man. While the earth in its depths must remain dead and cold except for slow crystalline change, at the surface which man looks upon and deals with

> it ministers to him through a veil of strange intermediate being; which breathes but has no voice; moves, but cannot leave its appointed place; passes through life without consciousness, to death without bitterness; wears the beauty of youth, without its passion; and declines to the weakness of age, without its regret.[40]

In the mystery of this "intermediate being," Ruskin continues, man finds the pleasures which he needs from the external world as well as the lessons he needs. All kinds of precious grace and teaching are united in this link between the earth and man. And in the classic passage below he describes God's daily preparation of earth for man, "with beautiful means of life," a recurrent theme in his works:

> First, a carpet to make it soft for him; then a colored fantasy of embroidery thereon; then, tall spreading of foliage to shade him from sun-heat, and shade

> also, the fallen rain, that it may not dry quickly back into the clouds, but stay to nourish the springs among the moss. Stout wood to bear this leafage: easily to be cut, yet tough and light, to make houses for him, or instruments (lance-shaft, or plough-handle, according to his temper); useless it had been, if harder; useless, if less fibrous; useless, if less elastic. Winter comes, and the shade of leafage falls away, to let the sun warm the earth; the strong boughs remain, breaking the strength of winter winds. The seeds which are to prolong the race, innumerable, according to the need, are made beautiful and palatable, varied into infinitude of appeal to the fancy of man, or provision for his service . . . and all these presented in forms of endless change. Fragility or force, softness and strength, in all degrees and aspects; unerring uprightness, as of temple pillars, or undivided wandering of feeble tendrils on the ground; mighty resistances of rigid arm and limb to the storms of ages, or wavings to and fro with faintest pulse of summer streamlet. Roots cleaving the strength of rock, or binding the transcience of the sand; crests basking in sunshine of the desert, or hiding by dripping spring and lightless cave; foliage far tossing in entangled fields beneath every wave of ocean--clothing with variegated everlasting films, the peaks of the trackless mountains, or ministering at cottage doors to every gentlest passion and simplest joy of humanity.[41]

And on the same theme, in Modern Painters I, he depicts the open sky as one vast canvas on which nature produces "scene after scene, picture after picture, glory after glory" for man's perpetual pleasure.[42]

The quoted passages suggest that Ruskin, like Wordsworth, often seems to vacillate between the two positions of the conception of spirit as an "active

principle" (The Excursion, IX, 1. 3) of somewhat indefinite delineation, and of spirit in an unmistakably Christian context. Some seventeen years had passed between the "nature" of the one and the "God" of the other. And although Ruskin's vacillation is different in tenor from that of Wordsworth, the firmer anchor bespeaks something of Wordsworth's dilemma. After the definite Christian contexts of several books of The Excursion, for example, in Book IX, Wordsworth moves back to the more indefinite stance of the active principle that subsists in all things. Most notably, in Book IV, he speaks of the God of infinite benevolence and power who orders our lives (11. 14-15), but in Book IX, he speaks of an active principle which is the soul of all the world (11. 3, 15). There are similar instances in The Prelude, though here, of course, much of the overt Christian context is a reworking. Ruskin's own anxieties made him all the more aware of Wordsworth's apparent difficulties in reconciling his concept of nature and religion. In Modern Painters III, commenting on the nineteenth century as part of the "dark ages," Ruskin says that there never was a generation of men, savage or civilized, who taken as a body, so woefully fulfilled the words "having no hope, and without God in the world." He lamented the fact that nearly all the powerful men of the age were "unbelievers; the best of them in doubt and misery; the worst in reckless defiance; the plurality in plodding hesitation." "One or two" he found "anchored, indeed, but

anxious, or weeping," and he lists Wordsworth as one of these. Wordsworth is not sure of his anchor, Ruskin adds, but drags it with him as he cries out that he would rather be a pagan suckled in some creed outworn so that he might have glimpses that would make him less forlorn.[43]

A related aspect of the concept of spirit and its benevolence reveals a further connection between the two writers. One finds that both often emphasize the benevolence principle almost to the exclusion of "nature, red in tooth and claw" ("In Memoriam," LVI, l. 15). This darker side of nature is what Shairp calls her infinite and inhuman side. It is that aspect, he says, that offers no symbols to soothe man's yearning; "it is a mysterious silence which has impressed the imagination of the greatest poets with a vague, yet sublime awe. The sense of it lay heavy on . . . Wordsworth and drew out [his] soul's profoundest music."[44] The awe lay just as heavily on Ruskin, and he, like his mentor, often chose the positive emphasis because thoughts of infinitude and the soul of all things led to assurance of being. This emphasis is true at least in Ruskin's early career. In both writers aspects of nature came to be valued for their poet-artist intuitions that led to ideas of being and eternity. Notwithstanding the fact that an "active principle" pervades much of Wordsworth's poetry, one must conclude that he and Ruskin stress essentially the theistic consolation of Christian doctrine. The darker aspects thus blend with all others

toward a higher good, bending to the principles of love and faith. It is significant that the period of Wordsworth's writings which most influenced Ruskin was that where the consolation was most apparent. He quotes from The Excursion more than from any other of Wordsworth's works, in discussions that range from truth to nature, where he pinpoints the accuracy of Wordsworth's descriptions, to ideas on education and art. Cook and Wedderburn index at least thirty-seven of these references.[45] Early in his career Ruskin speaks of the "faultless majesty" of The Excursion;[46] and attention has already been called to the line "We live by admiration, hope, and love" which Ruskin said embodied all that he had written.[47] His preference for The Excursion must be attributed in part to the dominant principle of "despondency corrected" through a closeness to nature and to God which results in a sustaining faith. It is the doctrine preached by the Wanderer and the Pastor, but it can also be found in the earlier poems. Wordsworth's general neglect of the obverse side of the coin has been remarked upon by practically all Wordsworth scholars. Ruskin's case, however, is different. As will be seen, there is a growing awareness in his writings of the darker aspects of nature closely associated with his "loss" of the landscape-instinct.

IV

The recognition of a spirit principle at work in nature was just a step away from the attribution of human feelings to things. Josephine Miles and James Logan have both commented on the similarities in thought of Ruskin and Wordsworth on the pathetic fallacy.[48] The term is Ruskin's but their ideas are so similar in many respects that Logan does well to suggest "that the essentials of Ruskin's famous essay had already been enunciated by the poet."[49] I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter one basic idea of their shared concept, that of looking closely at nature and describing accurately what was observed. Also alluded to was an outgrowth of this aspect, the question of the degree to which the observer's feelings may lead to a falseness of perception. Both Ruskin and Wordsworth recognized that the test of true feeling was closely related to sincerity, or "truth," and the emotional state of the observer. Before Ruskin wrote his famous diatribe, Wordsworth had issued a similar warning regarding the fallacy. In the "Appendix of 1802" he writes:

> The earliest poets of all nations generally wrote from passion excited by real events; they wrote naturally, and as men: feeling powerfully as they did, their language was daring, and figurative. In succeeding times, Poets, and men ambitious of the fame of Poets, perceiving the influence of such language and desirous of producing the same effect without being animated by the same passion, set themselves to a mechanical adoption of these figures of

> speech, and made use of them, sometimes with propriety, but much more frequently applied them to feelings and thoughts with which they had no natural connection whatsoever.[50]

Of his own avoidance of the fallacy he says:

> We have had the brow and eye of the moon before, both allowable; but what have we reserved for human beings, if their features and organs etc. are to be lavished on objects without feeling and intelligence. You will, perhaps, think this observation comes with an ill grace from one who is aware that he has tempted many of his admirers into abuses of this kind; yet, I assure you, I have never given way to my own feelings in personifying natural objects, or investing them with sensation, without bringing all that I have said to a rigorous after-test of good sense, as far as I was able to determine what good sense is.[51]

Ruskin addresses himself to the issue in much the same fashion.

> A poet is great, first in proportion to the strength of his passion, and then that strength being granted, in proportion to his government of it; there being, however, always a point beyond which it would be inhuman and monstrous if he pushed this government, and therefore, a point at which all feverish and wild fancy becomes true. Thus the destruction of the kingdom of Assyria, cannot be contemplated firmly by a prophet of Israel . . .
>
> But by how much this feeling is noble when it is justified by the strength of its cause, by so much it is ignoble when there is not cause enough for it; and beyond all other ignobleness is the mere affectation of it, in hardness of heart. Simply bad writing may almost always . . . be known by its adoption of these fanciful metaphorical expressions as a sort of current coin; yet

> there is even a worse condition of writing . . . in which such expressions are not ignorantly and feelinglessly caught up, but, by some master, skillful, yet insincere deliberately wrought out with chill and studied fancy.[52]

The pathetic fallacy has more import for the theory of the imagination in the next chapter since, according to Ruskin, it is one form in which a weak imaginative power evidences itself. In one of his sharpest departures from early praise of Wordsworth, Ruskin here calls him a poet of the second order, a reflective poet who delights in falseness of attribution as opposed to the first order, or creative poets like Shakespeare, Homer, and Dante.[53] Though Ruskin flails out at false attribution of feeling, he himself is given to the expression of general attribution frequently. His flowers, trees, and even the leaves on the trees quiver with emotion in their "socialized" settings. His leaves are "full of fears and affections" and they "shrink and seek as they obey." His flowers "tremble with strange joy at the feeling of their motion"; his tree has boughs that "seek their own livelihood and happiness according to their needs," and young shoots that have "undecided states of mind about their future life."[54] It has been noted that Ruskin sets up categories and questions the attribution of feeling in poetry but seems to find it quite acceptable in his own prose.[55] The key to proper usage lies in Ruskin's catch-all term "truth." The writer must at all times, he says, keep a firm grasp

on the reality of the thing described without the interference of emotion. He must also have genuine love for the objects. Ruskin gave great value to the objects themselves, thus he felt that Wordsworth's bestowal of emotion could lead to dangerous excesses. Wordsworth had said that

> . . . objects derive their influence not from properties inherent in them, not from what they are actually in themselves, but from such as are bestowed upon them by the minds of those who are conversant with or affected by those objects. Thus the poetry, if there be any in the work proceeds whence it ought to do, from the soul of man, communicating its creative energies to the images of the external world.[56]

Wordsworth's statement does not lessen the importance of the object, but it places an even greater importance on the creative power of the imagination. Ruskin, of course, recognized the creative power of the imagination also, but he often seemed more concerned about the danger of excessive feeling. He felt that many writers, Wordsworth among them, allowed their minds to wander too quickly from the object itself to their own thoughts and feelings. This kind of temperament, he says, can be of a mind and body

> . . . in some sort too weak to deal fully with what is before them or upon them; borne away or overclouded, or over-dazzled by emotion; and it is a more or less noble state, according to the force of the emotion which has enduced [sic] it.[57]

As Miles has observed, the central issue here is Ruskin's aesthetic concern with an object's "sake," by which he apparently meant qualities like color, design, pattern, and organic form.[58] In this connection, Ruskin said:

> I had, in my little clay pitcher, vialfuls, as it were, of Wordsworth's reverence, Shelley's sensitiveness, Turner's accuracy, all in one. A snowdrop was to me, as to Wordsworth, part of the Sermon on the Mount; but I never should have written sonnets to the celandine, because it is of a coarse yellow, and imperfect form. With Shelley, I loved blue sky and blue eyes, but never in the least confused the heavens with my poor little Psychidion. And the reverence and passion were alike kept in their place by the constructive Turnerian element; and I did not weary myself in wishing that a daisy could see the beauty of its shadow, but in trying to draw the shadow rightly, myself.[59]

Again this is part of his landscape-instinct; and behind it he says is the problem of "what sort of human, preeminently human, feeling it is that loves a stone for a stone's sake, and a cloud for a cloud's."[60] The essential disagreement between Wordsworth and Ruskin, then, is exactly on the emphasis of "sake" and on the emphasis of feelings, since both admitted a legitimate use of attribution. A contributing factor may have been each man's mode of observation. Wordsworth walked and viewed nature; Ruskin painted and sketched. The difference in vantage points thus is instructive, the latter tending toward a more conscious observation. The important point, however, is that on the general subject of the attribution of feeling,

the Wordsworthian influence is apparent; it helps mold Ruskin's ideas on the one hand while it provides a point of departure on the other.

V

The entire concept of spirit in the natural world is supported in Ruskin and Wordsworth by a shared recognition of liberty and law in nature, a realization of the principles of vitality and repose. The realization involves an acknowledgment of nature's vastness and her plenitude while at the same time recognizing law and a kind of orderliness of unity. Wordsworth had said, "In nature everything is distinct, yet nothing defined into absolute independent singleness."[61] Ruskin's way of putting a similar idea is this:

> . . . nature is never distinct and never vacant; she is always mysterious, but always abundant; you always see something, but you never see all.[62]

What appears at first glance to be a contradiction is not one at all. The difference is merely one of semantic emphasis. The main idea in both is Coleridge's unity in multeity. In this connection also Ruskin observed that "no inconsiderable part of the essential characters of beauty depends on the expression of vital energy";[63] and also, "the spirit of the hills is action, that of the lowlands repose."[64] These two aspects of nature, motion and rest, are not conceived as antithetical, however; they

are both complementary phases of a deeper life, of a life made meaningful by spiritual insight.

It is generally conceded that the idea of repose received more and more attention in Wordsworth's works as he grew older and that his Christian orthodoxy is largely responsible for this emphasis. Commenting on Wordsworth's aesthetic experience, Oscar Campbell explains that when Wordsworth faced squarely the mutability inherent in nature he sought not only a religion, but an aesthetic norm beyond nature--one that might produce in him through its permanence and stability unchanging peace.[65] In addition to the attention given to this idea in The Excursion and The Ecclesiastical Sonnets, Wordsworth also writes in the "Ode to Duty," "I long for a repose that ever is the same"; and in the same poem he calls attention to the principle of law when he says "thou dost preserve the stars from wrong" (11. 40-47). In the same vein, in one of the most profound passages in The Excursion, the Solitary reveals his longing for tranquillity. He says

> . . .what but this,
> The universal instinct of repose,
> The longing for confirmed tranquillity,
> Inward and outward; humble, yet sublime:
> The life where hope and memory are as one;
> Where earth is quiet and her face unchanged
> Save by the simplest toil of human hands
> Or season's difference; the immortal Soul
> Consistent in self-rule; and heaven revealed
> To meditation in that quietness.
> (The Excursion, III, 11. 396-405)

Ruskin's ideas on repose so parallel those of Wordsworth that in this respect, as elsewhere, he finds

matchless expression of his own ideas in Wordsworth's poetry. As has been seen, it is the later Wordsworth who influenced Ruskin most; thus one expects to find considerable emphasis on repose in Ruskin's works. Much of his aesthetic theory is worked out against this backdrop. He cites the above quotation from The Excursion in his own discussion of repose in Volume II of Modern Painters as he explains that as unity demands for its expression that which seems its contrary, variety, so the capability of vitality is necessary for the expression of repose.

> . . . That which in lifeless things enobles them by seeming to indicate life, enobles higher creatures by indicating the exaltation of their earthly vitality into a Divine vitality; and raising the life of sense into the life of faith,--faith, whether we receive it in the sense of adherence to resolution, obedience to law, regardfulness of promise, in which from all time it has been the test as the shield, of the true being and life of man, or in the still higher sense of trustfulness in the presence, kindness, and word of God; in which form it has been exhibited under Christian dispensation.[66]

Hence Ruskin concludes that there is no higher desire than that which exists in "rightly disciplined minds" for evidence of repose in "eternal signs." He concludes that no work of art is great without repose and that all art is great in proportion to the appearance of it. And without regard for the other qualities that he enumerates, he says that the search for this alone may lead to the rejection of all that is base, and the acceptance of all that is

good and great, for the "Paths of Wisdom are peace."[67] Throughout his discussion one is aware of the indelible imprint of Wordsworth.

VI

Both Wordsworth and Ruskin suffer a loss of their oneness with nature and experience a subsequent mental crisis, though the basic similarity ends here. Wordsworth goes on to record the restorative powers of nature, whereas Ruskin never fully recovers his earlier view except in rare flashes in Praeterita when, old and troubled, he looks back on his past and recalls only those things it gives him pleasure to remember. The classic dedicatory passages referred to in Chapter I signify Wordsworth's and Ruskin's acceptance of nature's healing and dedicatory powers; they herald, too, the eventual loss of "the visionary gleam" ("Ode: Intimations of Immortality," 1. 56) that gradually gave place to more concern for man and his moral state.

In Wordsworth's reliance on nature, in his desire "to link the fair works of nature to the human soul," ("Lines Written in Early Spring," 11. 5-6) he came more and more to value man himself, or his creative faculty, the imagination, and his ability to shape the materials received by the senses. Many reasons have been advanced for this increasing emphasis after his moral crisis. Among those receiving most credence are these summarized by Beach: the influence of rationalists gave way to that of theolog-

ical writers; his thwarted love affair had continuing reverberations in his intellectual life; he naturally came to distrust the inspirations of nature and relied on the prescriptive admonitions of Duty as voiced by religion; during the period when he had "given up moral questions in despair," he was compelled to a vigorous effort of "compensation," sublimation, and reconstruction of faith; he was thus led to more reliance on "transcendental" faculties--on the heart, the intuition, the "higher reason," or religious faith.[68] For the purpose of this study, however, the result is more instructive than the cause since it parallels Ruskin's experience and since it heralds, too, Wordsworth's increased dedication to the task of being the poet of man. In the process of change, nature as the force that had ministered to him during his childhood and youth through visitations, warnings, and benevolent love, that had sustained him and refreshed him, now seemed to lack some necessary quality. In reality her enduring forms remained unchanged; his attitude toward her was different. In comparing his former attitude to that of his crisis period, he asks

> What wonder, then, if, to a mind so far
> Perverted, even the visible Universe
> Fell under the dominion of a taste
> Less spiritual, with a microscopic view
> Was scanned, as I scanned the moral world?
> (The Prelude, XII, 11. 88-92)

And continuing this mood he says

> . . . for this
> Although a strong infection of the age,

> Was never much my habit--giving way
> To a comparison of scene with scene,
> Bent overmuch on superficial things,
> Pampering myself with meagre novelties
> Of colour and proportion; to the moods
> Of time and season, to the moral power,
> The affections and the spirit of the place,
> Insensible.
> (The Prelude, XII, 11. 112-121)

He had lost his poetic vision--"a glory had passed away from the earth" ("Ode: Intimations of Immortality," 1. 18). Time enabled him to turn once more to nature and find there again confidence and a source of power and inspiration. Restored by nature he becomes again "a sensitive being, a creative soul" who looked once more

> . . . with feelings of fraternal love
> Upon the unassuming things that hold
> A silent station in this beauteous world.
> (The Prelude, XIII, 11. 45-47)

Ruskin had a similar experience, though his loss of the landscape-instinct reveals "something far more deeply interfused" ("Tintern Abbey," 1. 96). His loss bespeaks a gradual mental clouding as well as a moral crisis brought on by a questioning of his narrow Evangelicalism. Propheti-cally his own terms, "mountain gloom and mountain glory," in Modern Painters IV point up the change in his attitude toward nature as he juxtaposes these two aspects and com-ments on social and economic factors:

> In Modern Painters I and II Ruskin looked at the peaks of mountains and saw God; in Modern Painters III, IV, and V he looks at their bases and sees shattered rocks and impoverished villages. The face of the Creator withdraws from the creation and in its place man emerges as a tragic figure in the foreground

> of a still potent, but flawed, nature. With that withdrawal, Ruskin's interest moves from mountain to men, from art to society.[69]

Ruskin's attitude in this respect represents a major departure from the course set by his mentor. Though Wordsworth was very much aware of nature's darker side, he never verbalizes it to the degree that Ruskin does in his later career. Wilenski maintains that Ruskin's emphasis is a manifestation of his manic impulses since he at first moans over the loss of his delight in nature much as he moaned over any of his various ailments or disabilities--his languor, his sense of failure, his indigestion. Later he transferred the fault to nature herself, and "thereafter he was haunted by the delusion that nature was deteriorating and that the world was cursed by a new kind of Storm-Cloud and Plague Wind." According to Wilenski, the Storm-Cloud delusion was evolved from the procedure of rationalization and transference which he shows to be characteristic of Ruskin's mental processes.[70] One may have some quarrel with the strict psychological emphasis, but there is in Ruskin's description of nature a marked change that reveals a progressive loss. He moves from those glorious paeans of nature that are so much anthologized to the darkening and bleak pictures that follow below.

There is a prophetic admixture in this passage from Modern Painters V.

> The autumn sun, low but clear, shines on the scarlet ash-berries and on the golden birch-leaves, which, fallen

> here and there, when the breeze has not caught them, rest quiet in the crannies of the purple rock. Beside the rock, in the hollow under the thicket, the carcase of a ewe, drowned in the last flood, lies nearly bare to the bone, its white ribs protruding through the skin, raven-torn; and the rags of its wool still flickering from the branches that first stayed it as the stream swept it down. A little lower, the current plunges, roaring into a circular chasm like a well . . . down which the foam slips in detached snow-flakes. Round the edges of the pool beneath, the water circles slowly, like black oil; a little butterfly lies on its back, its wings glued to one of the eddies, its limbs feebly quivering; a fish rises, and it is gone.[71]

One cannot escape the awareness of the darker side of nature here. Amidst the conventional beauties of nature, there is still a kind of ironic savagery in the destruction of the symbol of innocence and the butterfly. In other passages, from letters written between 1871 and 1875, and without the relief of beauty, Ruskin's message is even more grim:

> Everything is infinitely sad to me--this black east wind for three months most of all. Of all the things that oppress me, this sense of the evil working of nature herself--my disgust at her barbarity--clumsiness--darkness--bitter mockery of herself--is the most desolating.[72]
>
> (To C. E. Norton, April 3, 1871)

> Nature herself traitress to me--whatever Wordsworth may say.[73]
>
> (To C. E. Norton, January 15, 1873)

> The deadliest of all things to me is my loss of faith in nature. No spring and no summer. Fog always and the snow faded from the Alps.[74]
>
> (To C. E. Norton, February 13, 1875)

> Everything that has happened to me . . . is little in comparison to the crushing and depressing effect on me, of what I learn day by day as I work on, of the cruelty and ghastliness of the Nature I used to think so divine.[75]
> (To Susan Beever, January 21, 1875)

> Nothing could beat me except the plague of darkness and blighting wind--perpetual, awful--crushing me with the sense of Nature and Heaven failing as well as man.[76]
> (To C. E. Norton, March 25, 1875)

> The difference to me between nature as she is now and as she was ten years ago is as great as between Lapland and Italy, and the total loss of comfort in morning and evening sky the most difficult to resist of all spiritual hostility.[77]
> (To Susan Beever, December 11, 1875)

Occasionally one finds more admixture during this period, as in this entry from the Diary, August 16, 1875.

> An exquisite morning sky, all fretted with sweet white cloud seen only here and there through miserable rack of the foul storm smoke. Why does, how can, God do it and spoil His own work so wretchedly? At the moment, whistling wind, calm luminous sky and the black Devil cloud all contending for mastery.[78]

But more typically, one finds long descriptions like the following one from Modern Painters IV. Such passages are significant contrasts to the previously cited passage where God prepares the earth daily for man's pleasure.

> . . . Vast wastes of mountain ground, covered here and there with dull grey grass or moss, but breaking continually into black banks of shattered slate, all glistening and sodden with slow tricklings of clogged, incapable streams; the snow water oozing through them in a cold sweat, and spreading itself in creeping stains among their dust; . . .

> leaving a few jagged teeth, like the edges of knives eaten away by vinegar, projecting through the half-lodged mass from the inner rock, keen enough to cut the hand or foot that rests on them, yet crumbling as they wound, and soon sinking again into the smooth, slippery, glutinous heap, looking like a beach of black scales of dead fish, cast ashore from a poisonous sea; and sloping away into foul ravines, branched down immeasurable slopes of barrenness, where the winds howl and wander continually, and the snow lies in wasted and sorrowful fields, covered with sooty dust, that collects in streaks and stains at the bottom of all its thawing ripples.[79]

These passages reveal the depth of Ruskin's loss and relate it to that of Wordsworth, since they suggest that for Ruskin's later career the Wordsworthian view of nature was insufficient. Significantly Ruskin had described the onset by citing the "Ode on Intimations of Immortality."[80] There are still passages that reveal Ruskin's earlier view of nature, but for the most part the loveliness of nature has a "worm at the root."[81] The "mountain gloom" becomes pervasive and in its wake comes a preoccupation with man and his moral improvement. The five volumes of Modern Painters, spanning as they do some seventeen years, give a kind of history of the loss, but it is revealed as well in other contemporary materials. Typically in Modern Painters I, Ruskin saw "truth" in Turner's depiction of God's glories, the earth, water, sky, and vegetation of his landscapes; in Modern Painters V, he saw in the Liber Studiorum Turner's preoccupation with man and praises him for "his sympathy with sorrow, deepened by a continual

sense of the power of death."[82]

Thus, like Wordsworth, Ruskin lost "the glory and freshness of the dream" ("Ode: Intimations of Immortality," 1. 5). Wordsworth was able to return to nature, however, and effect a compromise so that his concept of nature and his religious beliefs meshed in maturity to give him some measure of that much sought after repose and the accompanying sustaining faith. Ruskin never quite achieves the compromise; therefore, one finds in many of his writings an admixture of the two attitudes toward nature--its beauty and its loss, the latter predominating in his later years until, between intervals of mental darkness, and prompted by pleasant memories and accurate notes, he reveals the loveliness of nature once more in Praeterita.

Ruskin once wrote that Wordsworth's love of nature would have been quite worthless had it not been for his understanding of the ways of men.[83] It was an understanding that Ruskin sought to share. As poet and prophet and possessors of a shared sensibility, Wordsworth and Ruskin were connected each to each, in a mighty scheme of truth penetrating "the open secret," and moving in ever-concentric circles to contexts in which each heard increasingly "the still sad music of humanity" ("Tintern Abbey," 1. 91).

CHAPTER III

THE IMAGINATION

> The imagination is that intellectual lens through the medium of which the poetical observer sees the objects of his observation.
> Wordsworth, Memoirs

The problem posed by close observation of nature as a starting point and an artistic rendering of what was observed as the end product resulted in a theory of the imagination--an attempt to bridge the gap between fact and art, between experience and expression. It was a problem that intrigued the early romantic writers, Wordsworth foremost among them, and one which the "last romantics" fell heir to. As the great Victorian spokesman of the Wordsworthian sensibility, Ruskin was heir apparent. He made important use of Wordsworth's prefaces as he formulated a theocentric theory of aesthetics that treats the concerns that Wordsworth emphasized, the importance of natural phenomena, the nature of the "poetical observer" and the roles of the imagination and emotion in the creative process.

In formulating his theory, one of Ruskin's main concerns was the same as that of Wordsworth, a description of the medium through which the poetical observer "sees," that intellectual lens, the imagination.[1] Ruskin's descrip-

tion has important affinities to Wordsworth's theory of the imagination. He follows Wordsworth closely in emphasizing the poet-artist's unique imaginative power which links him to all men, so that, in effect, he becomes a teacher and a moral leader; he stresses likewise the process of nurturing the imaginative sensibility; and finally, in his threefold characterization of the imaginative power itself, one finds significant Wordsworthian parallels. As each writer presents his views, one is conscious of an immediacy which urges a sense of community in the awareness of the imaginative potential in all men, and which seeks to belie Wordsworth's lament that ". . . Alas! Ages must pass away before men will have their eyes open to the beauty and majesty of truth."[2]

I

Wordsworth's conception of the imagination, like Ruskin's, was grounded in nature. It recognizes a vital reciprocity between nature and the mind of man, as well as an archetypal pattern for the imaginative function in nature. His ideas are based on his own experiences and closeness to nature, particularly as recorded in The Prelude and The Excursion, and they reveal an awareness of the imaginative potential of youth as well as the adult. It is noteworthy that such potential is not limited to poets and artists. It is, in fact, common to all and utilized in everyday experiences since it has a part in all perception.

Wordsworth spoke of those thoughts and feelings which are "grounded upon the universal intellectual property of man, --sensations which all men have felt and feel in some degree daily and hourly."[3] In what is probably his best known portrayal, he records in The Prelude the growth of imagination in the child thus:

> . . . Blest the infant Babe,
> . . . . . .
> Along his infant veins are interfused
> The gravitation and the filial bond
> Of nature that connect him with the world.
> . . . . . .
> Emphatically such a being lives
> Frail creature as he is, helpless as frail,
> An inmate of this active universe:
> For feeling has to him impartial power
> That through the growing faculties of sense
> Doth like an agent of the one great mind
> Create, creator and receiver both
> Working but in alliance with the works
> Which it beholds.--Such, verily, is the first
> Poetic spirit of our human life,
> By uniform control of after years,
> In most, abated or suppressed; in some
> Through every change of growth and of decay,
> Pre-eminent till death.
> (The Prelude, II, 11. 232, 242-244, 252-265)

He goes on to trace "the visionary power," the plastic quality that grew within him until often he experienced such a holy calm that "bodily eyes were utterly forgotten," and what he saw appeared like something in himself, a dream, "a prospect of the mind." But this perceptive potential in the child is not merely an abstract faculty, it is developed by his being "an inmate of the active universe" (11. 311, 348-352). Wordsworth stresses the fact that the imagination can only grow through the minis-

tration of love and a close bond to nature. Here begins for him what Heffernan calls a lifelong affair between the world and the poet-to-be, where nature becomes mentor, guide, and stimulus.[4] Throughout The Prelude, he continues to trace the growth and development of the imaginative faculty as he records his experiences, until, in Book XIV, he says that

> . . . Imagination . . . in truth,
> Is but another name for absolute power
> And clearest insight, amplitude of mind,
> And Reason in her most exalted mood.
> (The Prelude, XIV, 11. 189-192)

It is, he continues, the faculty which he had traced from its "natal murmur" through its course "among the ways of nature" to that place of eminence where it reflects the works of man and human life, and provides as well "faith in life endless" and the sustaining thought" of human Being, Eternity, and God" (11. 193-205). It is singularly significant that when Wordsworth published an extract from The Prelude in 1809, he entitled it "Influence of Natural Objects in Calling Forth and Strengthening the Imagination in Boyhood and Early Youth."[5]

Likewise, in The Excursion, Wordsworth traces the growth of imaginative sensibility in the Wanderer, since he is a born poet, one "sown by nature" and possessing the natural gift of vision, but without "the accomplishment of verse." In fact, Wordsworth says,

> . . . many are the Poets that are sown
> By Nature; men endowed with highest gifts,
> The Vision and the faculty divine;

> Yet wanting the accomplishment of verse.
> (The Excursion, I, 77-80)

He describes here, as he does in The Prelude, a young mind fashioned by a close relationship to nature, an essentially reciprocal process which has been described as "a dynamic correspondence of forces."[6] The young Wanderer, too, was one with nature, so much so that

> . . . the foundations of his mind were laid
> In such communion, not from terror free,
> While yet a child, and long before his time,
> Had he perceived the presence and the power
> Of greatness; and deep feelings had impressed
> So vividly great objects that they lay
> Upon his mind like substances, whose presence
> Perplexed the bodily sense. He had received
> A precious gift; for, as he grew in years,
> With these impressions would he still compare
> All his remembrances, thoughts, shapes, and forms;
> And, being still unsatisfied with aught
> Of dimmer character, he thence attained
> An active power to fasten images
> Upon his brain; and on their pictured lines
> Intensely brooded, even till they acquired
> The liveliness of dreams.
> (The Excursion, I, 11. 132-148)

Thus nature nourished his imagination and gave his mind "that apprehensive power by which she is made quick to recognize the moral properties and scope of things," and often in the process

> . . . 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.
> (The Excursion, I, 11. 166-169, 207-210)

The thrust of Wordsworth's ideas in both works is the development of an active and creative energy in the mind, a development predicated on the interaction of the mind with nature. As was seen in Chapter II, Wordsworth's

view of nature recognized a universe of forms and energies whose vitality man shares. Therefore, in effect, as Alec King points out, the poet-artist exists within the very processes of creation, among the models for creative transformations, as if he were a part of his produced work, and he is taught to "see" by the natural stimuli that surround him, and so continually to renew what his awakened sight can see.[7] For Wordsworth, and for Ruskin later, the imagination was an illuminating power that grew from an intimate association with nature. The substance and power of the poet-artist intuition was nature, as a nurturing agent and as a basis for composition. It remained for Wordsworth to describe this power as a facilitating force in the aesthetic and moral concerns of man.

In the "Preface to the Second Edition of Lyrical Ballads," Wordsworth describes the poetic process by noting the transforming power of the mind. He says that poetry has its origin in emotion recollected in tranquillity. Thus the "poetical observer" possessing the creative sensibility described above, by contemplation, gradually produces an emotion kindred to that which was the original reaction to natural stimuli.[8] In so doing, such a person acknowledges the beauty of the universe and evidences a spirit of love as well as pleasure, a connection which both Wordsworth and Ruskin emphasized. The process by which the "poetical observer" modifies the contemplated objects of his observation Wordsworth treats more fully

in the "Preface to the Poems of 1815." Here one finds his most reasoned statement on the imagination, the substance of which corresponds to the insights revealed elsewhere in his writings. In this discussion, Wordsworth lists the five powers requisite for the production of poetry. They are observation and description, sensibility, reflection, imagination and fancy, and judgment. He notes that none of these requires any particular notice except imagination and fancy, and proceeds to delineate these terms with particular reference to the grouping of his own poems in the volume.

Using as a point of departure Taylor's British Synonyms Discriminated, he shows that Taylor was not conversant with the creative nature of the imagination since he makes it little more than a mode of memory and makes no clear cut distinction between fancy and the imagination.[9] In an attempt to correct Taylor's oversight, Wordsworth then illustrates several properties which distinguish the two terms. Imagination, he says,

> . . . has no reference to images that are merely a faithful copy, existing in the mind, of absent external objects; but is a word of higher import, denoting operations of the mind upon those objects, and processes of creation or of composition, governed by fixed laws.[10]

These "operations of the mind," according to Wordsworth, involve several attributes which are really divisions of imaginative powers. The imagination has first a conferring power, or a power by which properties are added to an

image after it has been evoked. Among his examples to illustrate this power is Shakespeare's use of the imagination to suggest that a samphire-gatherer "hangs" on the cliffs of Dover. "The mind in its activity," says Wordsworth, "for its own gratification, contemplates [him] as hanging."[11] Another power that the imagination has is that of abstracting qualities from an object. In Wordsworthian terminology this seems to mean subtracting, or eliminating qualities. The example given here is that of the mind's seeming to dispossess the cuckoo of corporeal existence in the "concise interrogation: 'Shall I call thee Bird/ Or but a wandering voice?'" The imagination in this case is "tempted to this exertion by a consciousness in the memory that the cuckoo is almost perpetually heard . . . but seldom becomes an object of sight."[12] Both the conferring and abstracting powers of the imagination enable objects "to react upon the mind . . . like a new existence," since in effect they both are creative functions. And in each case, Wordsworth says, the objects are "endowed by the mind with properties that do not inhere in them, upon an incitement from properties and qualities the existence of which is inherent and obvious."[13]

Another aspect of the imaginative power involves its modifying quality and its propensity for unity. Reference has already been made to Wordsworth's idea of unity when he noted that in nature nothing is defined into absolute independent singleness; everything exists in one

mighty whole. His concept of the imagination embraces the idea of unity also since when the mind makes comparisons a fusion results. He puts it thus: "When the imagination frames a comparison . . . the images invariably modify each other."[14] This fusion and its reverse--dissolving numbers into unity and separating unity into numbers--can be seen in the following passage from Paradise Lost which Wordsworth cites in this connection and as an illustration of the conferring power:

> As when far off at sea a fleet descried
> Hangs in the clouds, by equinoctial winds
> Close sailing from Bengala, or the isles
> Of Ternate or Tidore, whence merchants bring
> Their spicy drugs; they on the trading flood
> Through the wide Ethiopian to the Cape
> Ply stemming nightly toward the Pole: so seemed
> Far off the flying Fiend.
> (Paradise Lost, Book II, ll. 636-643)

Wordsworth shows that Milton represents the fleet of ships as "one mighty person," then speaks of them again in the plural, thus changing the one back to many, and finally "recombines the multitude of ships" once more into one body.[15] R. D. Havens in The Mind of a Poet has re-emphasized that the purpose of the imagination in thus interpenetrating the conception of each thing with that of other things is unity. Such interpenetration, like the other transforming functions of the imagination, is but a means to the one end. When Wordsworth says that the imagination brings order out of confusion, gives meaning or significance or beauty to events or objects or thoughts, he means that it arranges sense data, emotions, and ideas into a pattern,

that is, into a satisfying unity.[16]

Moving to a discussion of fancy, Wordsworth shows that fancy is less demanding than the powers of the imagination.

> Fancy depends upon the rapidity and profusion with which she scatters her thoughts and images; trusting that their number, and the felicity with which they are linked together, will make amends for the want of individual value.[17]

For him it is a capricious quality and its effects depend upon how objects are "appositely produced or fortunately combined."[18] He concludes that fancy is given to quicken and beguile the temporal part of man's nature, while the imagination incites and supports the eternal. Wordsworth's illustration of the difference between the powers pits Milton's classic statement of nature's appearance of sympathizing after Adam's transgression against a similar "conceit" from Lord Chesterfield.

> Sky lowered, and, muttering thunder, some sad drops
> Wept at completing of the mortal sin.

And

> The dews of the evening most carefully shun
> They are the tears of the sky for the loss of the sun.[19]

In both cases the "associating link" is the same, but the imaginative power of the Miltonic lines bespeaks an act so momentous that the mind acknowledges the "justice and reasonableness of the sympathy in nature so manifested." For Wordsworth, both the imagination and fancy can, in Coleridgean terms, "aggregate and associate, evoke and

combine," but either the materials evoked and combined are different, or they are brought together "under a different law and for a different purpose."[20]

The examples used by Wordsworth to point up the distinguishing characteristics of imagination and fancy lend credence to his emphasis on emotion in the "Preface to the Second Edition of Lyrical Ballads," where he says of his own poetry "that the feeling therein developed gives importance to the action and situation and not the action and situation to the feeling."[21] There is, of course, additional evidence to support Wordsworth's claim of the importance of emotion or feeling in the imaginative process. In a letter to John Wilson in 1802, he writes that

> . . . a great Poet ought to do more than reflect human feelings faithfully . . . he ought to a certain degree rectify mens' feelings, to give them new composition of feeling to render their feelings more sane, pure and permanent, in short, more consonant to nature, that is, to eternal nature, and the great moving spirit of things. He ought to travel before men occasionally as well as at their sides.[22]

Although this is a private statement, it is noteworthy because it parallels almost exactly a similar one by Ruskin. It will be remembered that Ruskin said in Modern Painters I that the artist should give "new tones to what we see," that he should ". . . let us see more than we could ourselves, and bring nature up to us and near to us."[23] This exercise of imaginative power linked with feeling is the burden, too, of the "Preface to the Poems of 1815."

Wordsworth says, for instance, that the feelings of the poet prompt him to react to natural stimuli "in the spirit of genuine imagination." "Internal feelings," he continues, "co-operating with external accidents plant . . . images of sound and sight, in the celestial soil of the Imagination."[24]

Wordsworth's view of the creative aspect of the imagination helps establish the role of feeling. I have noted the close bond of feeling between youth and nature that in its reciprocity aids in shaping the potential for imaginative sensibility. In this connection, Wordsworth says in the "Preface to the Poems of 1815" that the poet "considers man and the objects that surround him as acting and re-acting upon each other, so as to produce an infinite complexity of pain and pleasure."[25] Feeling, or emotion, is thus the link between the creative person and the external world and is also an active agent in the imaginative process that helps shape or transform those objects of the visible world. Wordsworth effectively demonstrates this principle throughout his poetry, but nowhere, perhaps, is it more apparent than in his comments concerning the composition of "The Thorn." He said of this poem that it

> . . . 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 permanently an impressive object as the storm has made it to my eyes at this moment?"[26]

The statement was written after the poem was composed, but it serves to demonstrate, nevertheless, the feeling attached to an object and the translation of its effect into something more permanent.

One must keep in mind, however, that for Wordsworth, and for Ruskin, the importance of emotion did not give license to unrestrained feelings. The intercourse with nature and habits of meditation served to refine or to educate the passions to a "widening sphere of human sensibility."[27] In this connection, too, Wordsworth said that he valued his poems for the powers of mind called forth, and for the energies which they presuppose and excite as well as for their moral implications.[28] While calling attention to the natural restraints in "the poetical observer," this statement also reiterates what Wordsworth expected of his audience. In the "Essay Supplementary to the Preface of 1815," he says that in order for poetic feeling to be effectively communicated, there must also be "the exertion of a cooperating power in the mind of the reader."[29] "The Poet," he says, "must express himself as other men express themselves." In short, to use his more famous statement, "he is a man speaking to men":

> . . . a man, it is true, endowed with more lively sensibility, more enthusiasm and tenderness, who has a greater knowledge of human nature, and a more comprehensive soul, than are supposed to be common among mankind; a man pleased with his own passions and volitions, and who rejoices more than other men in the spirit of life that is in him; delighting to

> contemplate similar volitions as manifested in the goings-on of the Universe, and habitually impelled to create them where he does not find them.[30]

Note has already been made of Wordsworth's emphasis on the role of emotion in the creative process by his definition of poetry as having its origin in emotion recollected in tranquillity. But the process is by a mind that has thought long and deeply because the influxes of feeling to the poet-artist are the representatives of all our past feelings. Indeed, as the preceding quoted passage reveals, the poet-artist is chiefly distinguished from other men by a greater capacity to think and to feel and by a greater power to express his thoughts and feelings. Wordsworth notes further that the "poetical observer" writes under another restriction, that is, "the necessity of giving immediate pleasure to a human being possessed of that information which may be expected from him . . . as a man."[31]

In this sense, the creative person linked so inextricably to all men becomes a kind of leader or a moral guide since he is endowed with a greater sensibility and has a greater knowledge of human nature. His role becomes that of poet, teacher, visionary, and prophet all rolled into one. Wordsworth said that he sought "to teach the young and gracious of every age, to see, to think and feel, and therefore to become more actively and securely virtuous."[32] In a related comment in the "Preface to the

Second Edition of Lyrical Ballads," he notes that his poetry is important for "the multiplicity of its moral relations."[33] The more one reads his poetry the more obvious this multiplicity of moral relations becomes, and for the modern reader such relations underscore his visionary and prophetic tendencies since they are closely interwoven, and since Wordsworth, in effect, is championing a new kind of poetry. In the passage from The Recluse used in The Excursion, for example, in seeking to find "a fit audience, though few" he asks for guidance from "a greater Muse," since he must tread on shadowy ground as he looks

> . . . into the mind of man--
> My haunt, and the main region of my song
> --Beauty--a living Presence of the earth,
> . . . . . waits upon my steps;
> Pitches her tents before me as I move,
> An hourly neighbor . . . and, by words
> Which speak of nothing more than what we are,
> Would I arouse the sensual from their sleep
> Of Death, and win the vacant and the vain
> To noble raptures; while my voice proclaims
> How exquisitely the individual Mind
> (And the progressive powers perhaps no less
> Of the whole species) to the external World
> Is fitted.
> (The Recluse, ll. 776, 781, 793-819)

There is a related idea in Book I of The Excursion where Wordsworth describes the rapture of the Wanderer when sensation, soul, and form all met so that they "melted into him" and swallowed up his animal being. "In such access of mind, in such high hour/ Of visitation of the living God/ Thought was not" (ll. 211-213). In this connection, too, he notes his preference for "the prophetic and lyrical parts of the Holy Scriptures," and the works

of Milton and of Spenser over those of classical writers because the classical writers were subjected too much to the bondage of definite form.[34]

His inclination toward the visionary approach to creativity is given impetus when he speaks of the imagination as vision and as revelation. In Book I of The Excursion, for example, he calls the imagination "the vision and the faculty divine" (1. 79). In "The White Doe of Rylstone," he says that his "mortal song" has been "encouraged" by "celestial power" (VII, 11. 282-283). And in "The Preface to the Poems of 1815" he speaks of the "celestial soil of the imagination."[35] Adding to the substance of all of these ideas is his own prophetic posture established generally in the prefaces, and pinpointed in "The Preface to the Poems of 1815" by his rhetorical questioning of the duty of a "truly original poet." Does the real difficulty, he asks, lie in "breaking the bonds of custom" and in "establishing that dominion over the spirits of readers by which they are to be humbled and humanised, in order that they may be purified and exalted?"[36] It is clear that this is the task he has set for himself.

He felt that the creative person must establish that kind of dominion that will admit the truth of his awareness to others, since all share the imaginative potential. Through his unique office, he can lead others to nature to be purified by its influence and, in turn, exalted and humanized. The idea of individual character

thus cleansed forms the very basis of Wordsworth's moral and social philosophy, both of which I discuss in the next chapter. Characteristically, Ruskin follows Wordsworth in this emphasis. His message may have manic overtones, but it is clear nonetheless; he, too, seeks a kind of dominion over his readers in order to lead them to a better life through the basic purifying ideal of nature. Commenting on this problem of purification, Wordsworth wrote:

> Theologians tell us of the degraded nature of man; and they tell us what is true. Yet man is essentially a moral agent; and there is that immortal and unextinguishable yearning for something pure and spiritual.[37]

He saw the imaginative potential in all men as an important part of this upward movement since its very presence is in a sense moral as it precludes baser thoughts. After reading his kind of poetry, he says, "the reader must necessarily be in some degree enlightened, and his affections strengthened and purified."[38] This is an idea that Ruskin reveals also when he writes years later in Fors Clavigera that true imaginative power always purifies.[39] Both Wordsworth and Ruskin felt that the poet-artist could aid in leading others to this kind of purification by preaching simplicity and the common bonds of humanity, as well as the potential power of nature. One can find many passages throughout Wordsworth's poetry which point up his prophetic and visionary tendencies as well as the interdependent roles of the poet-artist. One naturally expects to find such passages in The Prelude and The Excursion since both works

treat aspects of that shared province, the growth of a "poetical observer's" mind.

The entire thrust of Wordsworth's discussion of the imagination may be seen in the following passage from Book IV of The Excursion. Here, demonstrating that "faultless majesty" which Ruskin admired, The Wanderer effects a synthesis of those faculties that interrelate to form the creative sensibility, a synthesis which precludes despondency. Wordsworth calls it a "union of the imagination, affections, understanding and reason" (The Excursion, IV, "Argument"). The requisite sensibility is formed, the Wanderer says, when "living things, and things inanimate/ Do speak, at Heaven's command to eye and ear"; the man who "communes with the forms of nature" with an "understanding heart" learns to know and love such objects as "excite no morbid passions" nor disquietude and, therefore, such a person "needs must feel the joy of that principle of love" which prompts him to seek for a kindred love

> In fellow-natures and a kindred joy.
> . . . . . .
> A holy tenderness pervades his frame
> His sanity of reason not impaired,
> Say rather, all his thoughts now flowing clear,
> From a clear fountain flowing, he looks round
> And seeks for good; and finds the good he seeks.
> . . . . . .
> And further; by contemplating the Forms [of nature]
> In the relations which they bear to man,
> He shall discern, how, through the various means
> Which silently they yield, are multiplied
> The spiritual presences of absent things.
> Trust me, that for the instructed, time will come
> When they shall meet no object but may teach
> Some acceptable lesson to their minds
> Of human suffering, or of human joy.
> (The Excursion, IV, 1204-1213, 1217, 1220-1224, 1230-1238)

For "the instructed," there is the promise of that desirable state of oneness with nature which can only be brought about by the creative fusion of the faculties enumerated. The Wanderer's fusion is the kind of interaction that Wordsworth stresses in his discussion of the imaginative power. His visionary approach to creativity does not give unlicensed liberty to the poet-artist; it does not open the way for "a world of delusion." Poetry does have its origin in emotion recollected in tranquillity and the imagination does work on the objects of observation through the emotional response in the viewer, but Wordsworth's creative person is one, he says, whose "thoughts have been disciplined by understanding" and whose feelings do not "revolt from the sway of reason."[40] In light of these and similar comments elsewhere, Ruskin's deprecation of his emphasis on feeling seems excessive since Wordsworth, like Ruskin, sought a "triumvirate of vital interaction,"[41] an interaction which would ideally result in a state of creative equilibrium between "truth" and feeling fused by the imagination.

II

It is clear that Ruskin was influenced by Wordsworth's discussion of the imagination since he refers to the "Preface to the Poems of 1815" several times in his own discussion. The pointed reference merely serves to heighten the Wordsworth-Ruskin relationship, however, since the dis-

cerning reader is aware of the marked parallels in Ruskin's discussion which suggest a close reading of Wordsworth's prefaces and poems. There is some similarity in tone and content as Ruskin treats those aspects that Wordsworth treated--the importance of natural phenomena, the nature of the poet-artist, and the imaginative process. One finds Ruskin's most reasoned statement of his theory of the imagination in Volume II of Modern Painters, though, of course, there are scattered comments elsewhere.

Ruskin follows Wordsworth in emphasizing that the pleasures of sight and hearing, those two essential components of the poet-artist sensibility, are gifts to man from a benevolent Creator. From these, in turn, arise joy, admiration, and gratitude, the Wordsworthian qualities which Ruskin uses as a basis for the "exulting, reverent, and grateful" perception which he calls theoria. It is man's instinctive contemplation of the natural world in a spirit of joy in life and gratitude to the Creator. Ruskin divides the faculties of the mind concerned in the contemplation of nature into two branches, one passive, the other active. One receives delight from external things, the other modifies external things so as to increase this delight. The passive power he calls "Theoria," the active, "Imagination."[42] Continuing in the Wordsworthian manner, he says

> . . . there was never yet the child of any promise (so far as the theoretic faculties are concerned) but awaked to

> the sense of beauty with the first gleam of reason; and I suppose there are few among those who love Nature otherwise than by profession and at second-hand, who look not back to their youngest and least-learned days as those of the most intense, superstitious, insatiable, and beatific perception of her splendors.[43]

In this passage, as elsewhere, Ruskin follows Wordsworth in describing his own youthful experiences. His comments here are echoed later in autobiographical pieces and call to mind related experiences during his "forming time." Calling Wordsworth "one whose authority is almost without appeal in all questions relating to the influence of external things upon the pure human soul,"[44] he continues his emphasis of the development of the poet-artist sensibility from early youth:

> If it were possible for us to recollect all the unaccountable and happy instincts of the careless time, and to reason upon them with . . . maturer judgement, we might arrive at more rapid and right results than either the philosophy or the sophisticated practice of art has yet attained.[45]

Using the "Ode: Intimations on Immortality" as a guide, he even suggests a theory of recollection in the child who possesses "the most vivid sensibilities for nature" which results in a predilection for those aspects of nature which suggest infinity--"all open ground, or lines of any kind against the sky, behind which there might be conceived the sea." This feeling for infinity is modified in after years, he says, and is common to all in the love of a light distance appearing over a comparatively dark horizon.[46]

He emphasizes throughout his discussion that the imagination, like the theoretic faculty, "must be fed constantly by external nature."

> . . . many painters of powerful mind have been lost to the world by their suffering the restless writhing of their imagination in its cage to take place of its healthy and exulting activity in the fields of nature . . . Imagination is a pilgrim on the earth--and her home is heaven, shut her from the fields of the celestial mountains--bar her from breathing their lofty, sun-warmed air; and we may as well turn upon her the last bolt of the Tower of Famine, and give the keys to the keeping of the wildest surge that washes Capraja and Gorgona.[47]

The nurturing of the intuitive awareness of the beauty of nature was as important to Ruskin's aesthetic as it was to Wordsworth's theory of poetry. He notes that by care and attention it is possible for all men to form an awareness of "truth." It requires "nothing which every man of ordinary intellect does not in some degree possess,--powers, namely, of observation and intelligence, which by cultivation may be brought to a high degree of perfection and acuteness." He continues:

> I believe this kind of sensibility may be resolved into the acuteness of bodily sense . . . associated with love, love I mean in its infinity and holy functions, as it embraces divine and human and brutal intelligences, and hallows the physical perception of external objects by association, gratitude, veneration, and other pure feelings of our moral nature.[48]

The degree to which the sensibility to external nature is developed, he says, depends partly upon the number and character of the subjects with which the mind works, and partly upon the natural depth of sensibility to the power of beauty of form and the other attributes of external objects. Those in whom the sensations of beauty are naturally acute and vivid hear the call of external nature so strongly that it must be obeyed. In those whose sensations are naturally blunt, he continues, the call is overpowered at once by other thoughts and their faculties of perception, weak originally, die of disuse.[49] In Wordsworthian terms, shades of the prison house begin to close in on such a sensibility. But for the poet-artist whose sensations are naturally acute and who has renewed them constantly by observation, there is recompense for the loss of the intense feeling of youth. It is, says Ruskin, "the gladness of conscience, and the vigour of the reflecting and imaginative faculties, as they take their wide and aged grasp of the great relations between the earth and its dead people."[50]

The moral implications of this recompense point up the fact that the poet-artist for Ruskin is also a man among men speaking to men. Indeed, as Landow so rightly observes in The Aesthetic and Critical Theories of John Ruskin, "Ruskin adopts much of the Wordsworthian description of the poet."[51] Like his Wordsworthian prototype, Ruskin's creative person seeks to make his audience "a sharer in

his own strong feelings and quick thoughts."[52] He is also "chiefly distinguished from other men by a greater promptness to think and feel without immediate external excitement, and a greater power in expressing such thoughts and feelings as are produced in him in that manner."[53] His creativity, too, is such that he "thinks and feels in the spirit of human passions."[54] He sees what others see, but his work is to gather and arrange the material by imagination "so as to have in it at last the harmony of helpfulness of life, and the passion or emotion of life."[55] Moreover, Ruskin says, the artist "talks" to the spectator and guides him to all that is beautiful so that he is

> . . . enobled and instructed, under the sense of having not only beheld a new scene, but of having held communion with a new mind, and having been endowed for a time with the keen perception and the impetuous emotions of a nobler and a more penetrating intelligence.[56]

The imaginative artist, he continues, is "greater a million times in every faculty of soul than we," so that we may wisely say to him

> Come between this nature and me--this nature which is too great and too wonderful for me; temper it for me, interpret it for me; let me see with your eyes, and hear with your ears, and have help and strength from your great spirit.[57]

Ruskin's creative person is likewise part prophet as well as poet-artist. This connection, of course, was common to the romantic sensibility. The one great cohesive force in romantic writers other than nature was a faith in

the imagination, or really in that moment of true vision that precedes the creative process. The poet-artist is thus one who is capable of a visionary experience, of really seeing into the life of things, and then is capable of rendering this "truth." The truth that both Wordsworth and Ruskin herald is a creativity which will usher in a new day in poetry and in art, so the prophetic function is really twofold, that of visionary experience and the establishment of a new mode of expression and the reception for that expression. In a preface to the second edition of Modern Painters I in 1844, Ruskin explains that in describing nature and showing its beauty he would

> . . . endeavor to trace the operation of all this on the hearts and minds of men; to exhibit the moral function and end of art; to prove the share which it ought to have in the thoughts, and influence on the lives, of all of us; to attach to the artist the responsibility of a preacher, and to kindle in the general mind that regard which such an office must demand.[58]

In unmistakably Wordsworthian language, Ruskin explains later that art is "to be taken straight from nature: it is to be plain narration of something the painter or writer saw"[59] through the intellectual lens of the imagination. He continues thus:

> All the great men see what they paint before they paint it . . . cannot help seeing it . . . very often the mental vision is, I believe, in men of imagination, clearer than the bodily one; but vision it is, of one kind or another,-- the whole scene, character, or incident passing before them as in a second sight, whether they will or no, and requiring

> them to paint it as they see it; they not daring, under the might of its presence, to alter one jot or tittle of it as they write it down or paint it down; it being to them in its own kind and degree always a true vision or Apocalypse, and invariably accompanied in their hearts by a feeling correspondent to the words,--"Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are."[60]

It will be remembered that Wordsworth speaks of the poet and prophet as being connected in a mighty scheme of truth, and that he emphasizes the poet-prophet relationship generally. In this vein, he speaks of his poems as "a new power in the literary world."[61] And later as he touted his theory of poetic simplicity, he asks, "Can it be wondered at that there is little preparation for a poet charged with a new mission to extend its kingdom, and to augment and spread its enjoyment?"[62] Ruskin apparently agreed with him. It was Ruskin's belief that there was little preparation for the genius of Turner who was "charged with a new mission," so he set out to correct the oversight. In the controversial passage which follows, he sees Turner as a prophet of God sent to reveal the mysteries of the universe.

> Turner--glorious in conception--unfathomable in knowledge--solitary in power--with the elements waiting upon his will, and the night and the morning obedient to his call, [is] sent as a prophet of God to reveal to men the mysteries of His universe, standing like the great angel of the Apocalypse, clothed with a cloud, and with a rainbow upon his head, and with the sun and stars given unto his hand.[63]

This is, perhaps, Ruskin's most obvious, and certainly his most overstated, comment on the link between the creative person and the prophet. Critics attacked this passage as blasphemous causing Ruskin to change it and later to drop it completely from an edition. He continued to identify Turner as a prophet, however, and to value the stated relationship of the poet-artist as prophet. The consistency with which both Wordsworth and Ruskin emphasize the relationship makes it an important link between them, since both were themselves prophets of a new moral order as well as champions of a new direction in poetry and art.

As he considers that "intellectual lens" through which the "poetical observer" views nature, Ruskin again follows his mentor. He, too, sets for himself the task of clearing the air of popular misconceptions and erroneous uses of the term "imagination," and, like Wordsworth, he uses a predecessor's "meagre" definition as a point of departure. Wordsworth had cited William Taylor; Ruskin cites Dugald Stewart, who he says misses the very point and purpose of all inquiry in his meagre definition of imagination and fancy. Using much the same argument as Wordsworth, Ruskin, too, finds fault with the writer's argument distinguishing the two terms, noting that as Stewart defines it, fancy is little more than a rapid occurrence of ideas to the mind.[64] Wordsworth had said that Taylor's description of fancy apparently involved little more than "quick and vivid recollection" of images

and was a mere mode of memory.[65] Interestingly enough, Ruskin reversed himself in an introductory note to a re-arranged edition of Volume II of Modern Painters in 1883. Here he says that the reader need not trouble himself "with the distinctions, attempted or alluded to, between Fancy and Imagination."[66] The distinction in terminology holds at the time of the original composition, however, since it was one that generally preoccupied the romantic theorists, and since the Wordsworthian influence was more apparent here than in later years. By 1883, Ruskin had lost interest in the terminology, but the distinction itself is still important since his habitual yardstick had become the quality of the artist and the emotion in the creative process. One expects Ruskin's discussion to have Wordsworthian parallels since he had studied Wordsworth to great advantage during the preceding years.

Ruskin follows Wordsworth again in noting that fancy suggests a faculty that has some properties of the imagination but is intended to be "merely decorative and entertaining" while its counterpart is the source of all that is great in poetic art.[67] Thus real imagination for Ruskin differs from fancy in complexity and in the quality of effect and emotional depth. He defines imagination as

> . . . the power of seeing anything we describe as if it were real; so that, looking at it as we describe (or paint), points may strike us which will give a vividness to the description that would

> not have occurred to vague memory, or been easily borrowed from the expressions of other writers.[68]

It must be noted that Ruskin supplies this definition in a note in 1883, as he points up his own deficiency in not making his definition clear, other than by implication, in the original work. But he assures the reader that this was always his definition.

A major problem arises here, of course, in Ruskin's "progressions of discovery"[69] over the years. He moved from what appeared to be the mere suggestion of art as serving a photographic function to a heightened sense of the imaginative power. His knowledge of art and his interests broadened so that even Turner is lost sight of often. True to his romantic heritage, however, he is ever concerned with the role of the poet-artist and his imaginative function in presenting the facts of nature. In Volume IV of Modern Painters, for example, he characterizes ideal art by the power of the imagination in its conception, the art being good or bad in proportion to the healthy condition of the creative mind; he characterizes unideal art as that which represents things as they are, and are good or bad in proportion to the perfection of the representation.[70] This kind of division suggests something of his usual emphasis, that for the great artist the actual facts of observation lead to imaginative creation. Thus, in effect, the great artist has Wordsworth's transforming power. On the other hand, those with weak, poorly nurtured

imaginative power never really get past the facts of observation except in plodding detail. Ruskin seems to be addressing himself to this last group most frequently, largely because of his sense of prophetic mission and because of his actual status as a teacher. His great message to the would-be artist is Wordsworth's dictum "Let nature be your teacher" ("The Tables Turned," l. 16).

In light of Ruskin's "progressions of discovery," then, it is difficult to properly assess his later notes, and the difficulty is compounded by the time span as well as his "oscillations of temper."[71] The phrase "as if it were real" in Ruskin's definition gives pause to the modern reader because of these problems. His definition is broad enough to encompass all of his ideas, if it includes the creative aspects of the imagination, as I think it does. He never seems to mean a simple recording of the facts of nature other than as a starting point of awareness by students and those with weak imaginative powers. As emphasized throughout this study, his idea is that such knowledge is necessary before the poet-artist can create from that momentary flash of intuition and sense impression. The power of greatness in art for him is closely allied to Wordsworth's phrase "treat things . . . as they seem to exist to the senses, and to the passions."[72] But, as has been seen, this creates problems for Ruskin since it can lead to unleashed emotions. The truth of Wordsworth's statement was important to Ruskin, but it presupposed a

purified and noble creative person. Similarly, he said that art represents things

> . . . truly as they appear to mankind; and it requires of everything . . . only this,--what that thing is to the human eyes and human heart, what it has to say to men, and what it can become to them.[73]

He says later that nothing must come between nature and the artist's sight; nothing must come between God and the artist's soul. The work of the artist, he says, is to be twofold only--to see and to feel.[74] With this kind of emphasis, the phrase "as if it were real" must include creative workings of the imagination, since this was his usual emphasis.

As he continues his discussion, Ruskin points out the errors of the mere "metaphysicians" in describing the imagination. These errors, he says, were closely allied to sense impressions so that the function of the imagination was thought to be one of falsehood, that is, that "its operation is to exhibit things as they are not, and that in so doing it mends the work of God."[75] He differentiates the imaginative faculty from the theoretic faculty, explaining that the latter is concerned with moral perception and appreciation of ideas of beauty. The imagination, on the other hand, is that faculty which the mind exercises in a certain mode of regarding or combining the ideas it has received from nature, and the operations of which become in their turn objects of the theoretic faculty.[76] The

false theorists, he said, argued from the standpoint of environment and psychology, but his main contention is that the appreciation of beauty is instinctive. Imagination was for him an intuitive gift of divine origin, and in its purest form "the highest intellectual power of man."[77]

In the Wordsworthian manner, he also makes a division of "powers" of the imagination: imagination associative, imagination penetrative, and imagination contemplative.[78] His division describes the imagination as acting somewhat in the following manner: there is a penetrative thrust of the mind which pinpoints the characteristic qualities of an object; then the mind abstracts those qualities that are not essential and combines the essential qualities into pleasing wholes and treats or regards these wholes. Because the process involves the highest faculty of man, Ruskin says that it allows the artist to "get to the spring of things and work out from that."[79]

> There is no reasoning in [the imagination], it works not by algebra, nor by integral calculus, it is a piercing, Pholas-like mind's tongue that works and tastes into every rock heart, no matter what be the subject submitted to it, substance or spirit, all is alike, divided asunder, joint and marrow, whatever utmost truth, life, principle it has, laid bare, and that which has no truth, life, nor principle, dissipated into its original smoke at a touch.[80]

This intuitive thrust of the mind is allowed only to those who <u>see</u>. The unimaginative mind sees nothing of the object it has to dwell upon or describe, and is, therefore, unable

to set anything before the eyes of a viewer. Ruskin uses "seeing" as a further refinement of his distinction between imagination and fancy. The fancy sees the outside, and gives "a portrait of the outside, clear, brilliant, and full of detail." The imagination sees the heart and inner nature, and makes the observer feel them, but is often "obscure, mysterious, and interrupted in its giving of outer detail."[81]

Following the penetrative thrust, the imaginative mind by the distinctness of its powers of conception has "poured out before it" through its knowledge of nature images from which to choose. It seizes and combines at the same instant all the important ideas of the poem or picture to be created. And while the mind works with any one idea, it is at the same instant working with and modifying all in their relations to it. The creativity in this associative mode of the imagination prompts Ruskin to conclude that "this faculty is indeed something that looks as if man were made after the image of God."[82]

The contemplative, or regardant power, is for Ruskin one which allows the mind to act on remembered or seen objects in the abstracting and combining of ideas. This is, perhaps, Ruskin's clearest application of Wordsworth's idea of emotion recollected in tranquillity. There is, Ruskin says, no wearying or satiation of the imagination in the contemplation of recollected objects unless there is a morbid condition of dissatisfaction with the present

and a continual longing for things absent.[83] In this respect, he also emphasizes Wordsworth's idea of joy in recollection.

> The peculiar charm we feel in [this] conception results from its grasp and blending of ideas . . . for we do not usually recall . . . one part at a time only of a pleasant scene, one moment only of a happy day; but together with each single object we summon up a kind of crowded and involved shadowing forth of all the other glories with which it was associated . . . and it will happen frequently that even when the visible objects or actual circumstances are not in detail remembered, the feeling and joy of them are obtained we know not how or whence.[84]

Ruskin felt that the blending of all these powers tended toward that much desired purification. He observes in Fors Clavigera that true imaginative power always purifies and is in this sense a mode of goodness since it can result in "absolute virginal purity of thought."[85] This idea has more import for the next chapter, but it may serve to point up the essential link between Wordsworth and Ruskin in the idea of a purification process in the imaginative power working through the stimulus of nature. Ruskin underscores the Wordsworthian connection by referring the reader to Wordsworth's prefaces to his poems for fuller explanation of the operations of the contemplative faculty of things "verbally expressible."[86] He then devotes the remainder of his discussion to the application by the artist and the sculptor.

Ruskin's recognition of Wordsworth's authority in things "verbally expressible" is significant since it further cements the bonds of relationship. Ruskin thought of the poet and the painter as one since they were both "poetical observers" using a medium of expression which involved perpetuating noble ideas or "truths" for the edification and instruction of others. He admits in Modern Painters III that he used "the words painter and poet quite indifferently."[87] Thus, he was naturally drawn to Wordsworth's description of the poet, because for him painting was language of a sort and great art a kind of poetry. The noblest pictures, he says, are

> . . . the result of all the highest powers of the imagination, engaged in the discovery and apprehension of the purest truths, and having so arranged them as best to show their preciousness and exalt their clearness . . . They are ruled by one great purpose throughout . . . the magnificence of tone in the perfect mind, which accepts only what is good for its great purposes, rejects whatever is foreign or redundant, instinctively and instantaneously ranges whatever it accepts in sublime subordination and helpful brotherhood.[88]

Ruskin's noble picture has its counterpart in Wordsworth's concept of poetry which sees the poet's imaginative power used in like fashion to instinctively grasp truths and make them "the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge."[89] Ruskin himself defines poetry as "the suggestion by the imagination of noble grounds for noble emotions", and he lists the Wordsworthian virtues admiration, joy, and love

among those passions that constitute "poetical feeling." Great art, he says, must precisely fulfill the definition given for poetry; it must not only present grounds for noble emotion, it must also furnish those grounds by imaginative power.[90] In conception, then, the poet and the artist for Ruskin are on common ground; they differ only in the "language" of expression.

Ruskin's and Wordsworth's discussions of the imaginative powers reflect the strength and distinctness of two strong minds acting on similar ideas, and reveal significant parallels even in their individuality. They reveal, as noted, the basic description which distinguishes fancy from the imagination; both writers note the lesser role of fancy. Both agree, too, that the imagination is a mystical faculty and that it must make an intuitive thrust to get to the "truth" of an object. Ruskin labels this thrust, but Wordsworth simply regards it as a necessary condition before the mind can perform its conferring and abstracting functions. So essentially both agree that the imagination must, in Ruskinian terms, penetrate and abstract before proceeding to reintegrate into pleasing wholes. Ruskin's terms are roughly equivalent also to Wordsworth's dissolving and separating power, whereby the mind combines images so that they may modify each other and result in a fusion. One important aspect of Ruskin's discussion is his application of romantic theory to art. Though he relates the function of the artist to that of the poet, his main

interest is the artistic problem. In this fact alone, one finds the major distinguishing factor for the Wordsworth-Ruskin relation. Accepting Wordsworth's supremacy in ideas that pertain to things verbally expressible, he defers to him in these matters. But Ruskin's is the first reasoned approach which applies the tenets of the romantic sensibility to other forms of art.

In contrast, Wordsworth's interest in art was a peripheral one occasioned in part by a prevailing attitude of poetry and painting as sister arts. Martha Shackford notes in Wordsworth's Interest in Painters and Pictures that Wordsworth wrote almost nothing about painting and had scant concern for the theory of aesthetics, but he did have a steady and deep enjoyment of pictorial art. What he read in the way of critical theory is not recorded. He mentions only a few writers on art by name, but Ruskin is among those mentioned. Interestingly enough, he thought Ruskin was a brilliant writer but that he had too much praise for Turner. Shackford also notes that there is no record of Wordsworth's acquaintance with Turner's paintings, but it is probable that he saw some of them at exhibitions in London, especially The Sun Rising through Vapor, 1807; Hannibal Crossing the Alps, 1812; Crossing the Brook, 1815; and Dido Building Carthage, 1815.[91]

If Wordsworth was not fully aware of Turner's talents, Ruskin made up for his lack by his own enthusiastic espousal of Turner's paintings. His initial interest in Turner

prompted his consideration of the role of the artist-poet and the imaginative function. This consideration led him, as it led Wordsworth, to an analysis of the role of emotion in the creative process, since the artist-poet intuition involves a unique sensibility with a special emotional quality. There is, Ruskin says, a reciprocal action between the intensity of moral feeling and the power of imagination. On one hand, those who have the keenest sympathy are those who can look closest and pierce deepest; on the other, those who have pierced deeply and who have seen the melancholy sense of things are filled with an intense passion and gentleness of sympathy. Thus he concludes that the powers of the imagination can be tested by the accompanying emotion.[92] It will be remembered that for Ruskin, too, it is the depth of emotion that distinguishes imagination from the more fickle fancy.

Likewise, a test of true emotion arises in Ruskinian schema in his description of the pathetic fallacy, where a right-oriented sensibility can check this manifestation of a "diseased" imagination. And a "diseased" imagination in this sense is one so overcome by what is before it that it fails to be bound by what Ruskin calls moral strictures of truth. In fact, one can view the entire basis of Ruskin's aesthetic as a kind of system of checks and balances among the somewhat conflicting elements of truth, imagination, and feeling. His theory of beauty which posits the origin of beauty in the object and points up its divine origin

may serve as a typical example. Such a theory is one way of guarding against the potential danger of emotion and of emphasizing the qualities of calmness and repose. Addressing himself to this point, Landow concludes that Ruskin initially attempted to deny the importance of association for this reason, in order to protect the objectivity of the beautiful.[93] It is of signal importance to note that throughout his writings, his habitual procedure is that of relating various modes of art to the psychological nature of the artists who produced them. In this connection, too, Scoggins has observed in Imagination and Fancy that Wordsworth's quieter poems of fancy are his insurance against a too powerful emotional quality in the poems of the imagination.[94]

In Chapter II, I called attention to the fact that in Ruskin's terminology Wordsworth was a "reflective poet," one of his second order of poets who delight in the pathetic fallacy, whereas his first order--Shakespeare, Homer, Dante--do not often admit this kind of falseness in impressions of external things.[95] But Ruskin refined his ideas on the role of emotion in the creative process. He follows Wordsworth in his definition of poetry as having its origin in recollected emotion by defining poetry as the suggestion by the imagination of noble grounds for noble emotions. And, as noted, among these noble emotions are those typically Wordsworthian ones--joy, love, and admiration.[96] Continuing his discussion, he says that

according to their emotional propensities, all men may be divided into several classes. Among these are

> . . . the men who feel strongly, think weakly, and see untruly (second order of poets); the men who feel strongly, think strongly and see truly (first order of poets); and the men who, strong as human creatures can be, are yet submitted to influences stronger than they, and see in a sort untruly, because what they see is inconceivably above them. This last is the usual condition of prophetic inspiration.[97]

Ruskin notes that all of these conditions are united by imperceptible transitions so that the same mind, according to influences to which it is subjected, may pass at different times into different states. But the true poet-artist must receive all feelings to the full, and yet have command of them. The greatness of the poet-artist depends upon the two faculties, acuteness of feeling, and command of it. He is great, first in proportion to the strength of his passion, and then, that strength being granted, in proportion to his government of it.[98] Ruskin often stresses the importance of strong emotions in Modern Painters, and continues to do so in his later writings. In The Two Paths, for example, he says "wholly in proportion to the intensity of feeling which you bring to the subject you have chosen, will be the depth and justice of your perception of its character."[99] And in the first lecture in Lectures on Landscape in 1871, he told his audience "If you are without strong emotions, you cannot be a painter at all."[100] Ruskin never emphasizes unleashed emotion, however; there

is always the stated or implied condition of the artist's control over his emotions. In Modern Painters III, he characterizes the "harmony" of the creative process where such control is implicit:

> I mean by [the imagination] here, the entire operation of the Humanity within us, the sum of the mental powers which, at the sight of an object, are set to work to take possession of it; which contemplate its nature, perceive and admire its peculiar virtues, or which refresh it with wonder, sanctify it with association and gild or darken it with the subtle dyes of hope and memory, and I understand this power to be operating altogether, like notes of music, but all forming a perfect harmony.[101]

Typically, he says in a lecture entitled "The Relation of Art to Religion" (1870) that

> Not only the highest, but the most consistent results have been attained in art by men in whom the faculty of vision, however strong, was subordinate to that of deliberate design, and tranquillized by a measured, continual, not feverish, but affectionate, observance of the quite unvisionary facts of the surrounding world.[102]

The quoted passages can be related to the poet-artist-prophet connection above, of course, and to a passage in Modern Painters III where Ruskin says that "the true seer always feels as intensely as anyone else; but he does not much describe his feelings."[103] If the creative person is part prophet and is attended by the "vision splendid," he must still concern himself with the "quite unvisionary facts of the surrounding world." In short, he must still be a man speaking to men and operating under certain

"fixed laws" of the imagination.[104]

It has been said that one of the ironies evident in those writers who are proponents of the romantic sensibility is the insistence that the creative person is one among many. No group of writers expected more from an audience, for they insisted that the success of the artistic rendering depends almost as much on the reader's or viewer's imagination as on the poet-artist's. Without the presence of such a faculty in an audience, the poet-artist would be an isolated genius, trapped by his own imaginative power in a world of experience whose meaning he could not share.[105] For Wordsworth and Ruskin, who shared a faith in the imagination and in the potential of the human mind, the creative person is not trapped by his own imaginative power. For both, the poet-artist, the proud possessor of a special sensibility, is one who has a close bond to nature, one who has thought long and deeply, who feels strongly, but has command of his feelings, and one whose imaginative power shapes his vision so that others who have sympathetic hearts can share his experience. The sharing assumes the community of man, or what has been called "uniformitarianism." The sharing paves the way, too, for a social conscience, whereby in Wordsworthian terms, the love of nature filtered through the intellectual lens of the imagination leads to love of man. One finds "presumptive evidence"[106] to support this claim in the sonnet "Crusades" from the Ecclesiastical Sonnets where Wordsworth calls the imagination "the mightiest lever known to the moral world."[107]

CHAPTER IV

"PEOPLE, BE GOOD!"

> The outermost and all-embracing circle of benevolence has inward concentric circles which, like those of the spider's web, are bound together by links, and rest upon each other; making one frame, and capable of one tremor; circles narrower and narrower, closer and closer, as they lie more near to the centre of self from which they proceeded, and which sustains the whole.
>
> Wordsworth, The Convention of Cintra

With the imagination as lever, both Wordsworth and Ruskin glimpsed a moral world where the mind of man and the external world are exquisitely fitted to each other (The Excursion, "The Prospectus," 11. 63-71). Their poetic vision of the creation which this union might accomplish, the beauty of what human life can be, occasioned their sense of urgency and their zeal and added to the hortatory quality of their writings. To each, it was a world which all can attain through development of an innate sensibility; thus each sought to lead others to a true realization of this sensibility through the guidance of his writings. In Wordsworthian terms, the world envisioned involves a delicate balance of man, nature, and human life, wherein nature is the fulcrum and the mediator between man

as an individual and man as a social being. Nature has the power to educate the mind and link her fair works to the human soul ("Lines Written in Early Spring," ll. 6-7). Or as Ruskin phrases it, nature works constantly with mankind to help shape "souls of a good quality."[1] Perhaps a more succinct statement of nature's influence on the moral strengthening of man is a private one made by Wordsworth in a letter to Charles James Fox in 1801. Here he says that natural scenery can be

> . . . a fountain fitted to the nature of social man, from which supplies of affection, as pure as his heart was intended for, are daily drawn.[2]

Similarly, Ruskin writes:

> . . . there are few who do not receive, and do not know that they receive at certain moments, strength of some kind or rebuke from the appealings of outward things. And it is not possible for a Christian man to walk across so much as a rood of the natural earth with mind unagitated and rightly poised, without receiving strength and hope from some stone, flower, leaf or sound; nor without a sense of a dew falling upon him out of the sky.[3]

Like Wordsworth, Ruskin valued that which is permanent, and the permanent to both was the natural. Thus both urged that man in his social ties must strive for that ideal of permanence and naturalness found in the external world. To do this, man must strengthen his character and gain inner harmony through his intercourse with nature, since to both writers the universe is the Bible of the Creator.

Closeness to nature was somehow to be the purifying ideal and the connecting link, the common spirit moving all humanity in the moulding of its diverseness into a sense of unity. It was in this sense roughly identifiable with the Rousseauistic general will, and it was given impetus by Wordsworth's and Ruskin's belief that the truly creative person can reveal the mysteries of this aspect of common being to those potential poets "sown by nature," and endowed with "the vision and the faculty divine" (The Excursion, I, 11. 77, 79). Without the informing influence of the creative person, the untutored might never realize this common bond and might be denied its great moral rewards. The possibility of such denial haunted both writers. Ruskin records in his diary, as early as 1844, the following statement:

> I think always of those who have no power of seeing what I see, and am full of remorse that I see it, and of the time that may--and that must come--when I shall not see it myself.[4]

Wordsworth may not have shared Ruskin's intense anxiety, but he is reported to have said that "although he was known to the world only as a poet, he had given twelve hours thought to the condition and prospects of society for one of poetry."[5]

Both writers shared a social gospel that has its emphasis in the democratic ideal of the worth of the individual, a life close to nature, and the dignity of labor. In effect, the envisioned society is one which

takes its measure from individual character as the primary social unit. Such character does not mean sheer individualism, however; rather, it is that which tends toward a collective expression for the good of all. This kind of purified character is formed in the theistic tradition of Christian revelation since it involves a loving awareness of beauty in God's creation and a closeness to Him through his works. One important parallel in this connection is the shared recognition that a sense of joy is a necessary condition for the true realization of this moral dimension. But both writers realized the difficulty of experiencing joy in a society that was becoming increasingly complex and mechanistic, and their works take on what Wordsworth called "the burden of the mystery of all this unintelligible world" ("Tintern Abbey," ll. 38-40).

The morality of the poetic vision shared by Wordsworth and Ruskin is both a state of feeling good, or achieving joy, and of doing good, though the relationship and the emphasis is not always clear. As Alec King has observed, this kind of morality involves what men have always seen and admired in nature's perfection:

> . . . a vital perfection of being which is fed from within--something made visible not only in the world of nature, but in all great works of art. It is what, in experience, we describe as "feeling good." It has nothing to do with effort and will, and is not the result of sorting out, calculating, judging. It is the result of identity in love. And the expressiveness of the phrase is in the

> ambiguity which is there if we stand off and inspect the meaning, and in the effortless simplicity and unity of the actual experience which the words declare. We seem to <u>feel</u> good, to be in touch with a liveliness and order which feels <u>good</u> at the same moment, for the liveliness and order is what we are. The relation between feeling good in this sense and doing good is necessarily obscure, since "doing" of any kind involves . . . us almost certainly in separating the object or person to whom we are doing good, from ourselves.[6]

The passage from King points up the difficulty involved in the translation of a state of pleasurable identity and oneness with nature to a course of action, though for both Wordsworth and Ruskin, the one is a necessary condition for the other. Ideally, after moral insight is achieved through a closeness to nature, moral behavior should follow. In fact, the emphasis on such insight and individual character has as a related principle that of simplicity, and by extension the idea of action and change. When man is prompted by pleasurable insight to apply ideas of individual worth and simplicity to things outside the self, to social problems and politics, for example, the inner harmony points up the disharmony of the social order. Such application, then, becomes closely associated with a belief that the laws or institutions of society have been built on a different principle, or at least that the existing institutions have failed. Action is thus implied, since where inequality exists there is a tendency to want to restore balance.

This tendency seems basic to the thought of both Wordsworth and Ruskin, though Wordsworth is generally described as more reflective and Ruskin as more action-oriented. The generalizations are essentially true, of course, but it must be recognized that while Wordsworth's social philosophy does not always overtly suggest action, it is implied, nonetheless. In The Excursion, for example, he speaks of "meditated action" as being the nourishing quality that sustains hope as a dominant principle for man's existence (IX, 11. 20-21). The recognition of action, stated or implied, is important in assessing Wordsworth's unique appeal to Ruskin. As he shapes his own social doctrine, Ruskin adopts Wordsworth's aphoristic line, "We live by admiration, hope, and love," as a recurring theme in his own writings (The Excursion, IV, 1. 763). The moral base of both writers is that of each man's personal encounter with the ordered universe and his recognition of the beneficence behind the order which teaches him reverence and love and, in turn, ideally helps shape his actions. The rest of this chapter will be devoted to an examination of Wordsworth's and Ruskin's shared ideas on the state of society, particularly those ideas that relate to the plight of the working man, education, the need for keeping natural beauty inviolate, and the question of slavery. The common center of these ideas is a faith that men live by admiration, hope, and love.

I

Wordsworth stressed a moral doctrine that is concentrically related to his concept of nature. He believed that an intimate association with nature could purify a man so that of necessity he would become a better person and thus unite with others more meaningfully for the good of all. For this reason, he treated the simple and universal elements of character to point up the fact that man can come to grips with the ultimate realities of existence through perception and feeling. His theory of poetry set forth in the "Preface to the Second Edition of Lyrical Ballads" notes that he proposed to choose incidents and situations from common life and to relate them or describe them in language actually used by men because he believed such subject matter to be the true province of poetry. In the simplicity of such lives, he says, "the essential passions of the heart find a better soil . . . are less under restraint, and speak a plainer and more emphatic language." Such passions can thus be more accurately contemplated, and more forcibly communicated because they are "incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature."[7] The proposal of such a theory is important in itself, but it takes on more significance when one considers that Wordsworth's ideas of development, like Ruskin's, were based on experience and a direct emotional or imaginative involvement in the subjects that he treats.

The personal involvement lends to the "truth" presented and adds to the tone of immediacy as well.

In Chapter II, I traced the growth and development of Wordsworth's concept of nature, noting his early loss of feeling and the eventual restoration of that feeling through a rededication to the forms of nature. In Chapter III, attention was given to the imaginative function in this growth and development. The two worked hand in hand to lead Wordsworth to a realization of the worth of man and his capacity for creativity, as well as the recognition of the essential purifying attribute of nature and the ability of those who live close to nature to find a measure of happiness and joy in their work and in their simple lives. Thus Wordsworth's ideal of character became one which emphasized those basic feelings and obligations which equalize all men and are, of course, universal in attainment. This was a facet of the "open secret" and was that revelation which served as the stimulus for the poet-artist as he led men to the discovery of the underlying unity of all being and the informing spirit that links all men.

In The Excursion, which embodies so many of his moral ideas, Wordsworth says that the ethical aim of the work is to "arouse the sensual from their sleep of Death, and win the vacant and the vain to noble raptures" ("Prospectus," 11. 60-62). He proposes to do this by treating the good and evil of life and by noting the moral strength and

consolations available to those who live close to nature. Typical of his subject matter is the story of the ruined cottage in Book I, where he deals with the domestic affections, sorrow, love and fidelity, and finally death. Later in Book IV, the Wanderer gives meaning to these passions when, voicing Wordsworth's moral philosophy, he counsels the Solitary in his search for repose. There is, he says,

> . . . one adequate support
> For the calamities of mortal life
> . . . . . an assured belief
> That the procession of our fate, howe'er
> Sad or disturbed, is ordered by a Being
> Of infinite benevolence and power;
> Whose everlasting purposes embrace
> All accidents, converting them to good.
> --The darts of anguish fix not where the seat
> Of suffering hath been thoroughly fortified
> By acquiescence in the Will supreme
> For time and for eternity; by faith,
> Faith absolute in God, including hope,
> And the defense that lies in boundless love
> Of his perfections.
> (The Excursion, IV, 11. 10-24)

Thus man must live by hope and love, boundless love for the Creator which is reflected, too, in his creations, and hope in loving providence and finally in the hope of eternity. The victory of this kind of life, the Wanderer continues,

> . . . is most sure
> For him, who, seeking faith by virtue, strives
> To yield entire submission to the law
> Of conscience--conscience reverenced and obeyed,
> As God's most intimate presence in the soul,
> And his most perfect image in the world.
> (The Excursion, IV, 11. 222-227)

But man need not rely solely on his conscience, for nature in all her plenitude is always available to him for his

succor. He can come to have a better knowledge of nature since that man alone is happy who lives to understand not only human nature, but all natures so that he learns of "all the mighty commonwealth of things/ Up from the creeping plant to sovereign man." Such knowledge of nature leads to admiration, the third "touchstone" of Wordsworth's triumvirate of powers for the moral life. Converse with nature, he says,

> . . . if directed by a meek
> Sincere, and humble spirit, teaches love:
> For knowledge is delight; and such delight
> Breeds love: yet, suited as it rather is
> To thought and to the climbing intellect,
> It teaches less to love, than to adore;
> If that be not indeed the highest love!
> (The Excursion, IV, 11. 342-350)

The qualities are reiterated as the Pastor confirms the Wanderer's philosophical discourse by more practical examples from the histories of those who lie in the churchyard. Their lives reveal that even suffering helps call forth those sustaining virtues and that they work with and through nature in helping to mold character. "A thing most sacred in the eye of heaven," Wordsworth says, is man commended to nature's care; and nature is

> . . . assisted in her office
> By all the elements that round her wait
> To generate, to preserve, and to restore;
> And by her beautiful array of forms
> Shedding sweet influence from above.
> (The Excursion, VI, 11. 179-187)

There are, however, problems in the social order that weaken man's power for good and crush his spirit so that his own efforts must be intensified if he is to reap

the full benefits of a character fashioned by nature. A mechanistic society and its attendant ills take their toll. In Book VIII of The Excursion, the Wanderer tells of changes in the countryside as "an inventive age" has "wrought to such strange issues" that the result is an "outrage done to nature." He gives a Dickensian picture of the countryside ravaged by factories and the inevitable dreary towns that spring up around them. He does see some positive value in the progress associated with the new order of things, but it is offset by the impairment of man's moral sense and a lessening of his dignity since he is often considered a pawn to be offered up in return for gain. At the sound of the factory bell, Wordsworth says,

> . . . Men, maidens, youths
> Mother and little children, boys and girls,
> Enter, and each the wonted task resumes
> Within this temple, where is offered up
> To gain, the master-idol of the realm,
> Perpetual sacrifice.
> (The Excursion, VIII, 11. 179-185)

He notes particularly the evil of such a system which robs the child of that freshness and wonder to be found in nature because he is made "the senseless member of a vast machine/ Serving as doth a spindle or a wheel." Though the political economists say that the state is prospering, can it really, he asks, with the forfeiture of the birthright of the child. Even the domestic affections are affected since parents can no longer rejoice in their children and aid them in their moral growth because

> . . . a premature necessity
> Blocks out the forms of nature, preconsumes
> The reason, famishes the heart, shuts up
> The infant Being in itself, and makes
> Its very spring a season of decay!
> (The Excursion, IX, 11. 159-160; 11. 287-291)

He paints an even bleaker picture of what society allows the hope of the race to become as men look selfishly to wealth. Wordsworth is thus one with Ruskin who was to say later, "There is no wealth but life--life including all its powers of love, of joy, and of admiration."[8] As he pictures the results of man's inhumanity to these the least among us, Wordsworth says, behold the boy,

> His raiment, whitened o'er with cotton flakes
> Or locks of wool . . . . . .
> Creeping his gait and cowering, his lip pale
> His respiration quick and audible;
> . . . . . Is this the form
> Is that the countenance, and such the port,
> Of no mean Being? One who should be clothed
> With dignity befitting his proud hope;
> Who, in his very childhood, should appear
> Sublime from present purity and joy!
> The limbs increase; but liberty of mind
> Is gone forever; and this organic frame,
> So joyful in its motions, is become
> Dull, to the joy of her own motions dead;
> And even the touch, so exquisitely poured
> Through the whole body, with a languid will
> Performs its function; rarely competent
> To impress a vivid feeling on the mind
> Of what there is delightful in the breeze,
> The gentle visitations of the sun,
> Of lapse of liquid element--by hand,
> Or foot, or lip, in summer's warmth--perceived,
> --Can hope look forward to a mankind raised
> On such foundations? Hope is none for him!
> (The Excursion, VIII, 11. 306-334)

"Hope is none for him" is the important point here for Wordsworth. In The Convention of Cintra he had said, "With the child, or the youth may we begin with more hope."[9] As

he relates the ills of society, he reiterates time after time that man lives by hope and by desire; without the idea of hope that something better will result from "the strange issues of the inventive age," life would be purposeless. "There is," he says, "an active principle" that subsists in all things and communicates good so that the human mind is nourished by hope, and

> . . . the food of hope
> Is meditated action; robbed of this
> Her sole support, she languishes and dies.
> We perish also; for we live by hope
> And by desire; we see by the glad light
> And breathe the sweet air of futurity;
> And so we live, or else we have no life.
> (The Excursion, IX, 11. 20-26)

Wordsworth's is an indictment against society for the declining of "the old domestic morals of the land" (The Excursion, VIII, 1. 236). "The world is too much with us" becomes his plaint as he laments the fact that "plain living and high thinking are no more" ("In London" (1802) 1. 11). Like Ruskin, he felt that society was sinking into a quagmire of moral decay, a condition that needed immediate attention. He envisioned a society that worked through its institutions in an informed spirit of humanity toward the end of strengthening moral character. Such a spirit of humanity could help insure the possibility of opportunity for all.

Wordsworth's oblique comments on slavery strengthen his concern for this opportunity. He likens the conditions of the working man to that abhorred practice in America

where black men and women were fettered and groaned "underneath a weight of slavish toil," while their owners "qualified" the oppression by a defense that rested on "a hollow plea of recompense" ("Humanity," 11. 60-86). Recognizing the dignity of human effort, even under the adverse circumstances of slavery, Wordsworth saw in the figure of Toussaint L'Ouverture the epitome of man's upward yearning. He apostrophizes that the fallen chieftain who yearned so for freedom should take comfort in the fact that "the breathing of the common wind," the air, the earth, and the skies are all powers that remain to carry on his work ("To Toussaint L'Ouverture," 11. 10-12). In this sense, the indomitable spirit of Toussaint L'Ouverture represents a facet of the "active principle" that exists in all things. Wordsworth said in The Excursion that the "most apparent home" of the principle was the human mind and that it forms a link between all souls and communicates good as it spreads beyond itself. It is by this principle, he says, that we "breathe the sweet air of futurity" (The Excursion, IX, 11. 3-25). As noted previously, Wordsworth stresses in The Excursion the strengthening influence of conscience as well as nature. Conscience, he says, when "reverenced and obeyed" is God's most intimate presence in the soul (The Excursion, IV, 1. 225). It is something of this quality that I think he saw in the fallen leader. There is a faculty within the soul, he says,

> That with interpositions, which would hide
> And darken, so can deal that they become
> Contingencies of pomp; and serve to exalt
> Her native brightness . . . . . .
> . . . . . virtue thus
> Sets forth and magnifies herself, thus feeds
> A calm, a beautiful, and silent fire,
> From the encumbrances of mortal life,
> . . . . . .
> From palpable oppressions of despair.
> (The Excursion, IV, 11. 1058-1077)

Here was evidenced a "soul of good quality" strengthened under the most difficult of circumstances; how much more easily could character be aided by the enduring forms that surround and await man. Similarly, he describes the noble bearing and personal dignity of a black woman whom he saw on a ship from Calais. She was "downcast . . . meek, destitute,"

> Yet still her eyes retained their tropic fire,
> That, burning independent of the mind,
> Joined with the lustre of her rich attire
> To mock the outcast--O ye Heavens be kind!
> And feel, thou Earth, for this afflicted race.
> ("We Had a Female Passenger," September 1, 1802, 11. 10-14)

In these poems, as elsewhere, Wordsworth questions the right of any man to assume property in another. As will be seen, however, his noble idealism gives place to mundane actuality as he becomes preoccupied with the question of adequate procedures for effecting change. But even in his mature rigidity, he felt strongly that the moral fibre of England was threatened, and by extension all mankind, since he clearly saw England as a very important part of mankind.

In this respect, it is revealing to note Wordsworth's Tract on the Convention of Cintra. In dealing with the immediate question of the convention's decision, he also treats those universal principles "by which alone the independence and freedom of nations can be preserved or recovered . . . My voice is raised for mankind," he says, as he points out that "in the moral virtues and qualities of passion which belong to a people, must [their] ultimate salvation be sought."[10] Emphasizing two of the qualities Ruskin admired in his work, repose and hope, Wordsworth says later in the tract

> . . . all knowledge of human nature leads ultimately to repose; and I shall write to little purpose if I do not assist some portion of my readers to form an estimate of the grounds of hope . . . in the present effort . . . or any future struggle.[11]

After chronicling the wrongs suffered by both sides in the long struggle, he says the people were moved by "exalted sentiments of universal morality," and by direct and universal concern for mankind. The recognition of problems in society and the gravity of such problems, he says, "reduces men, in all ranks of society, under the supremacy of their common nature; to impress upon them one belief; to infuse in them one spirit." Moral law must obtain, he continues, or the heart of the people, which alone can sustain the efforts of the people, will languish. Their desires will not spread beyond the plow and the loom, the field and the fireside; the sword will appear to them

an emblem of no promise, "an instrument of no hope." He writes also of the natural and social man, the deeper emotions, the simpler feelings, and the spacious range of the disinterested imagination, when the mind is in "a state of dignity." Such a state of mind produces a "delicacy of moral honour" which consecrates passions and makes them worthy of "taking their place as the advanced guard of hope."[12]

In this discussion Wordsworth calls to mind, too, those common bonds of thought discussed in Chapters II and III that relate him to Ruskin. The progress of a country might be quicker, he says, if persons who have positions of trust in government

> . . . understood the rudiments of nature as studied in the walks of common life; if they were men who had themselves felt every strong emotion "inspired by nature and by fortune taught."[13]

But again he sounds the same warning of excessive emotion noted in the previous chapters. "There is danger in being a zealot in any cause--not excepting that of humanity."[14]

Throughout Wordsworth's discussion, one finds the terms hope, admiration, and love recurring so often that in effect they form the leit motif for the tract as they do for The Excursion, and to some extent "The Essay Supplementary to the Preface to the Poems of 1815." "I began with hope," writes Wordsworth, "and hope has inwardly accompanied me to the end."

> The great difficulty of life for men of all classes . . . is a union of peace with innocent and laudable animation. Not by bread alone is the life of man sustained . . . but by anticipation . . . by joy, and by love . . . [and] by admiration.[15]

Love and admiration are essential qualities in man, he says. Both must "push themselves out towards some quarter," otherwise the moral man is killed. When they push out "collaterally," limits hard to pass are always encountered; but when they push upwards and downwards, to ancestry and to posterity, they meet with "gladsome help and no obstacles." And all three are passions, he says, which are "best encouraged by humility and simplicity in mind, manners, and conduct of life."[16]

But Wordsworth's moral concerns were not all theoretical with action only implied. His writings reveal also some suggestion of practical application of his ideas. Most notably, he proposed a system of universal education so that no child, however destitute, will

> . . . be left to droop
> By timely culture unsustained; or run
> Into a wild disorder; or be forced
> To drudge through a weary life without the help
> Of intellectual implements and tools;
> A savage horde among the civilized,
> A servile band among the lordly free!
> (The Excursion, IX, 11. 303-310)

He evidences a kind of democratic spirit here as he does when he further maintains that a system of education which provides training in "the rudiments of letters" and informs the mind "with moral and religious truth" is a right to

the young that must be recognized (The Excursion, IX, 11. 301-302). His interest in education was a long standing one. There are numerous pieces in his writings which attest to this interest and point up his view that the state is obligated to train young minds. He insists, however, that moral training must go hand in hand with "tuition," or the general school instruction. Education, he says

> . . . according to the derivation of the word, and in the only use of which it is strictly justifiable, comprehends all those processes and influences . . . that conduce to the best development of the bodily powers, and of the moral, intellectual, and spiritual faculties which the position of the individual admits of. In this just and high sense of the word, the education of a sincere Christian, and a good member of society upon Christian principles, does not terminate with his youth, but goes on to the last moment of his conscious earthly existence--an education not for time but for eternity.[17]

The quoted passage crystallizes what was a common theme in the letters and obiter dicta of Wordsworth. He insisted upon the social value of education; it should prepare for life and add to the moral stature of a person. For him, education was not simply the acquisition of knowledge, but a part of the collective goal of society.

Wordsworth's insistence that the state has a responsibility in education calls to mind a similar idea that he advocated in the "Postscript" to his poems of 1835. In commenting on the Poor-Law Amendment Act, he speaks of the duty of a Christian government to stand in loco parentis

toward all its subjects so that no one will perish through neglect or harshness of its legislation. Is it not indisputable, he asks,

> . . . that the claim of the state to . . . allegiance involves the protection of the subject? And, as all rights . . . impose a correlative duty upon another, it follows that the right of the state to require the services of its members, even to the jeoparding [sic] of their lives in the common defence, establishes a right in the people (not to be gainsaid by utilitarians and economists) to public support when from any cause they may be unable to support themselves.[18]

The sentiment evidenced here has all the earmarks of what Macaulay called "sullen socialism."[19] Understandably, Ruskin cites this passage from Wordsworth as he calls for similar action years later in a lecture that he published afterwards in A Joy Forever.

In "The Postscript," Wordsworth also calls attention to the plight of the working man in much the same fashion as Ruskin was to do later. He points out that many who opposed the principle of in loco parentis argued that every man who wanted to work could find work. If this assertion could be verified, he says, there would still remain the question of what kind of work and whether it was suited to the worker. He notes that there should be some concern for the happiness and well-being of the worker so that he is doing work that he is fitted to do.[20] The kind of concern voiced here for the dignity of the working man and that evidenced in The Excursion make all the more meaningful

the gallery of characters in the poems. He depicts the simplicity of lives close to nature for their universal value, that is, the bringing out of the native worth of the individual in the quietness and contentment of daily life. A mechanistic society bent on gain was a threat to this kind of repose because it made the worker a tool toward a materialistic goal and robbed him of his homely heritage. It robbed him as well of the opportunity to reap the full benefits of the reciprocal power of nature which could provide him a measure of joy. To offset this deprivation, society has a responsibility to consider working conditions more carefully so that the working man can regain some happiness in his work. He voices the concern that Ruskin was to glorify, that the working man should find joy in his work; it should not be permitted to become mere drudgery, since when it does, joy, a necessary part of human heritage, is lost.

Wordsworth maintained that the poor can only benefit from their aesthetic heritage by living close to the beauties of nature. For this reason, he opposed the building of a railroad through the Lake District, arguing that to build it would destroy the region's natural beauty and deny its inhabitants their normal intercourse with its beautiful scenery. The proponents of the railroad countered by saying that the railroad would avail more workers of this opportunity. Addressing himself to the issue in letters to The Morning Post, Wordsworth contends that an occasional

excursion to be close to nature does not answer the workman's needs; what is needed is a much more sustained exposure such as should be available to men in their ordinary surroundings since their happiness and well-being is linked to what they know and understand.[21] As will be seen, Ruskin echoes similar sentiments in a preface to a pamphlet entitled "A Protest Against the Extension of Railways in the Lake District."

Up to this point, I have considered the positive factors of Wordsworth's moral convictions. There is, of course, the obverse side which has to do with the oft-cited charge of apostasy. He has been soundly criticized by many for becoming "the lost leader" and taken to task for his growing conservatism. Part of the problem is that suggested by the passage quoted from Alec King early in this chapter, the difficulty of moving from a pleasurable feeling of oneness with nature to a state of "doing good." It is the same problem that Ruskin was to face also, though from another vantage point. Theoretically, Wordsworth's humanitarian concerns remain forceful, but he finds it difficult to translate such ideals into practical matters. Thus one finds a number of discrepancies between theory and practical advocacy. Typical of this kind of discrepancy is his treatment of the question of slavery, already alluded to.

Though he championed the cause of individual man and spoke out against slavery frequently, one finds,

nevertheless, several passages that give pause to the reflective modern reader and call to question the disparity between theory and practice. In later life, he seems to have been preoccupied with the feared problems of emancipation and he spoke out against those who were concerned with "attainment of its ends with disregard of its means." He explained that he did not wish to participate in the anti-slavery agitation because of "the excitement already existing in the public mind." But he adds, "No man can deplore more than I do the state of slavery in itself." He continues this "apostasy" by suggesting that the matter be left up to the owners:

> It might be submitted to the consideration of the owner whether, in the present state of society, he can, as a matter of private conscience, retain his property in the slave, after he is convinced that it would be for the slave's benefit, civil, moral, and religious, that he should be emancipated . . . whatever pecuniary loss might attend emancipation, it seems that a slave owner, taking a right view of the case, ought to be prepared to undergo it . . . by no means does it follow . . . that . . . the people of England, who through their legislature have sanctioned and even encouraged slavery, have a right to interfere for its destruction by a sweeping measure, of which an equivalent to the owner makes no part.[22]

The views presented here are a far cry from the earlier more impassioned ones for the cause of freedom. If one searches for a redeeming factor for Wordsworth, perhaps it can be found in the suggestion of the basic goodness of man that will allow the slave owners to act

from altruistic motives. In the case of Toussaint L'Ouverture, perhaps it can be found in the suggestion of the admiration and hope for a life that engendered such deep moral lessons; and for Wordsworth's noble, black fellow passenger, perhaps again the redeeming factor is admiration for nobility in adversity. Wordsworth's later views on slavery, as, indeed, on many other subjects, represent the mature man who has been chastened by what F. M. Todd calls

> . . . his suspicion of the unreflecting liberalism, of the heart's predominance over the head, and that awareness of complexity which can be (and was so often in Wordsworth's case, however indicative of political maturity) such an effective restraint upon decisive action in any direction--all these traits of the mature outlook were at work to make him revise and modify his original position.[23]

One can briefly characterize Wordsworth's moral philosophy as being deeply concerned with universal experiences that relate to character rather than conditions. In speaking of his detractors, he once said:

> I should think that I had lived to little purpose if my notions on the subject of government had undergone no modification: my youth must, in that case, have been without enthusiasm, and my manhood endued with small capability of profiting by reflection. If I were addressing those who have dealt so liberally with the words renegade, apostate, etc. I should retort the charge upon them, and say <u>you</u> have been deluded by <u>places</u> and <u>persons</u>, while I have stuck to <u>principles</u>.[24]

His principles are those that are bound up with admiration,

hope, and love, because he felt that these are attributes that give substance to man's life. One main thought behind this philosophy of universality is the strength and purity of the least common denominator of humanity, the solitary man, that can only be assured by a life close to nature which reflects an exulting and joyful acknowledgement of the Creator and his works. The spiritual affinity of this way of thinking is given impetus by his view of the mystical and creative aspect of the imagination. As shown previously, he saw the imagination as godlike since it allowed "the poetical observer" to get close to spirit, to enter into the truth of reality and produce a transcendent work of art. Again the sense of community is important in this view because the creative person and his audience share the same potential, if in varying degrees.

Putting his hope in those attributes which link all men, Wordsworth's ultimate goal was a society that recognizes the equalizing bond of environment and spiritual affinity to the end of purifying and uniting each individual for the good of all. The tenets of such a moral philosophy were certain to find a common meeting ground in the thought of Ruskin who, as has been seen, shared Wordsworth's love of nature and his estimate of the imagination, and who, as he grew older, moved more and more from art to society. And like Wordsworth, Ruskin, too, comes to that point where the optimistic vision of humanity is clouded by recognition of the failure of practical schemes toward its realization,

and he falls heir to a measure of the calumny endured by his mentor.

II

Ruskin's moral awareness can be attributed in part to his early Evangelical upbringing, since his mother required constant Bible study and church attendance. He records in Praeterita the prescient gloom that the family's Sunday activities evoked for him, as well as his youthful presentations of sermons in imitation of the local minister. His first such sermon, delivered when he was five, was, he says

> . . . some eleven words long; very exemplary, it seems to me--and I still think must have been the purest gospel, for I know it began with, "People, be good."[25]

There is prophetic foreshadowing here that suggests a sensibility whose moral convictions were destined to find a confluent stream in the thought of Wordsworth, since Wordsworth, too, was concerned with a mode of being good. Ruskin's early message "People, be good" remains the underlying text of much of what he wrote throughout his long career since he was ever preoccupied with being good or with doing good. His ethical and moral concerns meshed with those of Wordsworth and are compressed into the oft-cited lines from The Excursion:

> We live by Admiration, Hope, and Love
> And, even as these are well and wisely fixed,

> In dignity of being we ascend.
> (The Excursion, IV, 11. 763-765)

The upward progress from Wordsworth's theistic triumvirate serves as a leit motif for Ruskin's writings as well as Wordsworth's. The triumvirate of virtues also provides an illuminating organizing principle for this phase of my study that clearly reveals strong aspects of relationship and influence. Ruskin uses the Wordsworthian virtues singly and collectively again and again to illustrate his own concepts.

Essentially, the basis of Ruskin's moral philosophy was the same as that of Wordsworth, the concentric ideal of character development through a close relationship with nature. The radial concerns that grew from this common core are more numerous in Ruskin's writings, but typically they hearken back to the same purifying and unifying ideal of nature stressed by Wordsworth. Ruskin's interest, too, was in individual character as a social unit as well as the collective character of society. And though he proposed many practical schemes of reform, he repudiated the merely external and looked to the strengthening of individual and social character as the means and as the end of human endeavor. Like Wordsworth, he saw the wellspring of progress in the individual will. In Unto This Last, he says:

> All effectual advancement towards [the] true felicity of the human race must be by individual, not public effort. Certain general measures may aid, certain revised laws guide, such advancement; but the measure and the law which have

> first to be determined are those of each man's home.[26]

It is thus the elemental affections that he, too, insists upon as the primary molders of character. And for him also, these affections are nourished by a bond to nature that reverences natural phenomena as the "open secret" of God's being. In Modern Painters V, he writes:

> In these books of mine, their distinctive character as essays on art is their bringing everything to a root in human passion or human hope. Every principle of painting which I have stated is traced to some vital or spiritual fact.[27]

The vital, spiritual fact that remains the chief undergirding of his ideas is the theistic one that provides the Ruskinian assumption that "man's use and function is to be the witness of the glory of God and to advance that glory by reasonable obedience and resultant happiness."[28] His idea of man's happiness and joy in nature echoes Wordsworth and supports the concentricity of interest as Ruskin's emphasis shifts from art to social issues. Similarly, he writes in "The Study of Architecture" that if a nation be healthy, happy, pure, brave in its acts, and broad in its affections, its art and other endeavor will spring up in a new fashion that benefits all.[29]

From the outset, Ruskin's writings reveal a basic core of moral awareness. In Modern Painters I, he says that that art is greatest which has the noblest and most numerous ideas; that perfect taste is the faculty of receiving the greatest possible pleasure from those material sources

which are attractive to our moral nature in its purity and perfection; and that ideas of beauty are the subjects of moral perception.[30] He continues this moral inclination by reinforcing the idea that man is at once the standard and end of art, that he must be able to make judgments about art even as it is produced for his pleasure and benefit. Such emphasis posits the idea that art serves man by presenting noble ideas and its greatness is closely allied to how well it serves man, and to the creative power of the artist since he is a man speaking to men. Ruskin crystallizes this thought in the previously quoted statement that every principle of art is traced to some vital or spiritual fact and rooted in human passion and hope.[31] In much of his early writings, one can find continued evidence of a definite social and moral bent, though the full flowering was to come in his later career. In a pamphlet on Pre-Raphaelitism, for example, as early as 1851, he notes that

> God intends no man to live in this world without working, but it [is] no less evident that He intends every man to be happy in his work . . . Now in order that people may be happy in their work, these three things are needed: They must be fit for it: They must not do too much of it: and they must have a sense of success in it--not a doubtful one, such as needs some testimony of other people for its confirmation, but a sure sense, or rather knowledge, that so much work has been done well, and fruitfully done, whatever the world may say or think about it.[32]

In Chapter III, I called attention to Ruskin's treatment of the role of the creative person and how that treatment was bound up with Wordsworth's description of the poet. As he expanded his scope, Ruskin considered more fully the collective or social character as well as individual character. The Stones of Venice, for example, explores the relationship of collective character and the art of a people. During its Gothic period, according to Ruskin's schema, Venetian architecture reflected a strength and purity of character, while that of the Renaissance reflected all manner of vice and domestic corruption. He likens the state of Venice to that of England, noting that England was sinking into the same quagmire of materialism that corrupted the art and morals of Venice. As noted, he and Wordsworth sought the same result, an individual character purified and strengthened by moral influences, nature chief among them, to the end of man's uniting in a society that respects such character and whose moral tone and institutions reflect this respect. The germ of this idea appears in the early works, though his main concern remains art. The more he explores the relationship of art and character, however, the more he moves toward an awakened social consciousness. By the time he wrote The Political Economy of Art, he had come to the "sullen" socialistic conclusion that it is the duty of the state to "educate, organize, and in every way economize, the artistic ability of the nation in order to get and keep

for the national good the largest number of the best works of art."[33]

Since the public was ill-prepared for Ruskin's conclusion, he soon saw that the climate of opinion was such that England really had to undergo a drastic change before the potential of art or the individual could be fully realized. Hence his writings take on the increased hortatory tone revealed in the following passage. It is a Dickensian Coketown that he describes, which calls to mind Wordsworth's indictment in The Excursion:

> All lovely architecture was designed for cities . . . built that men might live happily in them, and take delight daily in each other's presence and powers. But our cities, built in black air which, by its accumulated foulness, first renders all ornament invisible in distance, and then chokes its interstices with soot; cities which are mere crowded masses of store, and warehouse, and counter, and are therefore to the rest of the world what the larder and cellar are to a private house; cities in which the object of men is not life, but labour; and in which all chief magnitude of edifice is to enclose machinery; cities in which the streets are not the avenues for the passing and procession of a happy people, but the drains for the discharge of a tormented mob, in which the only object in reaching any spot is to be transferred to another; in which existence becomes mere transition, and every creature is only one atom in a drift of human dust, and current of interchanging particles, circulating here by tunnels underground, and there by tubes in the air.[34]

The quoted passage is from a lecture on architecture delivered before the Royal Institute of British Architects in 1865. In the same lecture, Ruskin says that the "force of mechanism

and the fury of avaricious commerce" were so irresistible that he had "seceded" from the study not only of architecture, but nearly all art in order "to seek the best modes of getting bread and butter for [the] multitudes."[35] So he, like Wordsworth, "raised his voice for mankind"[36] in the admission that the ultimate salvation of a people in art, as in other endeavors, must be sought in individual and collective moral virtues.

Significantly, the moral virtues that Ruskin cites continuously are those Wordsworthian ones--admiration, hope, and love--that he, too, felt to be elemental and capable of being strengthened by lives lived close to nature. The pressing problem of society was that of fashioning "souls of good quality." And the life of the soul, Ruskin explains in The Art of England, is fed by Wordsworth's three virtues.

> . . . Admiration, meaning primarily all the forms of Hero Worship, and secondarily, the kind of feeling towards the beauty of nature, which I have attempted too feebly to analyze in the second volume of Modern Painters;--Hope, meaning primarily the habit of mind in which we take present pain for the sake of future pleasure, and expanding into hope of another world;--and Love, meaning of course whatever is happiest or noblest in the life either of that world or this.[37]

Earlier, Ruskin had "raised his voice for mankind" in Unto This Last, his first sustained utterance for social justice. Here he outlines a system of political economy which he proposes to replace the prevailing laissez-faire

policy. And characteristically, it is undergirded by concern for man's affections, and the omnipresent Wordsworthian virtues. Ruskin felt that the laissez-faire policy, in effect, was one of sheer self-interest and was merely the fulfillment of what he called that primordial greater self-interest which brought schism into the policy of angels, and ruin into the economy of heaven. He maintained that "Government and cooperation are in all things the Laws of Life; Anarchy and competition the Laws of Death."[38] Thus an economic system based on intense competition did immeasurable damage because it denied men the value of the social affections--affections such as one man owes to another.

In proposing his ideas, Ruskin challenged the prevailing concept of an "economic man," a machine-like creation devoid of human attributes. He sought to show that man must always be dealt with as a complete entity with due regard for the affections and moral feelings. He can no more be thought of as an "economic" man than as an "aesthetic" man; he is a thinking, feeling creature with all of these attributes and must be dealt with accordingly. Ruskin felt strongly that no program of social action can be effective without due regard for the affections. He says

> Among the delusions which at different periods have possessed themselves of the minds of large masses of the human race, perhaps the most curious--certainly the least creditable--is the modern soi-disant science of political economy,

> based on the idea that an advantageous code of social action may be determined irrespectively of the influence of social affection.[39]

As he points up the errors in such a delusion, his concern is the same as that of Wordsworth, a consideration of those ties that bind all men. Fundamental to his concern, too, is the ideal of purified and strengthened character that can interact for what he considers the cause of brotherhood. In fact, he says that it is only through strengthened character that the economy can be measured since manly character is needed to deal with material value.

Ruskin's system of economy calls for more governmental sensitivity to the needs of all men, but particularly the working man. First, he says, there should be training schools for youth established by the government so that each child can be taught the laws of health, habits of gentleness and justice, and the calling by which he is to live. Second, in connection with these schools, the government should establish and regulate factories and workshops for the production and sale of everything necessary for life and for the exercise of every useful art. Third, the government should provide suitable job training and jobs at a fixed rate of wages so that no one would have to suffer because of unemployment. And last, the old and the destitute should be provided for in an honorable manner that allows them dignity in receiving aid.[40] This four point program represents what Ruskin saw as the true relationship of a government to its citizens. The points

serve also to illuminate his more immediate concern, the individual man who must react with others in a society so ordered.

He likens the relationship of the state and the individual to that of a father and son, or a master and his servant. According to the prevailing laws of economy, he said, ideally the more work the servant can do, the greater the benefit to him and his master. But this kind of calculation was predicated on getting results from a machine-like character. A system based on such an exploitative economy could only lead to that kind of economic and moral disaster which Ruskin felt characterized contemporary England. What was needed, he concluded, was a different concept of what constitutes wealth. He felt that ultimately the wealth of a nation could only be measured in terms of its individual citizens. The final outcome and consummation of all wealth, he says, is producing "full-breathed, bright-eyed, and happy-hearted human beings."[41] Using the Wordsworthian terms, he explains that

> There is no wealth but Life. Life, including all its powers of love, of joy, and of admiration. That country is the richest which nourishes the greatest number of noble and happy human beings; that man is richest who, having perfected the functions of his own life to the utmost, has also the widest helpful influence, both personal, and by means of his possessions, over the lives of others.[42]

Such wealth gains its greatest strength from its own proper fuel, the affections, since these are the

"motive-power of a soul."[43] The least common denominator of Ruskin's political economy is that of Wordsworth's emphasis, the thinking, feeling solitary man as an entity whose emotions must not be separated from his economic position. "The maximum of life can only be reached by the maximum of virtue,"[44] Ruskin says; and again, characteristically, he emphasizes the use of nature in the process of building virtuous character through the affections.

> . . . nor can any population reach its maximum but through that wisdom which "rejoices" in the habitable parts of the earth . . . No scene is continually and untiringly loved, but one rich by joyful human labour; smooth in field; fair in garden; full in orchard; trim, sweet, and frequent in homestead; ringing with voices of vivid existence. No air is sweet that is silent; it is only sweet when full of low currents of under sound--triplets of birds, and murmur and chirp of insects, and deep-toned words of men, and wayward trebles of childhood. As the art of life is learned, it will be found at last that all lovely things are also necessary;--the wild flower by the wayside, as well as the tended corn; and the wild birds and creatures of the forest, as well as the tended cattle; because man does not live by bread only, but also by . . . every wondrous word and unknowable work of God. Happy, in that he knew them not, nor did his fathers know; and that round about him reaches yet into the infinite, the amazement of his existence.[45]

This passage represents a facet of the concept of nature, the force that gives impetus to Ruskin's social philosophy as well as Wordsworth's. It is a reaffirmation of the belief that the joyful and continual regard for the enduring forms of nature is in itself a statement of

being, and thereby a molder of character. Ruskin said that all effectual advancement of the human race must be by individual effort. An immediate need in this advancement he felt was a recognition of "the quantity of pleasure that may be obtained by a consistent, well-administered competence, modest, confessed, and laborious":

> We need examples of people who, leaving Heaven to decide whether they are to rise in the world, decide for themselves that they will be happy in it, and have resolved to seek--not greater wealth, but simpler pleasure; not higher fortune, but deeper felicity; making the first of possessions, self-possession; and honouring themselves in the harmless pride and calm pursuits of peace.[46]

What one sees here is the further translation of Wordsworth's theistic peace and repose into social values. It is a call for the quiet, ordered lives described by the Pastor; it is the Solitary's fervent wish put into practical terms, but terms for Ruskin which are grounded in a strictly ordered society. His liberty, like Wordsworth's, is bounded by law, thus the concern for inner harmony is also concern for an ordered society. As Raymond Williams has observed, at the root of all Ruskin's thinking is his idea of function--the fulfillment of each man's part in the general design of the universe.[47] Such a fulfillment was only possible if society was regulated in terms of the general design, which, as has been seen, involves a regard for the thinking, feeling man and the quality of his life.

As noted, the ideas presented here from Unto This Last form the foundation of Ruskin's social philosophy.

They are previewed earlier, and augmented later, but the succinct statement of them in this work was for Ruskin his definitive one. He called Unto This Last the "truest, rightest-worded" and the most serviceable thing he had ever written.[48] Significantly, he follows Wordsworth in stressing the affections; and he comes to use the Wordsworthian ideals of virtue as his habitual yardstick for measuring the progress of society, as he does in his definition of wealth cited above.[49] Cook and Wedderburn call attention to his constant use of the Wordsworthian virtues as an infallible test of progress.[50] In A Joy Forever, for example, he exhorts his audience to examine themselves after every period of renewed industry to see how far the faculty of admiration had been enlarged.

> This is the only constant and infallible test of progress. That you wonder more at the work of great men, and that you care more for natural objects.[51]

In his notes on the Discourses of Sir Joshua Reynolds, Ruskin said that although his writings then numbered "twenty biggish volumes," the teaching and main dividing of all that he had written could be given in the one line from Wordsworth which he so much admired. There he says that it is important to understand that admiration, hope, and love must not be self-centered; they must radiate to others. They are the constituent strengths of the human soul, he says, the threefold cord which cannot be broken, and which only death can loose; they are the trefoiled lip of the vase for the water of life, which may be broken

only when it is needed no more at the cistern. Of these three virtues, the first is unintelligible to so many because they live so far removed from nature's influence that they no longer see beauty in God's creations.

> They not only don't admire or wonder at anything, but they struggle with violent and fantastic effort from the possibility of ever being made to wonder at anything. If only we can find out how it is--if we can show that it is perfectly natural, legal, couldn't be any other way--how delightful it will be to have done with astonishment. We are sure the universe is only a juggle . . . the eggs really were never made in that blue jay of the sky. If we can but find out where the fellow gets his eggs, we shall be all right--never astonished anymore.[52]

Instead of the primary condition of admiration, Ruskin continues, man has substituted those expectations drawn from the complexity of his new life style: "Just what we expected, the Natural Consequence, the Conservation of Force, and the Prince of Competition." Further, man is not acting from the watchword "Every man must do his duty"; rather, he is preoccupied with doing the best he can for himself. Such selfishness can only be countered, he says, by the teaching of true love, love that reaches from the Creator to the least of his creatures.

> . . . Unless you teach your children to honour their fathers and their mothers, and to love God, and to reverence their King and to treat with tenderness and take care of kindly all inferior creatures, to regard all things duly, even if they have only a semblance of life and especially such as God has endowed with the power of giving us pleasure, as flowers--unless

> you teach your children these things
> you will be educating Frankensteins
> and demons.[53]

Finally, he notes that the books he was then engaged in writing, those addressed to social issues, were all to communicate what faculty he himself possessed of compassion and hope for mankind.[54]

In Fors Clavigera, Ruskin ranks the three virtues, noting that love is chief among the spiritual needs of man. It is listed last by Wordsworth, he says, because it is the culminating or crowning need. Earlier in Time and Tide (1867), he had spoken of love as the "purifying passion of the soul,"[55] and here in Fors Clavigera he says that man must be capable of admiration and hope before he can be capable of the ultimate purification by love. In this discussion, written in 1871, he combines admiration, hope and love with pure air, water and earth and labels them all as essential to life. The former are "immaterial" essentials, the latter, "material," but all will be realized only through a true political economy. Defining the "immaterial" values again, he calls admiration the power of discerning and taking delight in what is beautiful in visible form, and lovely in human character, and necessarily striving to produce the beautiful in form and to become what is lovely in character. He calls hope the recognition, by true foresight of better things to be reached hereafter, whether by ourselves or others, and necessarily issuing in the straightforward and "undisappointable" effort to advance,

according to our proper power, the gaining of them. Love in this discussion is more socially oriented so that one is "to both family and neighbor, faithful and satisfied."[56]

Ruskin indicts modern society for its failures in providing the material and the immaterial, but his denunciation is all the more scathing as he cites the moral losses of modern man. Instead of admiration, he says, man has learned contempt and conceit in his everyday life to the extent that beauty all around goes undetected as each man instinctively hates the good and destroys it. As for hope, there is so little of the spirit left that no plan is begun which will not pay immediately, nor are politicians and workmen able to form one clear idea of what they would like their country to become. No less scathing is his comment on love. The Biblical injunction is to love your neighbor as you love yourselves, he continues, but modern man has founded an entire science of political economy on a new and constant instinct, the desire to defraud his neighbor.[57] And it was this kind of false economy that he sought to discredit in his later writings.

In these writings, Ruskin constantly emphasizes the role of education in fashioning "souls of good quality" for his envisioned political economy. And, like Wordsworth, he felt that nature had an important role to play in this process. Both Wordsworth and Ruskin had a special interest in the young and saw their education as a kind of organic process of developing the full human potential, not the

mere acquisition of knowledge. The element of hope is strong with both because of the possibility of achieving the social ideal through the malleable nature of children. During one of his many lectures to students, Ruskin cautioned one group to compete "not for the praise of what you know, but for the praise of what you become; and to compete only in that great school where death is the examiner and God the judge."[58] In The Stones of Venice he had said:

> A man is not educated, in any sense whatsoever, because he can read Latin or write English, or can behave himself in a drawing-room; but he is only educated if he is happy, busy, beneficent, and effective in the world.[59]

There are, according to Ruskin, two vital influences on education, nature and humanity. In emphasizing the influence of nature, it is of signal importance that he quotes Wordsworth, noting that Wordsworth is distinguished by "exquisite rightness" in the following lines which call to mind the more famous one, "Let nature be your teacher":

> Then Nature said, a lovelier flower
> On earth was never sown.
> This child I to myself will take;
> She shall be mine . . .[60]

Like Wordsworth, too, Ruskin indicted industrialism and the complexity of modern life for robbing the young of free and joyful access to the wonders of nature. Such free and joyful access, leading as it does to the Wordsworthian triumvirate of virtues, must lead to inner purification and thus finally to Ruskin's second influence, humanity. Again individual and collective character is

the means as well as the end since he is one with Wordsworth in maintaining that the character of man must be strengthened and purified, not merely with individual perfection in mind, but with constant attention to man's position as a social creature as well. The Wordsworthian formula of nature as mediator and fulcrum between man the individual and man the social unit figures prominently here with the suggestion of a general will propelling each to unite effectively for the good of all. The moral quality of such an educational view is reinforced by Ruskin when he notes that all children of whatever age, grade, or gift are to be taught "the laws of Honour, the habit of truth, the virtue of Humility, and the Happiness of Love."[61] The end result of education should be the rendering of each person "practically serviceable to other creatures, according to the nature and extent of [his] own capacities."[62]

It is singularly significant that Ruskin lists admiration, hope, and love as the chief attributes of a moral education. "I take Wordsworth's line for my literal guide, in all education," he writes in Fors Clavigera. The ultimate goal of individual and social growth can only be realized when these virtues are instilled in every child. Defining the terms once more, he calls admiration the faculty of giving honor; hope, that of assuring the recognition of better things to come; and love, that of instilling appreciation for family, neighbors, and humanity as a whole.[63]

> . . . education consists in giving the creature the faculties of admiration,

> hope, and love. These are to be taught by the study of beautiful nature; the sight and history of noble persons; and the setting forth of noble objects of action.[64]

In the tradition of Wordsworth, Ruskin also joined the ranks of those who saw the need for governmental interest in education. "I hold it for indisputable," he writes, "that the first duty of a state is to see that every child born therein shall be . . . educated, till it attain years of discretion."[65] But in order to carry out this duty, he recognized that the state "must have an authority over the people of which we now do not so much as dream."[66] In A Joy Forever, where he cites Wordsworth's "Postscript" on the in loco parentis principle, he concludes that the state's first interference should be in education.

> In order that men may be able to support themselves when they are grown, their strength must be properly developed while they are young; and the state should always see to this--not allowing their health to be broken by too early labour, nor their powers to be wasted for want of knowledge.[67]

No less Wordsworthian are Ruskin's ideas on keeping natural scenery inviolate for the benefit of those who live close to its beauties. His argument against the building of a railroad through the heart of the Lake District has striking parallels to that of Wordsworth. As early as Modern Painters II, Ruskin included a note in his discussion of the theoretic faculty in which he cites Wordsworth's objection to the extension of a railway through the district.[68] As late as 1876, the question still claimed

his attention and he wrote a preface to a protest written by Robert Somervell against further extension of railroads. In his preface he appealed to all who cared "for the integrity of English peasant life or for the peace and power of her mountains" to rally to the cause of the protection of natural scenery. His argument is a destructive analysis of each point advanced by the proponents of the new railway. Citing what Wordsworth called "the false utilitarian lure,"[69] or the idea that the greatest happiness of the greatest number demanded that the scenery be made accessible to as many as possible, he effectively shows that access to large crowds would change the scenery so much that it would no longer be able to provide the pleasing and purifying effects commonly identified with it. He prefaces his argument thus:

> No one need charge me with selfishness in any word or action for defence of these mossy hills. I do not move . . . because I live in Coniston (where no sound of the iron wheels . . . can reach me), nor because I can find no other place to remember Wordsworth by than the daffodil margin of his little Rydal marsh. What thoughts and work are yet before me, such as he taught, must be independent of any narrow associations . . . the world is wide enough yet to find me some refuge during the days appointed for me to stay in it. But it is no less my duty, in the cause of those to whom the sweet landscapes of England are precious, and to whom they may yet teach what they taught me, in early boyhood, and would still if I had to learn,--it is my duty to plead with what earnestness I may, that these sacred sibylline books may be redeemed from perishing.[70]

The scenery is more than accessible, he continues, since "the public are pitched into it headforemost, and necessarily miss two-thirds of it." He notes, too, the resultant effects of city life which cause such visitors to leave the area "a beach of broken gingerbeer bottles," and he concludes that the minds of such city dwellers "will be no more improved by contemplating the scenery of [Grasmere] than of Blackpool."[71] His main contention, then, is the same as Wordsworth's, that an occasional excursion to be near the wonders of nature was of little value. Ruskin had said in Munera Pulveris that there was no need for excursion trains to give the laborer a moment's breath from the corruption of the cities. Since the city dweller lived in daily peril of his breath forever, what was needed was attention to the root cause:

> When you know how to build cities, and how to rule them, you will be able to breathe in their streets, and the "excursion" will be the afternoon's walk or game in the fields around them.[72]

In order to benefit from their aesthetic heritage, the humbler ranks of society had to effect a close and sustained relationship with nature such as that enjoyed by those who resided in the Lake District. The natural inhabitants were able to reap its full benefits free from "the deterioration of moral character [which follows] in . . . every district penetrated by a railway."[73]

A somewhat less pronounced area of confluence can be found in Ruskin's attitude toward the question of

slavery. Although he and Wordsworth espoused the general cause of brotherhood and purified and unified humanity, both had reservations about the more practical applications of the theoretical moral values they advocated. As noted previously, the reservations had partly to do with the discrepancy between a pleasurable feeling from nature and the translation of that feeling into action. They were rooted also in the general fear of "democracy," or more accurately, fear of the mob, which Ruskin was at more pains to express than Wordsworth. "There is a strange notion in the mob's mind now-days," he once said, "that everybody can be uppermost; or at least, that a state of general scramble, in which everyone in his turn should come to the top, is a proper utopian constitution."[74] Basically, he believed in a kind of caste system and in aristocratic rule, and so could say on the one hand in all earnestness that

> . . . slavery is not a political institution at all, but an inherent, natural and eternal inheritance of a large portion of the human race--to whom, the more you give of their own free will, the more slaves they will make of themselves . . .[75]

And, on the other hand, speak just as earnestly of

> . . . the desire and faith of mutual help; the virtue of vowed brotherhood for the accomplishment of common purpose, without which nothing great can be wrought by multitudinous bands of men.[76]

"In common parlance," he continues, "we idly confuse captivity with slavery":

> I have not been able to ascertain in definite terms, from the declaimers against slavery, what they understand by it. If they mean only the imprisonment or compulsion of one person by another, such . . . being in many cases highly expedient, slavery, so defined, would be no evil, but only its abuse; that is to say, where men are slaves, who should not be . . . It is not, for instance, a necessary condition of slavery, nor a desirable one, that parents should be separated from children, or husbands from wives; but the institution of war, against which people declaim with less violence, effects such separations--not infrequently in a very permanent manner. To press a sailor, seize a white youth by conscription for a soldier, or carry off a black one for a labourer, may all be right acts or wrong ones, according to needs and circumstances. It is wrong to scourge a man unnecessarily. So it is to shoot him. Both must be done on occasion, and it is better and kinder to flog a man to his work, than to leave him idle till he robs, and flog him afterwards.[77]

As Derrick Leon has suggested, the problem of slavery for Ruskin was inseparably connected with the problem of mastership, and this, in turn, resolves itself into the question of providence or improvidence in the individual.[78] This problem is clearly evident in the following passage from Unto This Last:

> . . . if there be any one point insisted on throughout my works more frequently than another, that one point is the impossibility of Equality. My continual aim has been to show the eternal superiority of some men to others, sometimes even of one man to all others; and to show also the advisability of appointing such persons or person to guide, to lead, or on occasion even to compel and subdue, their inferiors according to their own better knowledge and wiser will.[79]

Thus what appears to be an anomaly to the modern reader was really an outgrowth of Ruskin's deep conviction that the true order of society rested in a kind of paternalism with a concomitant noblesse oblige of the ruling class and fealty from all others. Both Ruskin and Wordsworth were concerned generally with the problem of slavery, at least theoretically, since it was a condition removed from their social sphere. But each was more concerned with the ills of society brought on by a mechanistic society, ills more closely related to what they saw around them daily. Both felt that these problems in the social order weakened the moral fibre of humanity and reduced men to an economic state of slavery that robbed them of their domestic affections as well as their normal intercourse with nature. Ruskin, always more action-oriented, addressed himself to this kind of slavery with scheme after scheme for "emancipation." He sought to uplift the cultural values of the working man with the goal of his achieving a measure of happiness in his niche in society and developing pride in his work.

It has been said of Ruskin that no other social critic has given so many feasible commands for those who are really in earnest to follow while the world waits for those larger changes which he so daringly imagined.[80] He sought not only to inflame his audience with a passion for social justice, as Wordsworth did, but also to persuade them to join him in schemes of practical reform. He

appealed to them through his writings and lectures and demonstrated many of his ideas as well in the lectures, in various schools, and, perhaps most significantly, in his proposal for the Guild of St. George. The society was to be the crowning example of the utilization of his ideas, where like-minded persons could band together and return to life on the land and useful and productive manual labor, while at the same time enjoying wholesome recreation and sound educational opportunities based on the ideas already set forth. The cultured class was to provide the funds for the enterprise through tithes. An eight point confession of faith was drawn up which proclaimed the sacredness of nature as the revelation of God and emphasized, among other things, the nobleness of human nature and the joy of love. Though, perhaps, committed to Ruskin's long range improvements of society, few answered his call for such an immediate and organized assault on its problems, and his noble aims were never realized.

As the scheme for the guild would suggest, Ruskin was always interested in the agrarian ideal and the need for working conditions that provide the working man with a sense of joy and pride in accomplishment. His vendetta against the machine grew partly from the idea that the monotony of its use impugned this principle, since workers often became tenders of machines that made only a fractional part of the finished product. They were thus unable to use their creative faculties or to have the satisfaction

of a created whole. What Ruskin objected to was over-specialization, which he felt degraded and brutalized a worker by confining him to one mechanical task without educating him or providing other tasks for him. "It is not the labour that is divided," said Ruskin, "but the men":

> --divided into mere segments of men, broken into small fragments and crumbs of life; so that all the little piece of intelligence that is left in a man is not enough to make a pin, or a nail, but exhausts itself in making the point of a pin or the head of a nail.[81]

Like Wordsworth, Ruskin insisted that the working man should do interesting and suitable work under wholesome and humane conditions. And for both, these conditions were to be based on concern for the affections, for man as a thinking, feeling creature.

Although Ruskin's ideas discussed in this chapter are essentially moral, they, nevertheless, struck at the heart of the existing social and industrial order and caused such a furor that he and his ideas became increasingly unpopular. He was also accused of apostasy because many could not understand why a man of such sensitivity to art and beauty should address himself to the problems of industry and society. He tried to show that all were related, that good art is the expression of a sound life and is thus the creative expression of a people working together in response to impulses that spring from happy and productive lives. It was a message that many failed to grasp. Much of his

writing came to be known as "wild outbursts of irresponsible wrath, only excusable by imputing to the writer a total lack of self-control."[82] Typical of the reaction to many of his ideas is an article that appeared in The Saturday Review in 1860. The writer speaks of Ruskin's "intolerable twaddle," his "windy hysterics," and his pouring out of feminine nonsense like "a mad governess." The writer also calls him a "paragon of blubbering" and notes that "he whines and snivels about England," in one instance, but concludes later that it is a condescension for him to argue at all with a man like Ruskin "who can only write in a scream."[83]

The frequent criticism and increasing mental instability took their toll and Ruskin's writings began to reveal "darker harmonies and sharper dissonances"[84] that echo the anguish he expressed more openly in his letters and resolved only in Praeterita. He grew more reflective and more reticent in his social philosophy and turned to other subjects, autobiography chief among them. As Henry James said, somewhat unkindly, Ruskin was,

> . . . scared back by the grim face of reality into the world of unreason and illusion, and . . . he wanders there without a compass and a guide--or any light save the fitful flashes of his beautiful genius.[85]

"The fitful flashes of his beautiful genius," however, continued to reveal a mind inflamed with a passion for the betterment of society which he compressed into the doctrine "Christ's gift of bread, and bequest of peace, shall be

'Unto this last, as unto thee.'"[86]

Ruskin's social philosophy reflects his outrage at a society so bent on riches and gain for the few that it neglects the moral value of its least common denominator, the working man. His was truly an ethos of doing good as well as feeling good through a pleasurable oneness with nature, though the intensity of his commitment and the magnitude of the problem detracted from the feeling. In Fors Clavigera he writes:

> I have no particular pleasure in doing good; neither do I dislike doing it so much as to expect to be rewarded for it in another world. But I simply cannot paint, nor read, nor look at minerals, nor do anything that I like, and the very light of the morning sky . . . has become hateful to me because of the misery that I know of, and see signs of . . . which no imagination can interpret too bitterly. Therefore, I will endure it no longer quietly; but henceforward, with any few or many who will help, do my poor best to abate this misery.[87]

Later, he admits

> I would give anything to be quit of the whole business . . . therefore . . . I am certain it is not ambition, nor love of power, nor anything but absolute and mere compassion that drags me on.[88]

A mind that reveals a commitment of such proportion must needs have found much for nourishment and for admiration in the works of Wordsworth whose avowed subject matter was nature, man, and human life. "There is scarcely one of my poems," Wordsworth wrote, "which does not aim to direct the attention to some moral sentiment, or to some general principal, or law of thought, or of our intellectual

constitution."[89] These moral sentiments revealed in Wordsworth's works were particularly appealing to Ruskin, especially since they were rooted in a love of nature which he shared. He was attracted to this mode of Wordsworthian thought because of its implications for a too materialistic society and for its hortatory quality. The dedication of each before the cleansing and edifying altar of nature assured a kindred spirit and a concentricity of interest that remained the dominant link in their thought, particularly in their moral convictions. Ruskin agreed with Wordsworth that attention should be given to those attributes which link all men, not to those which separate them. He had said in Modern Painters II that the unity of all men is

> partly in their sympathy, and partly in their giving and taking, and always in their love, and these are their delight and their strength, for their strength is in their co-working and army fellowship, and their delight is in the giving and receiving of alternate and perpetual currents of good, their inseparable dependency on each other's being, and their essential and perfect [sic] depending on their Creator's. [Men constantly build] to higher perfection, and the singleness and straight-forwardness of their tendencies [tends] to more complete communion with God.[90]

Thus he adopts the Wordsworthian triumvirate of virtues as the touchstones for his own discussion because he, like Wordsworth, felt that "even as these are well and wisely placed/ In dignity of being we ascend" (The Excursion, IV, 11. 764-765).

The ascension of being is heightened by the power of the imagination which acts as a clarifying agent and a propellant to that moral state where one achieves proximity to spirit, and by extension, a more meaningful life, since one joyously admires and loves the Creator through his works. This state of being produced by the admixture of love, admiration, and joy in nature precludes any baser emotions or actions and so is a mode of goodness in itself. On a broader level, the virtues become radial values that project from a common base into all realms of social life. Ruskin embraces, too, the ideal of a society ordered by the quality and character of each individual so that there is a common good rather than a laissez-faire attitude that neglects the poor and the working man. Indeed, to both writers, the attainment of the state of "a joy forever" can only be realized when "socialistic" practices are put into common use. Such an idea has some basis in the confluence of thought in the Christian context of the ideal of goodness and brotherhood. And although Ruskin's religion has been called to question by many, its roots were always strong enough to maintain a close relationship to spirit, even if the signs of sectarianism were muted.

Ruskin was attracted to Wordsworthian thought, then, because it was essentially moral and because Wordsworth advocated as the goal of human endeavor virtues attainable by all. Both stressed the elemental feelings that bind all mankind and are all the more powerful where lives are

lived close to nature. The great goal of each was universal self-realization that would, in turn, build a better society. It was a society that both envisioned through their own experiences and the lever of the imagination, and one whose prototype they saw in the quiet, ordered lives of the lake residents. The message, "People, be good," for Wordsworth and Ruskin, became one directed toward individual and collective morality. It takes into account, as much a pleasurable and purifying identification with nature as a manifestation of the Creator, as it does a course of action. In essence, it involves man's coming to grips with his environment, or his place in the whole scheme of things, and thereby effecting change in his own moral outlook as well as developing concern for others. Thus the "goodness" of such a moral outlook is much more than a narrow, restrictive idea of good behavior; it is rather a comprehensive view of humanity that springs from the "centre of self" and takes its measure from "souls of good quality." Such souls will understand Ruskin's exhortation, "People, be good," in the mode of nature, and will understand Wordsworth's dictum that

> In the final analysis the recognition of the beauty of nature and the call to its permanence has in it the overtones of the Christian exhortation to the individual "Be ye therefore perfect; even as your Father, which is in Heaven, is perfect.[91]

CHAPTER V

ONE MIGHTY TORRENT

> The history of a Poet's mind
> Is labour not unworthy of regard.
> Wordsworth, The Prelude

When Ruskin wrote his autobiography, Praeterita, he had already suffered several attacks of madness, or what his biographers called "brain fever."[1] His personal problems and the turmoil accompanying his social writings had taken their toll, and in this last work he sought the peace and calm which he had experienced in his early life. Praeterita is, he says, a record of only those things it gave him pleasure to remember.

> I have written [these sketches] . . . frankly, garrulously, and at ease; speaking of what it gives me joy to remember at any length I like--sometimes very carefully of what I think it may be useful for others to know; and passing in total silence things which I have no pleasure in reviewing, and which the reader would find no help in the account of.[2]

In a letter to Kate Greenaway, he explained that he was describing "the natural me--only . . . peeled very carefully."[3] The calm, pleasant tone that results from this peeling process is evident to the reader who turns to the auto-biography fresh from the often vitriolic tone, and even

rage, of the social writings. In the pages of Praeterita, one finds almost no mention of the social problems that he had addressed himself to so disastrously for so many years, and which form an important core of his writings.

The calmness of tone is also the result of Ruskin's consciousness of the effects of his insanity. "The game has to be played neatly," he wrote his printer. "Whenever I say anything they don't like, they all immediately declare I must be out of my mind." Thus he was determined to prove to his audience that he still had a firm grasp on reality, in what he called this "please-your-worship and by-your-leave style"[4] that he employs.

These are all qualifications that must be borne in mind when considering Praeterita in the tradition of autobiography as the key to the mind and art of a writer, or a history of a mind in the Wordsworthian tradition. The sole purpose of The Prelude is that of spiritual evolution. Wordsworth sets out to record the growth and development of his imaginative faculty and to note the major shaping influences in his life. This is not true of Praeterita, of course, but a similar kind of evolution becomes the by-product of the narrative. Essentially, Praeterita is a tissue of remembered impressions, impressions of those experiences which had pleasant associations for Ruskin. Yet I think there are some significant parallels between The Prelude and Praeterita that will bear examination and lend some emphasis to the aspects of relationship and

influence treated in the previous chapters.

Since, in effect, all autobiography is "part of a great confession,"[5] both Wordsworth and Ruskin reveal a self in this mode through the distillation and evaluation of selected experience. The delineated self thus becomes a composite of the mature author and the objectivized self and has creative and universal significance. "A version of the self" in this mode is what John Morris calls a new element in autobiography, the idea that the very composition is in itself an act that may be as privately and vividly important as any of the experiences recorded.[6] It is clear that the composition of their autobiographies serves Wordsworth and Ruskin in this manner. Their shared ideas on the community of man and the role of the creative person assure this view. The act of composition serves each as a man in his self-realization, as a poet-artist in his creativity, and as a teacher in his role as moral leader. Both Wordsworth and Ruskin actualize the role of the creative person and offer up their lives as documents to be read for the inherent moral implications, as well as for the key to their quality of mind and their art.

In this connection, Ruskin says of Praeterita:

> My described life has thus become more amusing than I expected to myself, as I summoned its long past scenes for present scrutiny:--its main methods of study, and principles of work, I feel justified in commending to other students; and very certainly any habitual

> readers of my books will understand them better, for having knowledge as complete as I can give them of the personal character which, without endeavor to conceal, I yet have never taken pains to display.[7]

Similarly, Wordsworth had said that his minor poems could be better understood through the autobiographical unfolding in The Prelude. In the "Advertisement" prefixed to the poem in 1850 he says:

> The preparatory poem is biographical and conducts the history of the Author's mind to the point where he was emboldened to hope that his faculties were sufficiently matured for entering upon the arduous labour which he had proposed to himself; and the two works [The Prelude and The Recluse] have the same kind of relation to each other . . . as the Ante-Chapel . . . to the . . . Gothic Church . . . [the author] may be permitted to add, that his minor pieces, which have been long before the public, when they shall be properly arranged, will be found by the attentive reader to have such connection with the main work as may give them claim to be likened to the little cells, oratories, and sepulchral recesses, ordinarily included in those edifices.[8]

And at the end of Book XIV, as Wordsworth apostrophizes to Coleridge, he says

> . . . what we have loved,
> Others will love, and we will teach them how;
> Instruct them how the mind of man becomes
> A thousand times more beautiful than the earth
> On which he dwells, above this frame of things
> (Which, 'mid all revolution in the hopes
> And fears of men, doth still remain unchanged)
> In beauty exalted, as it is itself
> Of quality and fabric more divine.
> (11. 446-454)

Ruskin says in Praeterita that during its composition he was forced to look deep into the mirror of self, and in turning back, meet himself face to face. It was a startling experience, he said, "when I got a glimpse of myself, in the true shape of me."[9] Wordsworth, too, in turning back, had met himself face to face; and it is the revealing of this face to face encounter, this "true shape" of the self that one sees in The Prelude and in Praeterita. In both works, the basic organizing principle is that of certain "spots of time" and a tissue of those connecting influences that figured prominently in shaping the mind and art. Both writers stress the early educative influence of nature, with a subsequent dedication before its altar, and a significant crisis of personality that leads to increased interest in man and human values. Moreover, there is a subtle similarity in style and tone that strengthens the bond of relationship and confluence, although each writer emerges as a strong, individual personality.

The emphasis on the educative influence of nature is the most pronounced relationship between The Prelude and Praeterita. Attention was called to this emphasis in Chapters I and II, and it remains here to note only the salient points as they reveal the self of the autobiographies. Both Wordsworth and Ruskin describe the ongoing process of self-realization, of a young mind molded by a reciprocal intercourse with nature that fostered a freshness and

wonder and led to a sense of spirit in all things. Wordsworth's rambles through the wonders of nature and the intensity of his response were matched by those of Ruskin, in intensity, at least, if not in freedom of access. In each case, the recall of experiences is to reveal the developmental influence of nature on the mature mind. The revelation becomes an avenue for the writers' and the audience's progression toward a wider reality, where the personal experience suggests the universal. Implicit in the tracing of the experiences, of course, is the suggestion that nature can perform the same office for anyone so attuned to its powers. Therefore, the claim is not for the Rousseauistic exceptional personality, but one possessing shared characteristics, if favored by the peculiar circumstances of the experiences recounted and the depth of sensitivity to those experiences. The self revealed is thus a discrete personality but one having affinities with the audience.

Ruskin tells his readers, for example, that his "arrogance was not founded on vanity, but on sorrow." There is a vast difference, he says, between the vanity of displaying one's own faculties, and the grief that other people do not use their own. He adds that he made no claim for any special power or capacity, except a patience in looking and a precision in feeling.[10] He explains, too, that the depth of his sensitivity resulted in part from its unique "mixture," since he

> . . . had vialfuls of Wordsworth's reverence, Shelley's sensitiveness, Turner's accuracy, all in one. A snowdrop was to me, as to Wordsworth, part of the sermon on the mount.[11]

It is noteworthy that in an unpublished passage from the manuscript of Praeterita, included in the Library Edition of the works, Ruskin says his description of this mixture and its development was, in effect, his account of his own quality of admiration.[12]

Similarly, Wordsworth reveals his affinities with his readers as he records experiences which could have been shared by anyone. Even in such incidents as the boat-stealing and the trap-stealing, he points up the unexceptional quality of the experiences themselves; it is his response to them that makes them unique. In Book III he says, "Points have we all of us within our souls / Where all stand single; this I feel" (11. 185-186). Earlier in Book I, he had spoken of "those first-born affinities" common to all that fit us to our experiences with existing things and constitute a bond in life (11. 555-558). Abbie Findlay Potts has observed that like Wordsworth, we have all been youngsters with vacations ahead of us and travel pending, and we have all shared experiences similar to those he recorded.[13]

Thus, the experiences noted by both writers are often the everyday experiences common to all. They are idealized only in the process of looking back on the past from the adult vantage point with a view toward emphasizing

certain traits and influences and giving them transcendent significance. The very process of selection and simplification of facts leads to some idealization since the writer must arrive at the "truth" of the self early and treat those experiences which stand out in memory because of the emotional ties to the revealed self.

If each writer can be accused of arrogance, it is an arrogance based, not on the kind of experience, but on the quality and the resultant compulsion to share something of this quality with others. In this respect, it is significant to note that the self is depicted most in relation to the natural influences and to those human ties that relate to this influence, rather than to the merely personal. Ruskin does, however, deal more with the personal than Wordsworth. But he constantly shows that the human ties often made him more alone and ultimately more conscious of nature. This impersonal quality may be arrogance, but it is also a concentration on the major influences that helped shape the mind. With this emphasis, Wordsworth's relationship to Dorothy is in some small part related to Ruskin's relationship with his parents, since he credits them, however negatively, with his introduction to natural scenery and with the opportunity to continue a close bond.

In both works, the revealed self is a sensitive, poetic one nurtured by nature from early childhood to maturity through a closeness that exemplified strong spiritual ties. Wordsworth records his sense-spirit

experiences throughout The Prelude; and it will be remembered that Ruskin, too, recaptures the mood of his early paeans of nature in Praeterita. One sees again the quality and depth of his landscape-instinct, that intense and joyful feeling connected with natural phenomena. The spiritual affinities prompted each to dedicate himself at the altar of nature--Ruskin in the Alps, and Wordsworth among the hills facing the morning sun.

Ruskin's parents had taken him to Italy to recuperate from an illness that caused him to interrupt his schooling. It was a particularly trying time for the young Ruskin because his illness was thought to be serious. In the bracing air of the Alps, he experienced an emotional moment that assured him of his special election to get well, as well as anointed him for his life's work.

> I awoke from a sound tired sleep . . . at six of the summer morning, June 2nd, 1841 . . . I dressed in three minutes, ran down the village street, across the stream, and climbed the grassy slope . . . I had found my life again;--all the best of it. What good of religion, love, admiration or hope, had ever been taught me, or felt by my best nature, rekindled at once; and my line of work, both by my own will and the aid granted to it by fate in the future, determined for me.[14]

Shortly afterwards, he began Modern Painters, the work which, as he acknowledged, was for the glory of God and the advancement of that glory.[15]

Wordsworth had experienced a similar emotional response. "The memory of one particular hour doth rise up," he says, as he recalls his becoming a votary to the

cause of nature. In Book IV of The Prelude, he tells of spending a night "in dancing, gaiety, and mirth," and notes that it was almost sunrise as he returned home. He gives a vivid description of the splendors of nature as he watched the sun rise in "memorable pomp" as the "solid mountains shone, bright as the clouds."

> Ah! need I say, dear Friend! that to the brim
> My heart was full; I made no vows, but vows
> Were made for me; bond unknown to me
> Was given, that I should be, else sinning greatly,
> A dedicated Spirit. On I walked
> In thankful blessedness, which yet survives.
> (11. 324-338)

Afterwards, he said,

> . . . the mind experienced in herself
> Conformity as just as that of old
> To the end and written spirit of God's works,
> Whether held forth in Nature or in Man.
> (11. 349-352)

This dedication figures prominently as a connecting link between the two writers. It was one of their significant spots of time, since it marks the experience when each became a "dedicated spirit" in that mode which was to remain influential in their lives and in their work.

As Ruskin records his experiences, he, like Wordsworth, punctuates them with certain other spots of time that in retrospect figured prominently in the process of becoming. His Springs of Wandel, for example, and his aspen tree have their counterparts in Wordsworth's Derwent and his oak. More important, however, is that major spot of time, the crisis of personality that each experienced following the eventual loss of the early delight in nature.

Such a crisis was virtually paradigmatic of the autobiographical mode, of course, but that of Wordsworth and Ruskin takes on more significance because of the added dimension of the loss of feeling for nature and the subsequent attempt toward compensation.

Wordsworth's much discussed period of crisis was closely connected to the French Revolution and its aftermath. In true revolutionary spirit, Wordsworth saw the conflict as a movement toward human progress. In Book XI, he traces his change in attitude from this optimistic view of mankind to a moral despair that threatened the very roots of his poetic ability. His attempt to reorder his life, to again find a moral meaning in experience, led him to question everything at the false bar of reason. Even his beloved nature fell heir to close scrutiny. In mental anguish, Wordsworth says, and wearied with contrarieties, he yielded up moral questions in despair (XI, 304-305). Ultimately, however, he regained something of his earlier feeling for nature and came back to the natural affections, those wellsprings of human nature that unify and exalt the soul. His own intense mental anguish "chastened and subdued" him so that he realized more fully the universal bonds between all men ("Tintern Abbey," l. 93). This moral reaffirmation marks the beginning of his emphasis as a poet of man, when nature comes to echo for him "the still, sad music of humanity."

This period also has bearing on Wordsworth's religious

convictions. De Selincourt characterizes the problem by noting that Wordsworth always had a passionate intuition of God present in the universe and in the mind of man.

> The temple in which he worshipped most devoutly was one not made with hands, the Bible in which he read the deepest lessons was "the Bible of the Universe, as it speaks to the ear of the intelligent, and as it lies open to the eyes of the humble-minded" . . . later the vision grew dim and . . . was no longer sufficient to meet his needs. Gradually, therefore, he turned more consciously to the Christian faith. This change was the almost inevitable outcome of his experience of life. The Wordsworth of 1798-1804 was the exultant champion of "man's unconquerable mind": "dignity," "majesty," "sovereignty" are words again and again applied to the human mind in the early Prelude, and again and again qualified in the later texts . . . The inevitable yoke brought by the years taught him the need of humility . . . Moreover, he felt a deep sense of responsibility as a teacher, and he had good reason to know that he was misunderstood . . . He was accused, even by readers of The Excursion, of not distinguishing "Nature as the work of God and God himself," and he felt it incumbent on him to remove from The Prelude all that might be interpreted as giving support to the heresy, and to bring that poem into accord with the later modifications of faith. He took pains to relate, as far as possible, his naturalistic religion to a definitely Christian dogma.[16]

Ruskin's path to his crisis was longer, more tortuous, and different in tenor, but it had the same end result--an increased interest in humanity and a later reaffirmation of Christian principles. The "peeling" technique that Ruskin uses in composing Praeterita removes the element of anguish from this version of the crisis.

Therefore, one does not see Ruskin's intense anxieties in wrestling with his religious convictions. These anxieties are revealed quite vividly in other writings, however, particularly in his letters. I have included here several illustrative passages from the letters and from Fors Clavigera since they may serve to supplement the "peeled" version of the nature of the crisis, and in so doing point up the relationship to Wordsworth's crisis.

In a letter to his father as early as 1848, Ruskin had said:

> The more I investigate and reason over the Bible as I should over any other history or statement, the more difficulties I find, and the less ground for belief.[17]

His anguish becomes more apparent in the following letter to Henry Acland in 1851:

> You speak of the Flimsiness of your own faith. Mine, which was never strong, is being beaten into mere gold leaf, and flutters in weak rags from the letter of its old forms; but the only letters it can hold by at all are the old Evangelical formulae. If only the Geologists would let me alone, I could do very well, but those dreadful Hammers! I hear the clink of them at the end of every cadence of the Bible verses--and on the other side, these unhappy, blinking Puseyisms; men trying to do right and losing their very Humanity.[18]

A year later, in utter despair as to what to believe, he admitted to his father a Coleridgean willing suspension of disbelief:

> I began thinking all over my past life . . . [and] saw that I had never really done anything for God's service: Then I thought of my investigations of

> the Bible and found no comfort in that either--for there seemed to me nothing but darkness and doubt in that either . . . So I considered that I had now neither pleasure in looking to my past life--nor any hope such as would be any comfort to me on a sick bed, or a future one. And I made up my mind that this would never do. So after thinking a little more about it, I resolved that at any rate I would act as if the Bible were true; that if it were not, at all events I should be no worse off than I was before.[19]

This kind of compromise quelled his doubts for a time, but it led ultimately to his "unconversion," which he records in Praeterita and elsewhere. His crisis, or at least the passing of it, was closely related to this "unconversion" from sectarian belief. In Praeterita, he tells of the experience after hearing a sermon delivered by "a solitary and clerkless preacher with a cracked voice." Preaching to a congregation numbering not more than twenty-four, the minister assured his small band of the exclusive favor of God which they enjoyed, while pointing out the wickedness of the rest of the world. The experience was all the more shattering for Ruskin because it represented the culmination of those many years of troubled thought and growing doubts about his religion. He decided that such narrow doctrine could serve him no longer, and his "evangelical beliefs were put away, to be debated of no more."[20] He connected this experience also with seeing what he called the spirit of God reflected in a Veronese painting, a spirit which he felt belied this narrow doctrine of election.

The prelude to Ruskin's "unconversion" and its aftermath represented for him a severe break with tradition and it troubled him for many years. One might note here his rendering of the same experience in Fors Clavigera, since the intensity of feeling is more evident than in Praeterita. The "clerkless preacher" with the cracked voice was then "a little squeaking idiot," and his audience consisted of seventeen old women and three louts. And in this version, he emerges from the chapel "in sum of twenty years of thought, a conclusively un-converted man."[21] Even after the above experience in the chapel at Turin, he later writes the following letter to Carlyle:

> The heaviest depression is upon me [that] I have ever gone through; the great questions about Nature and God and man have come on me in forms so strange and frightful--and it is so new to me to do everything expecting only Death, though I see it is the right way--even to play--and men who are men nearly always do it without talking about it.[22]

Ruskin's soul-searching, then, carried him through a period roughly equivalent to Wordsworth's yielding up all moral questions in despair, where he, too, loses some pleasure in nature. In Chapter II, attention was given to Ruskin's loss of the "landscape-instinct," that is, the spontaneous delight and oneness with nature. Although he lost this response of his youth, he always maintained his interest in nature, as did Wordsworth. As has been seen, Ruskin's continued interest is evidenced in his later ambivalence to nature and in the emphasis of its purifying

and edifying qualities. And like Wordsworth also, Ruskin increasingly turns to man as his subject matter. His evangelicalism is replaced by his "religion of humanity," which he emphasizes for some fourteen years. The emphasis marks the major turning point in his shift from art to society. The essence of this "religion" is revealed in the following passage from Fors Clavigera:

> Human work must be done honourably and thouroughly because we are now Men;--whether we ever expect to be angels or ever were slugs, being practically no matter. In resolving to do our work well, is the only sound foundation of any religion whatsoever. We are now Human creatures, and must, at our peril, do Human--that is to say affectionate, honest and earnest work.[23]

By the time he wrote Praeterita, Ruskin had returned to a somewhat more traditional faith, if still a non-sectarian one. In 1886, Christianity had become for him a religion without the damnation inherent in his early belief. Here he formulates his own definition of Christianity which omits mention of the Trinity, the fall, grace, the Bible, as well as damnation.

> The total meaning [of Christianity] was, and is, that the God who made earth and its creatures, took at a certain time upon the earth, the flesh and form of man; in that flesh sustained the pain and died the death of the creature He had made; rose again after death into glorious human life, and when the date of the human race is ended, will return in visible human form, and render to every man according to his work. Christianity is the belief in, and love of, God thus manifested. Anything less than this, the mere acceptance of the sayings

> of Christ, or assertion of any less than divine power in His Being, may be, for aught I know, enough for virtue, peace, and safety; but they do not make people Christians, or enable them to understand the heart of the simplest believer in the old doctrine.[24]

After the crisis of personality, both Wordsworth and Ruskin emphasize increasingly the concept of a unity in all being and in all endeavor. Ruskin looks more actively to society for renewed industry and progress, while Wordsworth begins to lose faith in the power of political action; but both saw the ultimate means of progress in the individual, in those wellsprings of human affections. Such a concept, undergirded as it is by the virtues, or truths, which condition life and the spirit of progress, leads inevitably toward some reintegration or synthesis of a faith. Therefore, the implied message of both writers is that there is no "everlasting no," and that their own experiences attest to that fact. Ruskin tells his readers in Fors Clavigera, for example:

> You cannot but have noticed--any of you who read attentively,--that Fors has become more distinctly Christian in its tone . . . This is partly because I am every day compelled, with increasing amazement, and renewed energy, to contradict the idiotic teaching of Atheism which is multiplied in your ears.[25]

Both writers felt that moral strengthening and thereby a faith, can be effected through a recognition of man's true capabilities and an awareness of his position in the whole scheme of things. And nature is always available to aid

in this process. Since man lives by admiration, hope, and love, a well-fashioned soul has the inherent qualities which will sustain it. As Wordsworth so aptly puts it, whatever one sees, or hears, or feels is but a stream that flows into a kindred stream (The Prelude, VI, l. 743).

The moral crisis and the dedicatory experience are the more significant parallels in Praeterita and The Prelude. There are, however, more subtle relationships in tone and in style that connect the two writers. One very pronounced parallel is the use of water and water imagery in both works. It will be remembered that references to rivers and torrents abound in The Prelude. Sometimes the references typify the source of real or potential vigor and vitality in nature, and sometimes they suggest life in general. For instance, in Book I, Wordsworth speaks of the Derwent as a source which blended its murmurs with his nurse's song and flowed "along his dreams" (ll. 270-274). In Book VII, he describes "the stream which overflowed the soul" (ll. 25-26); and in Book XIV, he explains the quality of his soul as having been "a rock with torrents roaring" (ll. 248-250). More importantly, however, he uses the river as an image of his entire life. All of the water images of the earlier books coalesce in Book XIV as he notes that he had traced the stream of his life from its "natal murmur" among the ways of nature, through a period when it was "lost sight of . . . and engulphed"; the stream reappeared, he continues, to flow strongly again, and from

its progress, he drew "sustaining thoughts of human being, eternity, and God" (11, 194-205). It is singularly significant that he should characterize life as the flowing process that led him to these sustaining thoughts. The implication is of a unity of being which suggests the continuity of mankind and concomitantly the idea of hope and progress. As has been seen, these are recurring themes in his writings as well as Ruskin's.

Ruskin's use of water imagery is essentially different from that of Wordsworth. But since the end results are similar, an examination of this use will serve to give substance to the aspects of relationship. In Chapter I, "The Forming Time," I called attention to Ruskin's habit of staring at things and letting the impressions sink in. This habit of observation always remained an important trait of his character, and over the years it provided him with the materials for analysis in his many works. These impressions form the basis of the narrative in Praeterita, becoming very often his own spots of time. Thus, there is a certain looseness of structure which is unlike that of The Prelude, since Wordsworth's experiences are generally more integral to the process of spiritual evolution. It is in these impressions that Ruskin's water imagery functions most prominently. His narrative includes many crystalline streams; and these streams have an intimate relationship to the revealed self since they become symbolic of his most pronounced characteristic, the tendency to

observe closely. Sometimes these crystalline streams are the source of the impressions themselves, and at other times they serve to "bind and blend things together."[26]

The first chapter of Praeterita is appropriately entitled "The Springs of Wandel." There is the immediate suggestion of the source of being and the growing stages of becoming. Ruskin speaks of the clear stream that was "an infinite thing for a child to look down into."[27] The looking down into the stream is a dimension that he maintains. In addition to the reasons given, there is another contributing factor for this dimension. The vantage points of each writer, mentioned in Chapter II, may be instructive, since Ruskin was generally given to more particularity than Wordsworth. But the essential image of vital, progressing energy is of basic importance. Calling to mind Wordsworth's comment on his early memory of the Derwent's murmur blending with his nurse's song, Ruskin also has fond memories of the Derwent:

> The first thing which I remember, as an event in life, was being taken by my nurse to the brow of Friar's Crag on Derwent Water; the intense joy mingled with awe, that I had in looking through the hollows in the mossy roots, over the crag, into the dark lake, has associated itself more or less with all twining roots of trees ever since.[28]

Throughout Praeterita, Ruskin's development unfolds against integral background scenery that is always animated by fountains, streams, rivers, and torrents. In fact, in describing his instinctive reaction to natural scenery,

he explains that his love of nature was especially related to "scenery animated by streams." Characteristically, these waters figure in the narrative, since, as he notes, he passed many of his days in deep thought pondering "with perpetual watching of all the ways of running water,--a singular awe developing itself in me."[29] In a chapter called "The Banks of Tay," for example, he explains that his recall of the dark pools of water was the source of the train of thought revealed. He refers to his thought as boasting since the chapter treats his quick thinking and his level-headed reaction in times of danger.[30] Admittedly, the relationship of the river and the train of thought is not always readily apparent to the reader, but for Ruskin it was fundamental.

In this respect, the beautiful and oft-cited description of the Rhone is revealing. Ruskin speaks of "the innocent way in which the river used to stop to look into every little corner," and it is as if he is describing his own tendency in the "pathetic" quality attributed to the river. The remainder of his description of this "lambent jewel" is also instructive:

> Great torrents always seem angry, and great rivers too often sullen; but there is no danger, no disdain in the Rhone . . . It seemed as if the mountain stream was in mere bliss at recovering itself again out of the lake-sleep, and raced because it rejoiced in racing, fain yet to return and stay . . . There were pieces of wave that danced all day . . . There were little streams that skipped like lambs and leaped like chamois; there

> were pools that shook the sunshine all through them, and were rippled in layers of overlaid ripples, like crystal sand; there were currents that twisted the light into golden braids . . . there were shoots of stream that had once shot fearfully into the air, and now sprang up again laughing that they had only fallen a foot or two;-- and in the midst of all the gay glittering and eddied lingering, the noble bearing by of the midmost depth, so mighty, yet so terrorless and harmless, with its swallows skimming . . . And the day went on, as the river; but I never felt that I wasted time in watching the Rhone.[31]

Neither the watching nor the description is wasted time since each reveals an aspect of the unfolding self. Aside from the overall idea of ongoing process which the water naturally evokes, there is also the corollary evocation here of human affections in the attribution. The suggestion of joy, happiness, and nobility in the progress calls Wordsworth to mind, since both he and Ruskin insist upon the importance of the affections. The use of water as an image for time and the emotions is, of course, a natural convention, but it gains significance from Ruskin's and Wordsworth's habitual emphasis.

Significantly also, Ruskin speaks of those tricklings of thought that did not take current until years afterwards. And he characterizes himself in the current of life as a "floppy and soppy tadpole . . . flattening and wriggling itself up the crystal ripples."[32] Finally in this regard, it is revealing to note that Ruskin ends his rambling thoughts with a reference to water. This fact is all the

more noteworthy as an indication of its essentiality when one considers that Ruskin wrote Praeterita between intervals of insanity and had no opportunity to really rework his ideas. Virginia Woolf characterizes the work itself as "a beautiful stream that wanders out of control and loses itself in the sands. Limpid as it looks, the pure water was distilled from turmoil."[33] In the chapter "Joanna's Care," Ruskin reverts to scenes of his early childhood and calls the remembered stream the fount of his youth. It was paved with crystal he says, and was sweeter to his kind of thirst than many more famous ones that he later saw. And then, after more recollections, he says, "How things bind and blend themselves together!"[34] It is in this binding and blending together of things that the recurrent water imagery functions in both Praeterita and The Prelude. The imagery calls to mind the development of the self as well as the progress of human life and the great ties of the affections--all "workings of one mind" (The Prelude, VI, 1. 636).

Also in the matter of style, a less pronounced relationship between The Prelude and Praeterita is that of overall tone and the implications of the revealed self--the solitary man. There is a kind of simplicity in both works that is heightened by a sense of candour and intimate sharing. Aside from the inherent aspect of this tone in the confessional nature of autobiography, it gains added importance from Ruskin's and Wordsworth's view of the role

of the creative person and the unity of all being. The moral interest of both assures an intimacy of tone because of the didactic implications of the creative person as teacher. A life such as the one revealed could lead to that much desired virtue, admiration. This, in turn, could lead to a better appreciation of and, indeed, reverence for nature, the major shaping influence and the revelation of the Creator. Each writer remains in the autobiographical mode a man speaking to men, if, perhaps, exhibiting a higher degree of sensibility and awareness than the ordinary man. When Wordsworth repeatedly addresses his reader as "dear friend," though ostensibly he is speaking to Coleridge, the reader comes to assume a sense of community and substitutes himself as the friend. And Ruskin elicits a similar response when he punctuates his narrative with comments directed to "the reader," with an occasional address to the "dear reader."

There is also an essential loneliness and solitude revealed in both works. This is occasioned in part by the temperament of each writer, and in part by the recognition of the importance of the individual. It is as if each has stripped himself down to a prototype of the human condition that proclaims man a solitary figure, long-suffering, but capable of the virtues that lead to the possibility of hope and a sustaining inner and outer harmony. Each man's life is thus offered up as a document to be read by others for the inherent moral implications,

as well as for the key to the mind and art of the author. Therefore, as noted, the speaker in The Prelude and in Praeterita is a composite of the mature author and the objectivized self that he delineates. The lives revealed, then, take on creative and universal significance; and this kind of significance is enhanced by the reader's awareness that central to the delineation is the "Bible of the Creator," with all of its beauties and soothing power.

In the final analysis, what one sees in The Prelude and in Praeterita is the recording of those significant experiences which, when recollected in tranquillity, give rise to powerful feelings about the self and its shaping influences, nature chief among them. The marked parallels in the two works--the spots of time, aspects of style and tone, the version of the self--can be attributed in part to Ruskin's lifelong respect for the older writer, and in part to those shared qualities and influences that helped create a similar sensibility.

In the works of both, the personal element is enhanced by the writers' intensity of feelings toward their experiences and by their shared conception of the community of man. For each, the autobiography gives meaning to the preceding works, individually and collectively, in the disciplina arcani of shared experiences, and in the delineation of the discrete self responsible for the distinctly subjective mode of thought that gave rise to them. The process of delineation was for Wordsworth the

growth of a mind, for Ruskin, the fashioning of a soul.

Wordsworth referred to himself in The Prelude as a traveler whose tale was always of himself; similarly, Ruskin is reported to have said that everything he wrote was part of a great confession.[35] The "histories" which result from such admissions are labors "not unworthy of regard." In their lives and throughout their writings, each celebrated the natural and the primacy of human values; thus, it is altogether fitting that their lives were offered up as examples of what they believed and what they taught.

CONCLUSION

This study has treated aspects of Ruskin's relationship to Wordsworth that are evidenced throughout much of his long career. For over forty years, Ruskin's works reveal significant aspects of relationship and influence in the citations from Wordsworth's writings and in a style and tone that grew from a "Wordsworthian" bond to nature and an interest in the elemental forces in human nature.

It is generally held that Ruskin, as one of the last romantics, was influenced considerably by Wordsworth in his early career, but that the influence gradually diminished as he turned to social criticism. I have shown that the Wordsworthian influence remained forceful, directly or indirectly, even in Ruskin's later writings. I have analyzed the early influence, noting the shared ideas on nature and on the imaginative process which ultimately evolve into intense social awareness; and I have attributed the continued relationship to a shared sensibility to natural phenomena, to a close reading of Wordsworth's works, and to shared ideas on the role of the creative person in the emphasis of the concentric purifying ideal of nature. The basic core of the relationship always remains essentially a moral one since it is closely allied to strengthening

individual character as a means of human progress.

Ruskin's "forming time" contributed in large measure to his development of a sensibility that found compatible ideas in Wordsworth's concept of nature. As a youth, he was able to effect a close relationship to natural scenery which was strengthened by an interest in Wordsworth's poetry. By the time he published the first volumes of Modern Painters, the Wordsworthian influence was at its peak, at least in outward signs. The many references to Wordsworth bolster Ruskin's own evolving attitude toward nature and reveal the respect that Ruskin had developed for Wordsworth. He reveals especially that he shared the emphasis of the more significant aspects of Wordsworth's concept of nature. Close observation was a cardinal principle for Ruskin as he articulated the creative problem for the artist as Wordsworth had done for the poet. And the idea of spirit in nature, with all of its ramifications, was as important to his aesthetic as it was to Wordsworth's theory of poetry.

Ruskin's interest in the creative problem led him to consider more fully the importance of natural phenomena in the creative process, as well as the role of the poet-artist and the imaginative function. He makes important use of Wordsworth's prefaces as he shapes his own ideas. His threefold division of powers is not unlike that of Wordsworth, and it reveals the same concern for "truth" in that moment of intuitive insight when the creative mind

interacts with the facts of observation for a resultant work of art. Both Wordsworth and Ruskin define the creative process in terms of vital interaction involving the distinctive imaginative faculty of the poet-artist, the facts of observation, and the emotional quality of the poetic insight. The unique quality of the imaginative faculty in the creative person points up his moral propensities. For both writers the poet-artist is favored in this special sensibility. He is one who has a close bond to nature, who has thought long and deeply, and who feels strongly, but has command of his feelings. Most important, however, he uses his imaginative power to shape his vision so that it can be shared with others. The sharing is implicit in his role of a man speaking to men and in the universal aspects of the imaginative faculty. Thus the role of the creative person points up the community of man and ultimately leads both Wordsworth and Ruskin to a more sustained concern for the problems of society.

Wordsworthian ideas continue to figure prominently in Ruskin's thought during the period noted for his social writings. He pinpoints the affections as the very basis of his political economy since he stresses the fact that man's emotions must be considered in any effective course of social action. He adopts the Wordsworthian line "We live by admiration, hope, and love" as a recurring motif in his social writings, using the named virtues singly and collectively to illustrate and amplify his own ideas.

Ruskin follows Wordsworth in emphasizing the essential purifying quality of these virtues that are best realized by lives lived close to nature and by persons who recognize nature as the Bible of the Creator. On a broader level, the virtues become radial values that project from this common base into all realms of social life. Both writers constantly stressed moral ideas that are rooted in these elemental feelings that bind all men. The great goal of each was universal self-realization through these purifying and strengthening qualities that would ultimately lead to a better society. The morality of such emphasis becomes one of pleasurable identification with nature as well as a mode of action shaped by the informing elemental affections.

The Prelude and Praeterita provide additional insights in the Wordsworth-Ruskin relationship. Although unlike in outward form, each is essentially the history of the development of a mind that sees creative and moral significance in the forms of nature. The autobiographies thus become a key to the mind and art of each writer by delineating the discrete self responsible for the distinctly subjective mode of thought revealed in the works. There are significant parallels in content and in style, the most notable, of course, being the educative influence of nature. Others that figure prominently are a similar dedication before the altar of nature, and a moral crisis involving a loss of feeling for nature and a subsequent

compensation that leads to increased interest in man. The parallels can be attributed in some measure to those shared qualities and influences that helped create in Ruskin a sensibility similar to that of Wordsworth, as well as to Ruskin's lifelong respect for Wordsworth and his ideas.

In Praeterita, as in Fiction, Fair and Foul, Ruskin rounds out his earlier more unqualified praise of Wordsworth by noting his weaknesses as well as his strengths. This study clearly shows that for Ruskin, Wordsworth's strengths were closely related to moral values. By his own admission, from youth to age, he always considered Wordsworth an infallible guide as far as moral conduct was concerned. Wordsworth became his daily guide because he emphasized compatible ideas of the primacy of human values and the value of nature in strengthening character. Ruskin's distillation of these ideas is his wealth of life; such wealth takes its measure from the Wordsworthian purified and strengthened individual character--character brought into sharp relief by the aspects of relationship and influence revealed in this study.

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[7]"Cambridge Inaugural Address": XVI, 187.

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CHAPTER I

THE FORMING TIME

[1]*Modern Painters* III: V, 368.

[2]*Praeterita*: XXXV, 51.

[3]*Ibid.*, p. 115.

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[5]*Ibid.*, p. 15.

[6]*Praeterita*: XXXV, 20-21.

[7]*Ibid.*, p. 43.

[8]*Ibid.*, pp. 43-44.

[9]*Ibid.*, pp. 44-45.

[10]Frederic Harrison, *John Ruskin* (New York: Macmillan, 1910), p. 17.

[11]*Modern Painters* III: V, 365.

[12]*Letters to a College Friend*: I, 413.

[13]*Poems*: II, 297.

[14]*Ibid.*, p. 315n.

[15]*Ibid.*, p. xxx.

[16]*Ibid.*, p. 257.

[17]Ibid., pp. 261-262.

[18]Ibid., p. 335.

[19]Ibid., p. 338.

[20]Ibid., p. 365.

[21]Ibid., pp. 384-385.

[22]Ibid., p. 379.

[23]Ibid., p. xxvii.

[24]William Knight, The Life of William Wordsworth, Vol. XI of The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth (Edinburgh: William Paterson, 1882-1889), pp. 369-370.

[25]Poems: II, xxvii.

[26]John Rothenstein and Martin Butlin, Turner (New York: George Braziller, 1964), p. 12.

[27]Praeterita: XXXV, 115.

[28]Ibid., p. 297. Wordsworth's line "We live by admiration, hope, and love" (Excursion, IV, 763) was one of Ruskin's favorites. He quotes it at least ten times in his works and, as will be seen, uses the virtues as a basis for several discussions, including art, political economy and education.

[29]Modern Painters I: III, xxii.

CHAPTER II

A LONG APPRENTICESHIP TO NATURE

[1]*Modern Painters* I: III, xxii.

[2]*Praeterita*: XXXV, 166.

[3]*The Eagle's Nest*: XXII, 153.

[4]*Ibid.*

[5]*Modern Painters* III: V, 333.

[6]*The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth*, ed. by Ernest De Selincourt and Helen Darbishire (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940-1949), II, 391.

[7]*Modern Painters* I: III, 307.

[8]John D. Rosenberg, *The Darkening Glass* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), p. 8. Rosenberg suggests that Wordsworth equated nature with "simplicity" in his attack on Augustan poetry, while Ruskin equates it with "truth" in his attack on the grand style in art. His statement is essentially true, of course, but it does not take into account Wordsworth's suggestion of creativity; "simplicity" here is somewhat restricting.

[9]Joseph Warren Beach, *The Concept of Nature in Nineteenth Century English Poetry* (New York: Macmillan, 1936), p. 36.

[10]*Modern Painters* III: V, 365-368.

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[14]Hershey Sneath, *Wordsworth: Poet of Nature and Poet of Man* (Port Washington: Kennikat Press, 1967), pp. 295-296.

[15]Walter Pater, *Appreciations* (London: Macmillan and Company, 1911), p. 42.

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[18]Alec King, *Wordsworth and the Artist's Vision* (London: Athlone Press, 1966), p. 1.

[19]*The Excursion*, I, 232. Italics are Wordsworth's.

[20]Rosenberg, p. 5.

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[27]*Praeterita*: XXXV, 314.

[28]"Preface to the Second Edition of *Lyrical Ballads*": De Selincourt, II, 394-395.

[29]*Ibid.*, p. 394.

[30]*Modern Painters* I: III, 136-137.

[31]Compare the passage in note 56 of this chapter.

[32]Rosenberg, p. 14.

[33]The Stones of Venice: XI, 44ff.

[34]Josephine Miles, Pathetic Fallacy in the Nineteenth Century in The Vocabulary of Poetry (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1946), pp. 183-185.

[35]Ibid., p. 185.

[36]Modern Painters IV: VI, 418.

[37]Ibid., p. 466.

[38]Praeterita: XXXV, 314.

[39]Modern Painters IV: VI, 118.

[40]Modern Painters V: VII, 14-15.

[41]Ibid., pp. 15-16.

[42]Modern Painters I: III, 343.

[43]Modern Painters III: V, 323.

[44]J. C. Shairp, Studies in Poetry and Philosophy (Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1872), pp. 265-266.

[45]General Index: XXXIX, 680.

[46]Modern Painters II: IV, 393.

[47]Appendix to Discourses of Sir Joshua Reynolds: XXII, 505. See Note 28 of Chapter I.

[48]Miles, pp. 239-257, passim; James Logan, "Wordsworth and the Pathetic Fallacy," Modern Language Notes, LV (March, 1940), 187-190.

[49]Logan, p. 187.

[50]"Appendix of 1802": De Selincourt, II, 405.

[51]The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth: 1821-1830, ed. by Ernest De Selincourt (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1939), I, 436-437.

[52]Modern Painters III: V, 215-216.

[53]Ibid., p. 205n.

[54]Modern Painters V: VII, 49; The Poetry of Architecture: I, 157; The Elements of Drawing: XV, 187.

[55]Douglas Ross Angus, "Wordsworth and Other Influences on the Development of Impressionism in Ruskin's Modern Painters" (Unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, Ohio State University, 1940-1941), p. 194.

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[58]Miles, p. 255.

[59]Praeterita: XXXV, 220.

[60]Praeterita: XXXV, 219.

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[77]Ibid., p. 187.

[78]"Introduction": XXIV, xxix-xxx.

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[81]Modern Painters V: VII, 422.

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[83]Modern Painters III: V, 362.

CHAPTER III

THE IMAGINATION

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[12]Ibid., p. 437.

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[25]"Essay Supplementary to the Preface of 1815": De Selincourt, II, 420.

[26]Prose note to "The Thorn": De Selincourt, II, 511.

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[73]*The Stones of Venice*: XI, 48.

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[75]*Modern Painters* II: IV, 36.

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[81]*Ibid.*, p. 253.

[82]*Ibid.*, p. 236.

[83]*Ibid.*, p. 289.

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[102]Lectures on Art: XX, 56.

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[104]"Preface to the Poems of 1815": De Selincourt, II, 436.

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[106]"Essay Supplementary to the Preface of 1815": De Selincourt, II, 412.

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CHAPTER IV

"PEOPLE, BE GOOD!"

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[2]De Selincourt, *Early Letters*, p. 262.

[3]*Modern Painters* II: IV, 215-216.

[4]*Modern Painters* II: IV, 77.

[5]Knight, *The Poetical Works of Wordsworth*, XI, 238.

[6]King, pp. 84-85.

[7]"Preface to the Second Edition of *Lyrical Ballads*": De Selincourt, II, 386-387.

[8]*Unto This Last*: XVII, 105.

[9]*The Convention of Cintra*: Grosart, I, 170.

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[27]Modern Painters V: VII, 257.

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[31]See note 27 above.

[32]"Pre-Raphaelitism": XII, 341.

[33]J. A. Hobson, John Ruskin: Social Reformer (London: James Nisbet and Company, 1904), p. 52.

[34]"The Study of Architecture": XIX, 24.

[35]Ibid., p. 38.

[36]*The Convention of Cintra*: Grosart, I, 120.

[37]*The Art of England*: XXXIII, 292.

[38]*Unto This Last*: XVII, 75.

[39]*Ibid.*, p. 25.

[40]*Ibid.*, pp. 21-23.

[41]*Ibid.*, p. 56.

[42]*Ibid.*, p. 105.

[43]*Ibid.*, p. 29.

[44]*Ibid.*, p. 105.

[45]*Ibid.*, p. 111.

[46]*Ibid.*, p. 112.

[47]Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society: 1780-1950* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), p. 143.

[48]*Unto This Last*: XVII, 17.

[49]See note 42 above.

[50]*A Joy Forever*: XVI, 154n.

[51]*Ibid.*, p. 154.

[52]"Notes on the *Discourses* of Sir Joshua Reynolds": XXII, 507.

[53]*Ibid.*, p. 505.

[54]*Ibid.*

[55]*Time and Tide*: XVII, 362.

[56]*Fors Clavigera*: XXVII, 91.

[57]Ibid., p. 95.

[58]The Eagle's Nest: XXII, 268.

[59]The Stones of Venice: XI, 263

[60]Sesame and Lilies: XVIII, 124; "Three Years She Grew in Sun and Shower," 11. 2-5.

[61]Fors Clavigera: XXIX, 484.

[62]Fors Clavigera: XXVIII, 655.

[63]Fors Clavigera: XXVIII, 255.

[64]Ibid., p. 656.

[65]The Stones of Venice, Appendix vii: XI, 263.

[66]Ibid.

[67]A Joy Forever: XVI, 27n, 111.

[68]Modern Painters II: IV, 36-37.

[69]"On the Projected Kendal and Windermere Railway," 1. 7.

[70]Preface to "A Protest Against the Extension of Railways in the Lake District": XXXIV, 138.

[71]Ibid.

[72]Munera Pulveris: XVII, 282.

[73]Preface to "A Protest Against the Extension of Railways in the Lake District": XXXIV, 140-141.

[74]Time and Tide: XVII, 396-397.

[75]Munera Pulveris: XVII, 256.

[76]Time and Tide: XVII, 364.

[77]*Munera Pulveris*: XVII, 254-255.

[78]Leon, p. 328.

[79]*Unto This Last*: XVII, 112.

[80]Vida D. Scudder, *Social Ideas in English Letters* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1898), p. 230.

[81]*The Stones of Venice*: X, 196.

[82]Hobson, p. 316.

[83]"Ruskin Again," *The Saturday Review*, X (November 10, 1860), 582-584.

[84]Rosenberg, p. 148.

[85]Percy Lubbock, *The Letters of Henry James* (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1920), I, 20.

[86]*Unto This Last*: XVII, 114.

[87]*Fors Clavigera*: XXVII, 27, 13.

[88]*Fors Clavigera*: XXVIII, 486.

[89]"Letter to Lady Beaumont": Grosart, II, 178.

[90]*Modern Painters* II: IV, 94-95.

[91]*The Convention of Cintra*: Grosart, I, 170.

CHAPTER V

ONE MIGHTY TORRENT

[1]*Praeterita*: XXXV, xxix.

[2]*Ibid.*, p. 11.

[3]Ibid., p. lii.

[4]*Ibid.*, pp. xxix, liii.

[5]Hobson, pp. 33-34.

[6]John N. Morris, *Versions of the Self* (New York: Basic Books, 1966), p. 15.

[7]*Praeterita*: XXXV, 11.

[8]*The Prelude*, ed. by Ernest De Selincourt (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), p. 509.

[9]*Praeterita*: XXXV, 280.

[10]*Ibid.*, pp. 419, 51.

[11]*Ibid.*, p. 220.

[12]*Ibid.*, p. 608.

[13]Abbie Findlay Potts, *Wordsworth's Prelude: A Study of Its Literary Form* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1953), pp. 1-2.

[14]*Praeterita*: XXXV, 297.

[15]*Modern Painters* II: IV, 28-29.

[16]De Selincourt, The Prelude, pp. viii-lix.

[17]Letters: XXXVI, 90.

[18]Ibid., p. 115.

[19]John Lewis Bradley, Ruskin's Letters from Venice: 1851-1852 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955), p. 244.

[20]Praeterita: XXXV, 496.

[21]Fors Clavigera: XXIX, 89.

[22]Letters: XXXVI, 382.

[23]Fors Clavigera: XXIX, 88.

[24]Praeterita: XXXV, 351-352.

[25]Fors Clavigera: XXIX, 86.

[26]Praeterita: XXXV, 561.

[27]Ibid., p. 15.

[28]Ibid., p. 94; Modern Painters III: V, 365.

[29]Ibid., pp. 219, 67.

[30]Ibid., p. 68.

[31]Ibid., pp. 326-328.

[32]Ibid., pp. 289, 280.

[33]Virginia Woolf, Praeterita, The New Republic, LII (December 28, 1927), 166.

[34]Praeterita: XXXV, 561.

[35]The Prelude, III, 11. 195-196; Hobson, pp. 33-34.

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