66-9270

NEWMEYER, Edna, 1915–
THE POET'S PROVINCE: WORDSWORTH'S
MANUSCRIPT NOTES IN PARADISE LOST.

The City University of New York, Ph.D., 1966
Language and Literature, general

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1966

# THE POET'S PROVINCE:
# WORDSWORTH'S MANUSCRIPT NOTES IN PARADISE LOST

by

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A dissertation submitted to
the Graduate Faculty in English in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University
of New York.

1966

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the University Committee in English as satisfying the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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# PREFACE

This study is limited, as the title indicates, to an analysis of the significance of Wordsworth's marks and notes in one of the several copies of Paradise Lost that graced his library--significance that is determined by tracing both the marked passages in Paradise Lost and Wordsworth's comments upon them through his poetry, prose, and letters over a representative range of his creative life. There is no attempt in the ensuing pages to arrive at an appraisal of Milton's total influence on Wordsworth's poetic philosophy, purposes, and methods; nor is there any intent to offset the findings of this inquiry against previous assessments of Wordsworth's use of Milton. Both are matters for a more comprehensive and detailed investigation, already in progress, for which the present study provides, I hope, useful and encouraging reconnaissance.

It is difficult to assess my total indebtedness to the noble array of scholars and editors of Milton and of Wordsworth to whom I have repaired again and again over the years. My footnotes and bibliography are, I am certain, only a token acknowledgement of all the help that I have received from them. It is a much easier task to express my gratitude to those more directly involved in training and preparing me for this piece of work. I want first to thank Professor Phyllis Bartlett for her wise and patient guidance throughout the course of this study: it was her suggestion that initiated my inquiry into Milton's influence on Wordsworth, and it was her intercession on my behalf that secured my access to the Wordsworth Library at Grasmere and made possible my discovery of the manuscript notes. I owe older debts of gratitude to Professor Irene Samuel who taught me how to read Milton and to Professor Hoxie N. Fairchild whose lectures were the first to open my mind to a more appreciative understanding of Wordsworth. Of great help, too, in my first tentative investigations of Milton's influence on Wordsworth, were the warm encouragement and learned advice that I received from Professor Robert R. Cawley. And I am happy to take this opportunity to express deep appreciation to Professor Helaine Newstead for her teaching, interest, advice, and support throughout the six years of my graduate studies.

I also thank Miss Vera Farnell of Grasmere most sincerely for her gracious supervision of my education in Wordsworth's school of Nature and for her personal efforts to fulfill my most earnest desire at Grasmere, a view of one of the cataracts that haunted Wordsworth like a passion. I am grateful to the Trustees of the Wordsworth Library for their permission to use the facilities at Dove Cottage, to Mr. Jonathan Wordsworth, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, with whom I have corresponded regarding my discovery of Wordsworth's manuscript notes and my use of this manuscript material in this dissertation, and to Miss Nesta Clutterbuck, librarian at Dove Cottage, for her generous cooperation and assistance during my stay at Grasmere and in our correspondence during the years that followed.

E. N.

New York, April 1966

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## Key To Abbreviations And Sigla

| | |
|---|---|
| *EL* | *The Early Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth (1787-1805)*, ed. Ernest de Selincourt (Oxford, 1935). |
| *MY* | *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth: The Middle Years*, ed. Ernest de Selincourt, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1937). |
| *LY* | *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth: The Later Years*, ed. Ernest de Selincourt, 3 vols. (Oxford, 1939). |
| Griggs | *Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Earl Leslie Griggs, 4 vols. (Oxford, 1956-1959). |
| Knight | *Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, ed. William Knight, 2 vols. (London, 1896). |
| *Prel.* | *The Prelude or Growth of a Poet's Mind*, ed. E. de Selincourt, rev. H. Darbishire, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1959). |
| *PW* | *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth*, ed. E. de Selincourt and Helen Darbishire, 2nd ed., 5 vols. (Oxford, 1952-1963). |
| <> | Indicates words or parts of words crossed out by Wordsworth. |
| <?> | Indicates part of a word crossed out by Wordsworth but indecipherable. |
| [?] | Indicates doubtful transcription of Wordsworth's handwriting. |

# I

# INTRODUCTION

Two years ago I undertook a detailed study of Milton's influence on Wordsworth because it seemed to me that there was more significance to the numerous Miltonic echoes in Wordsworth's poetry than verbal coincidence, unconscious recall, or admiration for Milton's diction could explain. I was convinced that Wordsworth's use of Milton's language represented intentional references to Milton's ideas, but I recognized that I would require more concrete evidence than my own insights to persuade the admirers of Wordsworth who do not share his views of Milton that this point of view was more than wishful conjecture. I needed in a sense to peer over the shoulder of Wordsworth's thought as he was in the act of reading Milton, to eavesdrop on the process by which so many of Milton's lines found their way into Wordsworth's poetry. If Wordsworth could cite Milton's authority to support his own theories of prosody and declare with such startling confidence that he was "sure Milton would have supported" him in his opinions,[1] was it not equally possible that Milton's ideas, as well as his poetic techniques, were a point of departure for his own?

The likelihood of finding such specific evidence was not promising. Unlike Coleridge and Hazlitt, Wordsworth delivered no lectures nor did he write any critical essays on Milton. Except for occasional expressions of admiration or citations of Milton's authority on questions of poetic practice, we have surprisingly little from the "best knower" of Milton, as Lamb called him, that would indicate the nature of his knowledge or his attitude toward it. Nor has anyone recorded that he enriched his volumes of Milton's poetry with the kind of marginal notes for which generations of Coleridge's readers, beginning with Lamb and De Quincey, have been so grateful. The evidence, by De Quincey's word, is rather to the contrary. Wordsworth, he tells us, "rarely, indeed, wrote on the margin of books; and, when he did, nothing could less illustrate his intellectual superiority." In fact, "the comments were such as might have been made by anybody." What little there are of marginal notes by Wordsworth are "disappointing," for Wordsworth "thought of nothing but delivering himself of a strong feeling, with which he wishes to challenge the reader's sympathy."[2]

As stubborn as I am curious and rejecting all discouragement even if it came from an intimate of Wordsworth's, I visited the Dove Cottage Library in Grasmere in the summer of 1963 in quest of the unlikely: marginal notes by Wordsworth in the volumes of Milton's poetry that Wordsworth was known to have possessed. The librarian very kindly put at my disposal the volumes in the Dove Cottage collection: a copy of Paradise Lost published in 1763 from the text of Thomas Newton, owned by Wordsworth in his Cambridge days and containing a fragment of a poem on Milton written by Wordsworth during that period;[3] the first edition of Paradise Lost, A Poem in Ten Books, presented to Wordsworth by Samuel Rogers on "Novr. 13. 182-" with the inscription: "My dear Wordsworth, Pray accept this little volume, one of the most precious that I can give or you receive. It will acquire a new value by becoming yours"; and Charles Lamb's gift of a first edition of Paradise Regained inscribed "To the best knower of Milton, and therefore the worthiest occupant of this pleasant Edition."

A several days' page-by-page search turned up not a word, mark, or sign that Wordsworth's hands had held these volumes, his eyes had passed over their print, his mind had paused and pondered over their contents. Consoling myself with the thought that no one can truly say that he has entered into the spirit of Wordsworth's poetry until he has gazed long and meditatively on his native mountains, I spent several days in pleasurable study of this kind. Four days before my scheduled departure from Grasmere I visited the Wordsworth Museum to pay my respects to the Wordsworth memorabilia on view there. As I passed from glass case to glass case, poring over letters and personal items, my eye fell on an open volume on the flyleaf of which were the following inscriptions:

> This book was bound by my Brother Henry its cover was the skin of some favourite Animal which he had dressed. I forget further particulars. M. W. Rydal Mount Oct. 7th - 1850.
>
> It was also much read and referred to by my Father - W. Wordsworth.[4]

The title page revealed it to be the second edition of Paradise Lost, published in twelve books in 1674, and bore the signature of William Wordsworth.

In a state of hopeful excitement I hurried across the road to the Dove Cottage Library to inquire whether arrangements could be made to remove the volume from the locked glass case and to make it available for my examination. On the following day the copy of Paradise Lost, "much read and referred to" by Wordsworth, was at my disposal. I scouted some seventy-five pages with little enough encouragement along the way: an x at I. 194, an asterisk in I. 592, an underlining of I. 610-613, another x at the end of II. 488. Suddenly, on the turn of a page, there appeared the first promising sign of a successful conclusion to my search: an x at the end of III. 524 on the seventy-sixth page and on an interleaf between pp. 76-77 the kind of brief comment that De Quincey describes.

In all, there are thirty markings spread through all twelve books of Paradise Lost. Of these, thirteen are followed by interleaved comments of varying length. one by a two-word marginal note. The interleaves were inserted, presumably, at the time that Mary Wordsworth's brother, Henry Hutchinson, rebound the volume. The markings are of three kinds: single lines marked off by x, of which there are twenty-six; two instances of underlining, one a group of four lines, the other of three words; an asterisk in one line; a diagonal at the end of another.

My first reactions were two-fold: excitement at finding new manuscript material by Wordsworth; disappointment over the paucity of comment on a "much read" masterpiece. Several months of research proved, however, that this disappointment was unwarranted. The discovery of the manuscript notes was but the prelude to an even greater adventure of discovery in Wordsworth's poetry, prose, and letters. Using the marked lines and the sequences of which they are a part as a guide, I found passages in Wordsworth's poetry that reflect not only the lines in Paradise Lost but Wordsworth's comment upon them as well.

Before proceeding to a discussion of the manuscript notes, some prefatory remarks on their authenticity and my method in handling them seem necessary. I am no handwriting expert and, while the comparisons I made between these manuscripts and others at the Dove Cottage Library showed the same execrable calligraphy that the

Wordsworth letters so deplore, I would not presume to pass judgment on the basis of my observations. The principal proof will come from the evidence Wordsworth himself provides in his poetry.

With regard to method, it does not seem profitable to deal with the markings and comments in the order of their appearance since they seem to fall into defined groupings by subject matter, so that a seriatim handling would involve inexcusable repetition and complicated cross-referencing.[5] There are, for instance, nine marks scattered through the first ten books of Paradise Lost that concern Satan or his followers, on four of which there are manuscript notes. There are two marks that refer to Nimrod, one of which (without comment) seems related to the moral significance of the Satan passages and is best discussed in conjunction with them; the other (with comment) raises the question of compassion for human suffering and will be discussed with more pertinence along with other marked passages that are of significance to Wordsworth's doctrine of imagination and intellectual love. There is another group that grows out of Wordsworth's theories on poetic subject matter, poetic realism, and poetic diction, as expressed in the Prefaces of 1800 and 1815. And still another group deals with technical and scholarly matters.

It should be clear from this method of organization that my emphasis will fall on Wordsworth's absorption and transformation of Milton's thought rather than on the verbal indebtedness to which Raymond Dexter Havens gives such emphasis:

> . . . his very resemblance to Milton would have blinded him to his indebtedness, for it is hard to realize how much one owes to a lifelong friend of similar views but greater powers. To be sure, though he may not have known how numerous

> they were, he must have been aware of the many phrases and of some of the more unusual words that he borrowed; but such things would not have troubled him. He regarded Milton's authority as supreme, at least in diction, and accordingly may have thought that borrowing from him was like taking words from the dictionary. The similarity between his own exalted, orotund passages and those of Paradise Lost he undoubtedly felt and felt with pride. 6

This is not to say that I will ignore verbal indebtedness; I will give it very careful examination, but in the manner and for the purposes that Wordsworth himself recommended to Walter Scott who, in 1805, was preparing an edition of Dryden:

> A correct text is the first object of an editor; then such notes as explain difficult or unintelligible passages, or throw light upon them; and lastly, which is of much less importance, notes pointing out passages or authors to which the Poet has been indebted, not in the piddling way of a phrase here and phrase there (which is detestable as a general practice), but where the Poet has really had essential obligations as to matter or manner. 7

The evidence adduced by this study will, I believe, rule out Havens' general conclusion that Wordsworth was "almost certainly unconscious of the extent to which Milton influenced him."[8] Even without the evidence of the manuscript notes, what we know of Wordsworth's prodigious poetic memory makes such an assumption doubtful. We know that as a boy he could repeat by heart large portions of Shakespeare, Milton, and Spenser.[9] Wordsworth himself tells us that he played literary games with his poetic memory, and he recommends his "practice" to his readers. In a note prefixed to "The sun has long been set," in the edition of 1835, he explains that "not a word" of this poem "is original":

> . . . it is simply a fine stanza of Akenside, connected with a still finer from Beattie, by a couplet of Thomson. This practice, in which the author sometimes indulges,

> of linking together, in his own mind, favourite passages from different authors, seems in itself unobjectionable: but, as the publishing such compilations might lead to confusion in literature, he should deem himself inexcusable in giving this specimen, were it not from a hope that it might open to others a harmless source of private gratification. 10
>
> (Italics W.'s)

Wordsworth again calls attention to his unusual poetic memory in a pencilled comment in Barron Field's unpublished "Memoirs of the Life and of the Poetry of William Wordsworth." Field had quoted Hazlitt's complaint in The Spirit of the Age that it was "mortifying to hear" Wordsworth "speak of Pope and Dryden whom, because they have been supposed to have all the excellences of poetry, he will allow to have none."[11] Wordsworth replies:

> I have ten times the knowledge of Pope's writings & of Dryden's also that ever this writer had--to this day I believe I could repeat with a little previous rumaging of my memory several 1000 lines of Pope--But if the beautiful the pathetic & the sublime be what a poet should chiefly aim at how absurd is it to place those men among the 1st Poets of their Country--admirable are they in treading their way but that way lies almost at the foot of Parnassus. 12

Surely we have reason to expect from Milton's "best knower" an even readier and more conscious recall of thousands of his lines. The material presented in this study will confirm these expectations. We will, on several occasions, see Wordsworth playing his literary game in earnest in some of his most serious poetry. We will find him making a variety of combinations of the following elements: the marked lines in Paradise Lost; other lines in Paradise Lost related by subject but not noted in the marks and comments; the ideas expressed in the manuscript notes; lines from Wordsworth's own previously written poetry that also have a thematic relation to Paradise Lost and his commentary. We will watch Wordsworth in the act of correcting or improving upon Milton within the framework of his own comments, at other times reversing his criticism of Milton in his own poetic practice, and in some cases using Milton's thought as the basis for developing a philosophical point of view that we have considered to be particularly and peculiarly Wordsworthian. What will also come clear is that Milton's influence was not confined to any particular period and that its range extends from Wordsworth's earliest productions to his latest manuscripts. It is almost impossible to hazard a guess as to when the manuscript notes were written for a number of reasons: I have had no success in running down the date when Wordsworth acquired this copy of Paradise Lost; although his son tells us that he often resorted to this volume, he does not indicate the years when he did so; nor have I found any evidence in the Wordsworth letters as to the date when Henry Hutchinson rebound the volume. Analysis by an expert of the paper used for the interleaves could perhaps determine the earliest possible dating for the manuscript notes; however, it cannot be assumed that the comments were written during any one reading of the poem because the ideas that they express are reflected in poetry written as early as 1791. It is just as likely, therefore, that the poetic reflections preceded the comment, as the other way round.

I hope, in what follows, that I have benefited from Wordsworth's advice to Henry Taylor on the proper method for determining the "conscious obligations" of one poet to another:

> . . . the subject has three branches--accidental coincidences without any communication of the subsequent author; unconscious imitations; and deliberate conscious obligations. The cases are numerous in which it is impossible to

distinguish these by anything inherent in the resembling passage, but external aid may be called in with advantage where we happen to know the circumstances of an author's life, and the direction of his studies. 13

## Footnotes

[1] Letter to John Peace, Feb. 23, 1842, LY, III, 1113-14.

[2] The Writings of Thomas De Quincey, III: Literary Reminiscences (Cambridge, 1876), 387-389; "The Two Races of Men," Elia, The Works of Charles and Mary Lamb, ed. E. V. Lucas (London, 1903), II, 26-27; Letter to Samuel Taylor Coleridge, June 7, 1809, The Works of Charles and Mary Lamb, ed. E. V. Lucas, VI: Letters, 1796-1820 (London, 1905), 401.

[3] For the text of the poem see PW, V, 362.

[4] "Brother Henry": Henry Hutchinson; "M. W.": Mary Wordsworth; "W. Wordsworth": son, born May 12, 1810.

[5] See Appendix B for a complete table of Wordsworth's marks and comments in the order of their appearance in the Paradise Lost volume.

[6] The Influence of Milton on English Poetry (New York, 1961; orig. pub. 1922), pp. 199-200.

[7] Letter dated Nov. 7, 1805, EL, p. 542.

[8] The Influence of Milton, p. 199.

[9] Christopher Wordsworth, Memoirs of William Wordsworth (London, 1851), I, 34.

[10] PW, IV, 396.

[11] William Hazlitt, The Spirit of the Age (World's Classics ed., London, 1960; orig. pub. 1904), p. 141.

[12] British Museum Add. MS. 41325, verso 50.

[13] Letter dated Dec. 26, 1823, LY, I, 131.

# II

# THE POET'S PROVINCE

## 1. Natural vs. Supernatural

Of primary interest to the student of Wordsworth are the comments on Paradise Lost that reflect Wordsworth's poetic theories and practice. Central to both was his desire to "keep the Reader in the company of flesh and blood,"[1] and his insistence that "the Imagination not only does not require for its exercise the intervention of supernatural agency, but that, though such agency be excluded, the faculty may be called forth as imperiously, and for kindred results of pleasure, by incidents within the compass of poetic probability, in the humblest departments of daily life."[2] We should expect that Wordsworth could rest content with the validity of his argument only if he could prove it by or against the authority of Milton. In the opinion of many readers, it is precisely in Wordsworth's attempt to assert the sublimity of the natural and the familiar, against the sublimity of thesupernatural and the exotic, that Wordsworth is so radically different from Milton. The first of the manuscript notes on this subject seems to confirm this impression; but Wordsworth's practice, we will find, leaves much in doubt.

In Book III of Paradise Lost, Wordsworth marks one line (548) toward the conclusion of a long passage (501-551) that compares the view of the newly-created world that greets Satan on his emergence from

Chaos to other "renown'd" prospects:

As when a Scout
Through dark and desert ways with peril gone
All night; at last by break of cheerful dawn
Obtains the brow of some high-climbing Hill,
Which to his eye discovers unaware
The goodly prospect of some foreign land x[3]
First seen, or some renown'd Metropolis
With glistering Spires and Pinnacles adorn'd,
Which now the Rising Sun gilds with his beams.
(543-551) 4

Wordsworth's comment embraces the entire sequence (501-551):

> This part of the picture might have been improved by <the delineation>[5] a simple introduction of some of the most interesting rural images of an extensive prospect viewed at daybreak such as Hamlets, cottages & woods, with reaches of a river &c. < peering> displaying themselves here & there thru the morning vapour. The last three verses are inimitably picturesque. It has been said of poets as their highest praise that they exhausted worlds and then imagined new, that existence saw them spurn her bounded reign &c. But how much of the most valuable part of the poet's province < consists in> how much of the real excellence of Imagination consists in the capacity of exploring < existing> the world really existing & thence selecting objects beautiful or grand as the occasion may require. Who is there that does not peruse this description of so familiar an appearance with far more pleasure than the preceding account of the sea of Jasper < and> or liquid pearl, the palace gate imbellished with diamond and with gold, or the golden stairs which were occasionally let down from heaven. 6

The "preceding account" bears quoting because it, as well as Wordsworth's criticism of it, will turn up in Wordsworth's own poetry:

far distant he descries
Ascending by degrees magnificent
Up to the wall of Heaven a Structure high,
At top whereof, but far more rich appear'd
The work as of a Kingly Palace Gate
With Frontispiece of Diamond and Gold

> Imbellisht; thick with sparkling orient Gems
> The Portal shone, inimitable on Earth
> By Model, or by shading Pencil drawn.
> The Stairs were such as whereon Jacob saw
> Angels ascending and descending, bands
> Of Guardians bright . . . .
> . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
> Each Stair mysteriously was meant, nor stood
> There always, but drawn up to Heav'n sometimes
> Viewless, and underneath a bright Sea flow'd
> Of Jasper, or of liquid Pearl . . . .
> (501-519)

As we examine the passages in Wordsworth's poetry that seem to have originated from this sequence in Paradise Lost and from the ideas that it engendered in Wordsworth, we will find more than once that the conflict between Wordsworth's poetic theories and his poetic instincts and predilections is never quite at rest.

The earliest illustration of Wordsworth's claim against Milton occurs in An Evening Walk. It is a lengthy description of "an extensive prospect" in the Lake Country,[7] and contains all the ingredients prescribed in the manuscript note: "interesting rural images"; "Hamlets, cottages & woods, with reaches of a river . . . <peering>" or "displaying themselves here & there thru . . . vapour" or shadow; "objects beautiful or grand" selected from "the world really existing"; the "pleasure" that such a view affords:

> How pleasant, as the sun declines, to view
> The spacious landscape change in form and hue!
> Here, vanish, as in mist, before a flood
> Of bright obscurity, hill, lawn, and wood;
> There, objects, by the searching beams betrayed,
> Come forth, and here retire in purple shade;
> Even the white stems of birch, the cottage white,
> Soften their glare before the mellow light;
> The skiffs, at anchor where with umbrage wide
> Yon chestnuts half the latticed boat-house hide,
> Shed from their sides, that face the sun's slant beam,
> Strong flakes of radiance on the tremulous stream:

Raised by yon travelling flock, a dusty cloud
Mounts from the road, and spreads its moving shroud;
The shepherd, all involved in wreaths of fire,
Now shows a shadowy speck, and now is lost entire.
(98-113)

A MS reading in Wordsworth's copy of 1793,[8] not used in later texts, repeats the detail of "cottages & woods" displaying themselves through a "transparent veil" of shadow:

And mellow lights invest with richer green
Each speck of lawn the broken rocks between,
And cots till now in bowering shades concealed
Through their transparent veil gleam half revealed,
Where oaks o'erhang the road the radiance shoots
On tawny earth wild weeds and twisted roots . . . .

Instead of "the sea of Jasper or liquid pearl," Wordsworth gives us the "sparkling" lights and "burnished" glow of a Cumberland lake:

And now, on every side, the surface breaks
Into blue spots, and slowly lengthening streaks;
Here, plots of sparkling water tremble bright
With thousand thousand twinkling points of light;
There, waves that, hardly weltering, die away . . . .
. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
And now the whole wide lake in deep repose
Is hushed, and like a burnished mirror glows . . . .
(118-125)

In place of Milton's golden stairs "whereon Jacob saw Angels ascending and descending, bands Of Guardians bright," Wordsworth paints a grand picture of a "group of potters," a "panniered train," a "peasant," and a "team" of "mountain horse[s]" ascending and descending a "steep road"; and we hear the thunder, not of God, but of a "blasted quarry":

Their panniered train a group of potters goad,
Winding from side to side up the steep road;
The peasant, from yon cliff of fearful edge
Shot, down the headlong path darts with his sledge;
Bright beams the lonely mountain-horse illume
. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
While the sharp slope the slackened team confounds,
Downward the ponderous timber-wain resounds . . . .
(125-135)

Rounding out the grandeur of the scene above, is the awesome simplicity below:

> From lonesome chapel at the mountain's feet
> Three humble bells their rustic chime repeat;
> Sounds from the water-side the hammered boat;
> And *blasted* quarry thunders, heard remote!
> (138-141; italics W.'s)

If we have missed the point that "the real excellence of Imagination consists" not in spurning nature's "bounded reign" but in "exploring the world really existing," Wordsworth pauses to make the point:

> Even here, amid the sweep of endless woods,
> Blue pomp of lakes, high cliffs and falling floods,
> Not undelightful are the simplest charms,
> Found by the grassy[9] door of mountain farms.
> (142-145)

For Milton's "goodly prospect" gilded by the "beams" of the "Rising Sun" and "adorn'd . . . With glistering Spires and Pinnacles," Wordsworth substitutes a rural "prospect all on fire," of cliffs, towers, and woods:

> Just where a cloud above the mountain rears
> An edge all flame, the broadening sun appears;
> A long blue bar its aegis orb divides,
> And breaks the spreading of its golden tides;
> And now that orb has touched the purple steep,
> Whose softened image penetrates the deep.
> 'Cross the calm lake's blue shades the cliffs aspire,
> With towers and woods, a "prospect all on fire" . . . .
> (168-175)

This earliest and most consistent representation of the imaginative stimulus provided by "incidents within the compass of poetic probability, in the humblest departments of daily life" bears such striking resemblance to Wordsworth's manuscript note in *Paradise Lost* that we might well believe that the note furnished the prose guide for its composition. Beneath the surface, however, an opposing tendency is asserting itself, and lines 170-171 provide the clue. A variant reading (1794) compares this appearance of the sun to "the dark spear that crossed the sunbroad shield Of Satan striding o'er the empyreal field."[10] The intrusion of the supernatural, although excised from later texts, proves how strong was the pull of Wordsworth's poetic affinities even when he was most consciously denying them.

The Recluse fragment (1800) supplies further examples that "the real excellence of Imagination consists in the capacity of exploring the world really existing." Wordsworth speaks of the valley of Grasmere as affording him "boon . . . absolute," "surpassing grace," and "dear Imaginations realized Up to their highest measure" (103-109).[11] Then he bursts forth into an apostrophe to the valley's beauties, in terms recommended in the manuscript note, and claims for them a bliss exceeding Milton's mythical Eden. Once again, we find "cottages & woods, with reaches of a river . . . displaying themselves here & there" and "objects beautiful and grand":

> Thou art pleased,
> Pleased with thy crags, and woody steeps, thy Lake,
> Its one green Island and its winding shores;
> The multitude of little rocky hills,
> The Church and Cottages of mountain stone
> Clustered like stars some few, but single most,
> And lurking dimly in their shy retreats,
> Or glancing at each other chearful looks,
> Like separated stars with clouds between.
> What want we? have we not perpetual streams,
> Warm woods, and sunny hills, and fresh green fields,
> And mountains not less green, and flocks, and herds,
> And thickets full of songsters, and the voice

> Of lordly birds, an unexpected sound
> Heard now and then from morn till latest eve,
> Admonishing the man who walks below
> Of solitude, and silence in the sky?
> (117-133)

But the attractions of Milton's mythical landscape are somehow irresistible. The "solitude, and silence in the sky" give the scene the pristine quality of the newly-created earth that greeted Satan's view after his arduous journey through Chaos.

The Recluse provides another description of Grasmere valley with closer analogies both to Milton's lines and Wordsworth's criticism of them. Wordsworth's "growing prospect" revealing itself to a "pensive Stranger, journeying" parallels Milton's "goodly prospect" that "discovers" itself "unaware" to a "Scout" who has "Through dark and desert ways with peril gone":

> With process not unlike to that which chears
> A pensive Stranger, journeying at his leisure
> Through some Helvetian dell, when low-hung mists
> Break up, and are beginning to recede;
> How pleased he is where thin and thinner grows
> The veil, or where it parts at once, to spy
> The dark pines thrusting forth their spiky heads;
> To watch the spreading lawns with cattle grazed,
> Then to be greeted by the scattered huts,
> As they shine out; and see the streams whose murmur
> Had soothed his ear while they were hidden: how pleased
> To have about him, which way e'er he goes,
> Something on every side concealed from view,
> In every quarter something visible,
> Half-seen or wholly, lost and found again,
> Alternate progress and impediment,
> And yet a growing prospect in the main.
> (474-490)

From 1793 to 1800, Wordsworth's poetry shows an almost consistent conformity to the principles laid down in the Preface to the Lyrical Ballads and in the manuscript note in Paradise Lost. But Wordsworth would have been an unusual poet indeed if he could have entirely resisted the appeal of a "Kingly Palace Gate . . . Imbellisht" with "Diamond and Gold," a "goodly prospect of some foreign land," or a "renown'd Metropolis With glistering Spires and Pinnacles adorn'd." From 1802 onward, Milton's exotic and cosmological prospects creep into Wordsworth's poetry. They are hedged in by qualifications, apologies, and denials, it is true; they are the products of fancy rather than imagination. But as the frequency of such passages increases, Wordsworth's defensive detractions gradually disappear. The familiar and natural are allowed peaceful coexistence with the exotic and supernatural.

In a sonnet written in 1802,[12] we find the strange anomaly of a Yorkshire prospect calling forth visions of an "Indian citadel," a "Temple of Greece," and the "groves Elysian" that four years earlier The Recluse had disparaged and dismissed.[13] If we doubt that this poem is in any way related to the exotic and supernatural prospects of Paradise Lost (III. 501-551), or to Wordsworth's comment upon them, the sonnet tends to support a contrary opinion. There is a renowned prospect viewed at the end of a journey. Where Milton's golden stairs and gate of diamond and gold were "inimitable on Earth By Model, or by shading Pencil drawn" (III. 508-509), Wordsworth's "rich dower" of "citadel," "Temple," and "tempting isle . . . never were imagined." Although Wordsworth admits that they are "objects all for the eye Of silent rapture," he feels that they are not permanent objects for imaginative pleasure:

> Dark and more dark the shades of evening fell;
> The wished-for point was reached--but at an hour
> When little could be gained from that rich dower
> Of prospect, whereof many thousands tell.

Yet did the glowing west with marvellous power
Salute us; there stood Indian citadel,
Temple of Greece, and minster with its tower
Substantially expressed--a place for bell
Or clock to toll from! Many a tempting isle,
With groves that never were imagined, lay
'Mid seas how steadfast! objects all for the eye
Of silent rapture; but we felt the while
We should forget them; they are of the sky,
And from our earthly memory fade away.

Evidently the apologetic tone of the concluding three lines was insufficient to satisfy Wordsworth's poetic tenets; perhaps the pervasive tone of regret may have seemed too great a concession to the poets who "exhausted worlds and then imagined new." At any rate, two years later, Wordsworth wrote another sonnet in which he offers a pointed excuse for this lapse. "Those words," he tells us, "were uttered" in a "pensive mood." The vision they describe "is unstable as a dream of night":

Nor will I praise a cloud, however bright,
Disparaging Man's gifts, and proper food.
Grove, isle, with every shape of sky-built dome,
Though clad in colours beautiful and pure,
Find in the heart of man no natural home:
The immortal Mind craves objects that endure:
These cleave to it; from these it cannot roam,
Nor they from it: their fellowship is secure. 14

Wordsworth has checked the poetic impulse, denigrated it, but he cannot discard it. Both sonnets are published in the Poems of 1807, an "expostulation and reply" regarding the "poet's province."

In 1805, as he was writing the sixth book of The Prelude, Wordsworth was to discover from two experiences--his disappointment with the summit of Mont Blanc and the anticlimax of his crossing of the Alps--that the "bounded reign" of nature could sometimes fall short of the power and the glory of the imagination when it spurned "the world really existing." He was also to succumb, on two occasions in The Prelude, to the poetic pleasure of painting fabled gardens and empyrean prospects.

In Book VIII Wordsworth describes "Gehol's famous Gardens" so that he may declare the beauties of his native country "more exquisitely fair." His delight in the exotic details, however, betrays his pleasure in such fantasies and overshadows his stated purpose:

> Beauteous the domain
> Where to the sense of beauty first my heart
> Was open'd, tract more exquisitely fair
> Than is that Paradise of ten thousand Trees,
> Or Gehol's famous Gardens, in a Clime
> Chosen from widest Empire, for delight
> Of the Tartarian Dynasty composed;
> (Beyond that mighty Wall, not fabulous,
> China's stupendous mound!) by patient skill
> Of myriads, and boon Nature's lavish help;
> Scene linked to scene, an evergrowing change,
> Soft, grand or gay! with Palaces and Domes
> Of Pleasure spangled over, shady Dells
> For Eastern Monasteries, sunny Mounds
> With Temples crested, Bridges, Gondolas,
> Rocks, Dens, and Groves of foliage taught to melt
> Into each other their obsequious hues
> Going and gone again, in subtile chace,
> Too fine to be pursued; or standing forth
> In no discordant opposition, strong
> And gorgeous as the colours side by side
> Bedded among rich plumes of Tropic Birds;
> And mountains over all embracing all;
> And all the landscape endlessly enrich'd
> With waters running, falling, or asleep.
> (1805: 119-143)

It is noteworthy that, although Wordsworth selected the name of his garden from a travel book on China,[15] he derived its features from Milton's description of the Garden of Eden (P. L., IV. 208-275; IX. 115-118).[16] Milton dismisses an entire catalogue of gardens drawn from mythology and travel literature to declare that none "might with this Paradise Of Eden strive" (IV. 274-275). If ever the site of a garden was chosen from "widest Empire," Eden has no rival: "in this pleasant soil His far more pleasant Garden God ordain'd" (IV. 214-215). It is Milton who first makes the point that "Nature boon"--"not nice Art"--has poured forth the beauties of his Eden (IV. 241-243). Wordsworth takes his cue from Milton even when he intends by inference to criticize him. With the wonders that compose Gehol's Garden, Wordsworth juxtaposes the one marvel that is "not fabulous"--"that mighty Wall . . . China's stupendous mound!" This isolated touch of realism casts into doubt the credibility and substantiality of the garden itself, and is characteristic of Wordsworth's repudiation of Milton's imaginary structures, the golden stairs and Heaven's Gate. Milton anticipates Wordsworth in this distinction between fable and reality: Eden is not only a "Spot more delicious" than mythical gardens, but real or historical gardens as well:

> Spot more delicious than those Gardens feign'd
> Or of reviv'd Adonis, or renown'd
> Alcinoüs, host of old Laertes' Son,
> Or that, not Mystic, where the Sapient King
> Held dalliance with his fair Egyptian Spouse.
> (IX. 439-443)

Wordsworth's "not fabulous" is very reminiscent of Milton's "not Mystic."[17] And his declaration that the "Paradise Where" he "was rear'd" is "lovelier far" and "more to every sense Delicious" (Prel., VIII. 144-147) confirms my assumption that Wordsworth has this passage of Paradise Lost in mind.

The "Palaces and Domes Of Pleasure" point to Coleridge's Kubla Khan,[18] but the two poets must have been aware that the same book of travels produced Coleridge's "Mount Abora" and the "Mount Amara . . . by some suppos'd True Paradise" (P. L., IV. 281-282) that Milton disavows as mere fable and inferior to the real Eden of Scripture. By Coleridge's own account of the composition of Kubla Khan, the poem had its origin in his reading "Purchas's Pilgrimage" just prior to the sleep that produced the dream. The copy of Purchas that Coleridge was using may well have been the volume that remained in Wordsworth's library until his death. Milton's use of Purchas has long been established. It is no accident, therefore, that Coleridge's Mount Abora, Wordsworth's Gardens of Gehol, and Milton's Eden show marked parallels with the gardens described in Purchas. Not the least noteworthy is the mountain setting that is common to all three.[19]

Wordsworth's "Rocks, Dens, and Groves of foliage taught to melt Into each other their obsequious hues" remind us of Eden's "umbrageous Grots and Caves" (IV. 257), even more so of the

> sweet interchange
> Of Hill and Valley, Rivers, Woods and Plains,
> . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
> Rocks, Dens, and Caves
> (IX. 115-118)

that made Eden "A happy rural seat of various view" (IV. 247). And the "waters running, falling, or asleep" of Gehol's Gardens echo the "crisped Brooks, Rolling" (P. L., IV. 237-238), the "rapid current" (IV. 227), the "many a rill" that "united fell" (IV. 229-230), and the "murmuring waters" (IV. 260) that drowsed in Eden.

The features of Milton's Eden also serve to depict the "true Paradise" of Wordsworth's native region. Crowning the glories of Eden are the virtues of its human inhabitants (P. L., IV. 288-294); so, too, the "fragrance breathing of humanity" (Prel., 1805: VIII. 151) perfects the beauty of Wordsworth's green earth. The simple occupations of Adam and Eve who had

> no more toil
> Of thir sweet Gard'ning labor than suffic'd
> To recommend cool _Zephyr_, and made ease
> More easy, wholesome thirst and appetite
> More grateful . . . .
> (IV. 327-331)

have their echo in the pursuits of Wordsworth's countryman:

> Man free, man working for himself, with choice
> Of time, and place, and object; by his wants,
> His comforts, native occupations, cares,
> Conducted on to individual ends
> Or social . . . .
> (_Prel._, 1805: VIII. 152-156)

Wordsworth's rural man,

> followed by a train
> Unwoo'd, unthought-of even, simplicity,
> And beauty, and inevitable grace
> (156-158)

reflects the "grace . . . pour'd" on the "shape" of Adam and Eve (_P. L._, IV. 364-365) and the "train" of "Perfections" that attends upon Adam:

> Meanwhile our Primitive great Sire, to meet
> His god-like Guest, walks forth, without more train
> Accompanied than with his own complete
> Perfections; in himself was all his state,
> More solemn than the tedious pomp that waits
> On Princes, when thir rich Retinue long
> Of Horses led, and Grooms besmear'd with Gold
> Dazzles the crowd, and sets them all agape.
> (_P. L._, V. 350-357)

Although Wordsworth criticizes the pomp and glory of Milton's ethereal prospects, Milton's scorn for the dazzle of "tedious pomp" and the preeminence that he accords to the beauty, grace, and dignity of simplicity very likely confirmed Wordsworth's own preferences. Wordsworth may well have had in mind just such a passage from

Paradise Lost, as the foregoing, when he formulated the poetic principle that lies behind his comment on the "poet's province":

> In the higher poetry, an enlightened Critic chiefly looks for a reflection of the wisdom of the heart and the grandeur of the imagination. Wherever these appear, simplicity accompanies them; Magnificence herself when legitimate, depending upon a simplicity of her own, to regulate her ornaments. 20

And when he concluded in The Recluse that the beauty of earth, "a living Presence," surpassed "the most fair ideal Forms Which craft of delicate Spirits hath composed,"[21] he was probably taking his cue from these lines in Paradise Lost:

> O Earth, how like to Heav'n, if not preferr'd
> More justly, Seat worthier of Gods, as built
> With second thoughts, reforming what was old!
> For what God after better worse would build?
> (IX. 99-102)

In Book X of The Prelude, Wordsworth recounts an emotional experience that transforms natural phenomena into supernatural vision. It is interesting that his imagination should have to "spurn" the "bounded reign" of the "world really existing" in order to render a faithful reproduction of an event within those boundaries. The occasion is the news that Robespierre has fallen; the landscape is transfigured by Wordsworth's emotions of joy and gratitude:

> Over the smooth Sands
> Of Leven's ample Aestuary lay
> My journey, and beneath a genial sun;
> With distant prospect among gleams of sky
> And clouds, and intermingled mountain tops,
> In one inseparable glory clad,
> Creatures of one ethereal substance, met
> In Consistory, like a diadem
> Or crown of burning Seraphs, as they sit
> In the Empyrean. Underneath this show

> Lay, as I knew, the nest of pastoral vales
> Among whose happy fields I had grown up
> From childhood. On the fulgent spectacle
> Which neither changed, nor stirr'd, nor pass'd away,
> I gazed . . . .
> (1805: X. 475-489)

"These lines," as de Selincourt notes, "ring with Miltonic echoes,"[22] but the allusions to which he refers do not seem to me to be appropriate to this scene: "Ethereal substance" (P. L., VI. 330) is part of a description of Satan's first wound in the Battle in Heaven; "in Consistory" (P. R., I. 42) describes a meeting of the Fallen Angels; "bright Seraphim in burning row" (At A Solemn Music, l. 10) is more appropriate in that it describes a scene in heaven, but it lacks other features of Wordsworth's description. The first scene in Heaven in Paradise Lost (III. 56-62) seems a more likely source:

> Now had th' Almighty Father from above,
> From the pure Empyrean where he sits
> High Thron'd above all highth, bent down his eye,
> His own works and their works at once to view:
> About him all the Sanctities of Heaven
> Stood thick as Stars, and from his sight receiv'd
> Beatitude past utterance . . . .

Milton, like Wordsworth, begins with the heavenly setting, directs our attention to the earth below, and then returns to the "Empyrean." Milton's circle of Angels "thick as Stars" suggests a "diadem . . . of burning Seraphs"; the attendant Angels who receive "Beatitude past utterance" from the sight of God are indeed "In one inseparable glory clad." The "intermingled mountain tops," transformed by Wordsworth's emotion into a "Consistory" of "burning Seraphs," are reminiscent of another scene in Heaven (P. L., V. 619-623) in which Milton compares a circle of Angels dancing around the throne of God to the "intervolv'd" motions of the "starry Sphere." In the early text, Wordsworth attributes his vision over "Leven's ample Aestuary" to his "fancy" (X. 489) rather than to his imagination. After 1839, the word "fancy" disappears and along with it the apology that the use of this term implies.[23]

The conflict between the natural and the supernatural "prospect," between the familiar rural scene and the exotic panorama of a metropolis adorned "with glistering Spires and Pinnacles," continues in The Excursion. What is remarkable about the passages now to be examined is the consistency with which they refer to Paradise Lost (III. 501-551); to Wordsworth's comment upon it; to his own and Milton's descriptions of fabulous gardens, among them Eden; to Milton's scenes in Heaven and Wordsworth's visions in the Empyrean.

We should remember that Milton compares Satan's view of Heaven's Gate, the golden stair, and the newly-created earth to the experience of a "Scout" who

> Through dark and desert ways with peril gone
> All night; at last by break of cheerful dawn
> Obtains the brow of some high-climbing Hill,
> Which to his eye discovers unaware
> The goodly prospect of some foreign land
> First seen, or some renown'd Metropolis
> With glistering Spires and Pinnacles adorn'd,
> Which now the Rising Sun gilds with his beams.
> (III. 543-551)

We should also bear in mind that what follows these supernatural and fabulous prospects is Satan's first glimpse of Eden, superior in every respect to all the gardens of myth and fable.

In Book II of The Excursion (319-348), Wordsworth describes his preferred rural scene, "Renowned for splendid prospect far and wide" (l. 322). He begins with an account of his journey to that spot, marked by "peril," "dark and desert ways," a "high-climbing hill":

> We scaled, without a track to ease our steps,
> A steep ascent; and reached a dreary plain,
> With a tumultuous waste of huge hill tops
> Before us; savage region!
> (323-326)

The "dreary plain" is a reminder of Hell (*P. L.*, I. 180);[24] the trackless ascent and "tumultuous waste" of the "savage region" recall Satan's journey through Chaos. Wordsworth's lines also echo Satan's subsequent approach to Eden:

> . . . a steep wilderness, whose hairy sides
> With thicket overgrown, grotesque and wild,
> Access deni'd . . . .
> . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
> Now to th' ascent of that steep savage Hill
> *Satan* had journey'd on, pensive and slow;
> But further way found none, so thick entwin'd,
> As one continu'd brake, the undergrowth
> Of shrubs and tangling bushes had perplext
> All path of Man or Beast that pass'd that way:
> One Gate there only was, and that look'd East . . . .
> (*P. L.*, IV. 135-137; 172-178)

Wordsworth is obviously playing his literary game of "linking together, in his own mind, favourite passages." He combines Satan's first view of the newly-created world after his perilous journey through Chaos (III. 501-551) with Satan's first view of Eden and its savage approaches (IV. 135-178). In conformity with the opinions of his manuscript note, Wordsworth substitutes a rural "prospect . . . renowned . . . far and wide" for Milton's "goodly prospect" of a "renown'd Metropolis" of Book III; his vale is Milton's true Eden of Book IV, but it "discovers" itself "unaware" like the "goodly prospect" of Book III:

all at once, behold!
Beneath our feet, a little lowly vale,
A lowly vale, and yet uplifted high
Among the mountains; even as if the spot
Had been from eldest time by wish of theirs
So placed, to be shut out from all the world!
Urn-like it was in shape, deep as an urn;
With rocks encompassed, save that to the south
Was one small opening . . . .
(Exc., II. 327-335)

Milton's Eden has "One gate . . . only . . . and that look'd East"; Wordsworth's vale has "one small opening" and that looked "to the south." It has "one bare dwelling; one abode, no more" (Exc., II. 339); it is peaceful like prelapsarian Eden and free of "Sickness, or accident, or grief, or pain":

Far and near
We have an image of the pristine earth,
The planet in its nakedness: were this
Man's only dwelling, sole appointed seat,
First, last, and single, in the breathing world,
It could not be more quiet: peace is here
Or nowhere; days unruffled by the gale
Of public news or private; years that pass
Forgetfully; uncalled upon to pay
The common penalties of mortal life,
Sickness, or accident, or grief, or pain.
(Exc., II. 359-369)

We have here an amazing demonstration of the close interweaving in Wordsworth's mind of favorite passages in Milton's poetry, of Wordsworth's criticism of one of those passages, and of his own poetic theories and purposes. It is as if Wordsworth could not feel secure in expressing his ideas, even when they are meant as a challenge to Milton's, without the reassuring "underpresence" of Milton.

The Excursion offers another rural vista that illustrates the principles of Wordsworth's manuscript note on Milton's exotic "prospects." Here there is no undercurrent of conflict and no manifest dependence on Milton:

> --So we descend: and winding round a rock
> Attain a point that showed the valley--stretched
> In length before us; and, not distant far,
> Upon a rising ground a grey church-tower,
> Whose battlements were screened by tufted trees.
> And towards a crystal Mere, that lay beyond
> Among steep hills and woods enbosomed, flowed
> A copious stream with boldly winding-course;
> Here traceable, there hidden--there again
> To sight restored, and glittering in the sun.
> On the stream's bank, and everywhere, appeared
> Fair dwellings, single, or in social knots . . . .
> (V. 77-88)

The integrant features of this landscape derive from the formula proposed in the manuscript note: "an extensive prospect" of "cottages & woods, with reaches of a river &c. displaying themselves here and there." But Milton is not entirely absent from Wordsworth's considerations. The "battlements" of a "grey church-tower" replace the "glistering Spires and Pinnacles" of Milton's "Metropolis";[25] the "crystal Mere" and "glittering" stream supplant the "sea of Jasper or liquid Pearl." To emphasize these subrogations, Wordsworth informs us that the pastor of this grey church is both rural and regal: he is the "shepherd of his flock; or, as a king Is styled . . . The father of his people" (101-104).

A late addition to The Excursion, however, written apparently just prior to its publication in 1814,[26] shows Wordsworth giving way almost entirely to the poet's impulse to "spurn" nature's "bounded reign." This passage (II. 830-874) impressed one of Wordsworth's contemporaries as a singular instance of Wordsworth's descriptive powers, for he quoted it with this comment in an article "On the Genius and Writings of Wordsworth" that appeared in the New Monthly Magazine on November 1, 1820:

> Take for example, the following picture of masses of vapour receding among the steeps and summits of the mountains after a storm beneath an azure sky; the earlier part of which seems almost like another glimpse of Milton's heaven; and the conclusion of which impresses us solemnly with the most awful visions of Hebrew prophecy. 27

That is to say, since Milton's scenes in the empyrean are drawn from Scripture, that the entire passage is remarkably Miltonic. Equally notable are the echoes from the passages of Wordsworth's poetry that we have been discussing in connection with his manuscript note. Once again, the prospect is viewed after a difficult journey:

> A single step, that freed me from the skirts
> Of the blind vapour, opened to my view
> Glory beyond all glory ever seen
> By waking sense or by the dreaming soul!
> (830-833)

The first sight "opened to" Satan's "view" on his emergence from Chaos is "inimitable on Earth By Model, or by Shading pencil drawn" (P. L., III. 508-509) or, as Wordsworth puts it, a "glory" beyond the powers of "waking sense" or "dreaming soul" to conceive.

Through 1820, this portion of the description continues with a revealing concession to the poetic value of the heavenly "prospect" that is to follow; interesting, too, is the reiteration of its inimitable gorgeousness:

> Though I am conscious that no power of words
> Can body forth, no hues of speech can paint
> That gorgeous spectacle--too bright and fair
> Even for remembrance; yet the attempt may give
> Collateral interest to this homely Tale . . . . 28

That "familiar appearances" in "the world really existing" may require the "collateral interest" of the supernatural to ensure the reader's enjoyment, is a startling admission for Wordsworth to make.

It is no surprise, therefore, that these lines disappear after 1820. But the retention of the "gorgeous spectacle" testifies to Wordsworth's pleasure in spurning the "bounded reign" of the "familiar" and to the corresponding pleasure he expects to excite in his readers. He proceeds with what the New Monthly Magazine reviewer calls "another glimpse of Milton's heaven":

> The appearance, instantaneously disclosed,
> Was of a mighty city--boldly say
> A wilderness of building, sinking far
> And self-withdrawn into a boundless depth,
> Far sinking into splendor--without end!
> Fabric it seemed of diamond and of gold,
> With alabaster domes, and silver spires,
> And blazing terrace upon terrace, high
> Uplifted; here, serene pavilions bright,
> In avenues disposed; there, towers begirt
> With battlements that on their restless fronts
> Bore stars--illumination of all gems!
> (834-845)

The "mighty city . . . instantaneously disclosed" is Milton's "renown'd Metropolis" that the "eye discovers unaware"; Wordsworth's "wilderness of building," "silver spires," "towers begirt With battlements" parallel Milton's "glistering Spires and Pinnacles" (P. L., III. 547-550); the "Fabric . . . of diamond and of gold," the "fronts" that "Bore stars--illumination of all gems" follow the pattern of Milton's heavenly Gate:

> The work as of a Kingly Palace Gate
> With Frontispiece of Diamond and Gold
> Imbellisht; thick with sparkling orient Gems
> The Portal shone, inimitable on Earth . . . .
> (III. 505-508)

The echoes of Wordsworth's own poetry, and the inner conflict that they reveal, are equally noteworthy. The "mighty city" and "alabaster domes" that he describes so pleasurably in 1814 recall the

"Indian citadel," envisioned in the Yorkshire skies--admired as a wonder "never imagined" in Sonnet XI (1802), but rejected along with "every shape of sky-built dome" in Sonnet XII (1804).[29] They also evoke the "Palaces and Domes Of Pleasure" of Gehol's Gardens (Prel., VIII. 119-143), denigrated along with their Miltonic and Coleridgean associations,[30] in favor of the "tract more exquisitely fair" of Wordsworth's native country. The telltale "here and there" appearance of "pavilions bright" and "towers begirt With battlements" reflect the "here and there" display of rural images of the manuscript note and of all the rural prospects of An Evening Walk, The Prelude, and The Excursion itself.

What has happened to the Wordsworth who insists that the description of a "familiar appearance" gives "far more pleasure" than a "sea of Jasper or liquid Pearl," a "palace gate imbellished with diamond and with gold," or a pair of "golden stairs . . . occasionally let down from heaven"? Wordsworth interjects the anticipated modification; his marvels issue from natural phenomena:

> By earthly nature had the effect been wrought
> Upon the dark materials of the storm
> Now pacified; on them, and on the coves
> And mountain-steeps and summits, whereunto
> The vapours had receded, taking there
> Their station under a cerulean sky.
> (846-851)

Milton justifies his marvels in the same naturalistic terms that Wordsworth employs. Following close upon the fabulous prospect criticized by Wordsworth's manuscript note (P. L., III. 501-551) is Milton's description of the Sun, another landscape of gold, silver, and varied jewels (III. 591-597). "What wonder," says Milton, that such prodigies should exist on the Sun, if

> Th' Arch-chemic Sun so far from us remote
> Produces with Terrestrial Humor mixt
> Here in the dark so many precious things
> Of color glorious and effect so rare?
> (606-612)

Wordsworth's apologetic interpolation is characteristic, but with a difference: what he justifies in The Excursion (1814) as an "effect . . . wrought" by "earthly nature," he dismissed as unjustifiable in Sonnet XII (1804)[31] where a "sky-built dome, Though clad in colours beautiful and pure" can "Find in the heart of man no natural home."

As we continue reading, we realize that Wordworth's explanation has been a mere qualm before another Miltonic burst into the empyrean: "Oh, 'twas an unimaginable sight!" he echoes Milton once more:

> Clouds, mists, streams, watery rocks and emerald turf,
> Clouds of all tincture, rocks and sapphire sky,
> Confused, commingled, mutually inflamed,
> Molten together, and composing thus,
> Each lost in each, that marvelous array
> Of temple, palace, citadel, and huge
> Fantastic pomp of structure without name,
> In fleecy folds voluminous, enwrapped.
> (852-860)

The Miltonic origins of these images can best be traced through Wordsworth's own poetry. The fusion of colors and objects, "mutually inflamed," that compose this "marvelous array Of temple, palace, citadel, and huge Fantastic pomp" looks back to the wonders of Gehol's Gardens where "Rocks, Dens, and Groves of foliage" were "taught to melt Into each other their obsequious hues" (Prel., VIII. 134-135). And these lines in turn lead to the "sweet interchange

Of Hill and Valley, Rivers, Woods, and Plains . . . Rocks, Dens, and Caves" (P. L. , IX. 115-118) that made Eden "A happy rural seat of various view" (P. L. , IV. 247).[32] The "commingled" effect of clouds, rocks, and sky also recollects, along with its Miltonic reverberations (P. L. , III. 57-62; V.619-623), the empyrean vision that emerged from "gleams of sky And clouds, and intermingled mountain tops, In one inseparable glory clad" (Prel. , X. 478-483), when Wordsworth heard the news of Robespierre's fall.[33] The "Fantastic pomp of structure" evokes the "Structure high . . . mysteriously . . . meant"--the golden stairs of Paradise Lost (III. 502-516).

As Wordsworth develops his vision in The Excursion, its association with the Robespierre passage in The Prelude receives further substantiation, for it is a "Consistory" in Heaven described in greater detail:

> Right in the midst, where interspace appeared
> Of open court, an object like a throne
> Under a shining canopy of state
> Stood fixed; and fixed resemblances were seen
> To implements of ordinary use,
> But vast in size, in substance glorified;
> Such as by Hebrew Prophets were beheld
> In vision--forms uncouth of mightiest power
> For admiration and mysterious awe.
> (II. 861-869)

Under the "fulgent spectacle" from which Wordsworth could not avert his "gaze" in The Prelude, "Lay, as . . . [he] knew, the nest of pastoral vales Among whose happy fields . . . [he] had grown up From Childhood" (X. 484-489). The same preeminence of supernatural over natural persists in The Excursion:

> This little Vale, a dwelling-place of Man,
> Lay low beneath my feet; 'twas visible--
> I saw not, but I felt that it was there.
> That which I saw was the revealed abode
> Of Spirits in beatitude . . . .
> (870-874; italics W.'s)

In the closing line, Wordsworth forges still another link between the Heaven of Paradise Lost (III. 57-62), the heavenly "Consistory" of The Prelude, and the heavenly "court" of The Excursion. The "inseparable glory" of The Prelude's Seraphs and the "beatitude" of The Excursion's Spirits have their source in Milton's "Sanctities of Heaven" ranged "thick as Stars" about the throne of the "Almighty Father" from whose "sight" they "receiv'd Beatitude past utterance."

In Book III of The Excursion, Wordsworth himself calls attention to the interrelation of these segments of his verse. The Solitary is recounting the fall of the Bastille; once more, under the stress of emotion, vision supersedes reality. While the circumstances provide an implicit analogy to the Robespierre passage in The Prelude, the Solitary compares this marvelous seizure to his visionary experience in the mountains disclosed in Book II:[34]

> The crash it [the Bastille] made in falling! From the wreck
> A golden palace rose, or seemed to rise,
> The appointed seat of equitable law
> And mild paternal sway. The potent shock
> I felt: the transformation I perceived,
> As marvelously seized as in that moment
> When, from the blind mist issuing, I beheld
> Glory--beyond all glory ever seen,
> Confusion infinite of heaven and earth,
> Dazzling the soul.
> (III. 713-722)

Enough has been said regarding the Miltonic underpinnings of the related passages in The Prelude and The Excursion to require no belaboring here. The hopes for the new democracy expressed in "mild paternal sway" inject a new Miltonic note reminiscent of Michael's promise to Adam that he will not be denied the care and guidance of God after his departure from Eden: God will be found in valley and plain "still compassing thee round With goodness and paternal Love" (P. L., XI. 349-353). The pattern for church government proposed by Milton in The Reason of Church Government provides a closer model for the civil government envisioned by Wordsworth in these lines. Under the new covenant of the Gospel, Milton explains, God is no longer:

> . . . a judge after the sentence of the Law, nor as it were a schoolmaister of perishable rites, but a most indulgent father governing his Church as a family of sons in their discreet age; and therefore in the sweetest and mildest manner of paternal discipline . . . . 35

In an extensive descriptive sequence in Book IX of The Excursion, Wordsworth attempts to reconcile his contending affinities for the rural prospects that the manuscript note estimates to be "the most valuable part of the poet's province" and for the cosmological and mythical landscapes with which Paradise Lost abounds. The circumstances are familiar: there is a difficult climb; a "fair prospect" opens gradually to the sight; there is a stretch of water, a majestic church-tower, cottages; the valley has the "rocks impassable and mountains huge," the peace and pristine simplicity of Eden:

> as we clomb,
> The Valley, opening out her bosom, gave
> Fair prospect, intercepted less and less,
> O'er the flat meadows and indented coast
> Of the smooth lake, in compass seen: far off,
> And yet conspicuous, stood the old Church-tower,
> In majesty presiding over fields
> And habitations seemingly preserved
> From all intrusion of the restless world
> By rocks impassable and mountains huge.
> (570-579)

Suddenly another prospect, this time in the sky, "discovers" itself "unaware" through the mist. It is in every respect a duplicate of the "effect . . . wrought" by "earthly nature" in Book II of The Excursion. Also evident are its affinities to the Gardens of Gehol and the Consistory of burning Seraphs in The Prelude. There is, however, no apparent indication of supernatural vision:

> Already had the sun,
> Sinking with less than ordinary state,
> Attained his western bound; but rays of light--
> Now suddenly diverging from the orb
> Retired behind the mountain-tops or veiled
> By the dense air--shot upwards to the crown
> Of the blue firmament--aloft and wide:
> And multitudes of little floating clouds,
> Through their ethereal texture pierced--ere we,
> Who saw, of change were conscious--had become
> Vivid as fire; clouds separately poised,--
> Innumerable multitude of forms
> Scattered through half the circle of the sky;
> And giving back, and shedding each on each,
> With prodigal communion, the bright hues
> Which from the unapparent fount of glory
> They had imbibed, and ceased not to receive.
> That which the heavens displayed, the liquid deep
> Repeated; but with unity sublime!
> (Exc., IX. 590-608)

In this sequence, Wordsworth displays the dazzling complexity with which he can play his game of combining favorite passages of poetry. The labyrinthine intervolution of threads from Paradise Lost, from his manuscript note, and from the poetry that he fashioned out of the former two, leaves the mind mazed. "Ordinary state" suggests the "canopy of state" of the Heavenly Court of Book II of The Excursion (862-863), recalls the courtliness of the "crown of burning Seraphs" in the Robespierre passage of The Prelude (X. 481-483), and points to the scenes in Heaven in Paradise Lost (III. 57-62; V. 619-623).

The sunbeams "shot upwards to the crown" have a common source with the "effect . . . wrought" by "earthly nature" (Exc., II. 846-847) in Milton's landscape of the Sun (P. L., III. 606-619)[36] where the Sun's "Beams . . . shot upward still direct" (616-618). The "multitudes of little floating clouds" and their "ethereal texture" resemble the "Clouds of all tincture" (Exc., II. 854) and the "one ethereal substance" of the "burning Seraphs" (Prel., X. 481). The "bright hues . . . giving back, and shedding each on each, With prodigal communion" are the same colors that are "Confused, commingled, mutually inflamed, Molten together" and "Each lost in each" (Exc., II. 852-859). They are also: the "inseparable glory" of the "intermingled mountain tops" of the Robespierre passage (Prel., X. 479-480); the "Rocks, Dens, and Groves of foliage taught to melt Into each other their obsequious hues" of Gehol's Gardens (Prel., VIII. 134-135); and the "sweet interchange Of Hill and Valley, Rivers, Woods and Plains . . . Rocks, Dens, and Caves" of Eden (P. L., IX. 115-118). The "bright hues . . . imbibed" from the "unapparent fount of glory" suggest the "Glory beyond all glory seen" of the two previous passages in The Excursion (II. 832; III. 720), the "inseparable glory" with which the "burning Seraphs" are clad (Prel., X. 480-483), the "color glorious" that "Th' Arch-chemic Sun . . . Produces [when] with Terrestrial Humor mixt" (landscape of the Sun, P. L., III. 608-612), the gold of the sun that paints the "fleecy skirts" of "Mists and Exhalations" . . . to deck with Clouds th' uncolored sky" (Morning Prayer of Adam and Eve, P. L., V. 185-189). The "unity sublime" reflects the "harmony Divine" of the Angels dancing in "intervolv'd" motions about the throne of God (P. L., V. 619-625) from which the "crown of burning Seraphs," "intermingled" and "inseparable" (Prel., X. 479-483) takes its suggestion.[37]

This "refulgent spectacle" (Exc., IX. 611), reminiscent of the "fulgent spectacle" of the Robespierre sequence (Prel., X. 487), inspires the Pastor to prayer,[38] the spirit of which closely resembles the morning prayer of Adam and Eve (P. L., V.). The Pastor sees in the natural configuration of cloud and color a "local transitory type" of the heavenly courts of Book X of The Prelude, Book II of The Excursion, and the several heavenly scenes of Paradise Lost:

> Eternal Spirit! universal God!
> Power inaccessible to human thought,
> Save by degrees and steps which thou hast deigned
> To furnish; for this effluence of thyself,
> To the infirmity of mortal sense
> Vouchsafed; this local transitory type
> Of thy paternal splendours, and the pomp
> Of those who fill thy courts in highest heaven,
> The radiant Cherubim;--accept the thanks
> Which we, thy humble Creatures, here convened,
> Presume to offer . . . .
> (Exc., IX. 614-624)

Adam and Eve address their prayer to the "Parent of good . . . who sit'st above these Heavens To us invisible or dimly seen In these thy lowest works" (P. L., V. 153-158). They, too, envision the court in heaven:

> Speak yee who best can tell, ye Sons of Light,
> Angels, for yee behold him, and with songs
> And choral symphonies, Day without Night,
> Circle his Throne rejoicing, yee in Heav'n . . . .
> (P. L., V. 160-163)

In the Pastor's prayer, the "degrees and steps" that God has furnished to make His "Power" accessible "to human thought" suggest the chain of being and scale of love by which, Raphael explains to Adam and Eve, they may ascend to heaven and heavenly love (P. L., V. 470-505; VIII. 589-592). The "local transitory type" by which the "splendours" of the heavenly court are "vouchsafed" to the "infirmity of mortal sense" duplicates the method by which Raphael construes the events in heaven and the acts of creation for Adam and Eve: "measuring things in Heav'n by things on Earth" (VI. 893) and "So told as earthly notion can receive" (VII. 179). As he explained earlier:

> what surmounts the reach
> Of human sense, I shall delineate so,
> By lik'ning spiritual to corporal forms,
> As may express them best, though what if Earth
> Be but the shadow of Heav'n, and things therein
> Each to other like, more than on Earth is thought?
> (P. L., V. 571-576)

It is Milton, therefore, who provides Wordsworth with the means of reconciling the effects of earthly nature with the worlds imagined by poets who spurn the bounds of nature's reign.

But Wordsworth's conflict never really comes to rest. Ode 1814[39] (composed January 1816) reiterates the elements we have traced from Paradise Lost, the manuscript note, and Wordsworth's poetry from 1793 to 1814. Wordsworth turns the table on his own comment in a strange way: a rural prospect, that is as inimitable by "happiest skill Of pencil" as any of Milton's or Wordsworth's cosmological landscapes, is the product of "Fancy" freed from the limitations of "corporeal sense":

When the soft hand of sleep had closed the latch
On the tired household of corporeal sense,
And Fancy, keeping unreluctant watch,
Was free her choicest favours to dispense;
I saw, in wondrous perspective displayed,
A landscape more august than happiest skill
Of pencil ever clothed with light and shade;
An intermingled pomp of vale and hill,
City, and naval stream, suburban grove,
And stately forest where the wild deer rove;
Nor wanted lurking hamlet, dusky towns,
And scattered rural farms of aspect bright;
And, here and there, between the pastoral downs,
The azure sea upswelled upon the sight.
Fair prospect, such as Britain only shows!
(1-15)

From Wordsworth's day to our own, it has been generally assumed that Wordsworth was singleminded in his rejection of supernatural agencies and in his determination to "keep the Reader in the company of flesh and blood." Wordsworth's manuscript note in Paradise Lost has led us to passages in his poetry that reveal a running argument on this question with Milton and himself that continued throughout the greater part of his most creative period. It was not merely a matter of whether the natural and the familiar provided a better province for the exercise of the imagination, but whether the "worlds . . . imagined new" were the product of the lofty imagination or of the humbler faculty of the fancy.

Hazlitt felt this to be the crux of the problem in evaluating Wordsworth's poetry, although he substitutes his own basic classifications of poetry for Wordsworth's. "Poetry," he says, "may be properly divided into two classes; the poetry of imagination and the poetry of sentiment." The "combination of these different excellences" makes for the "perfection of poetry"--a combination and perfection that Milton possessed but that Wordsworth did not. It is interesting that Hazlitt's illustration of Wordsworth's deficiency in the poetry of imagination should refer to the same passage in Paradise Lost that Wordsworth marked as illustrative of the practice against which his own poetic philosophy contended:

> [Wordsworth] . . . has none of the pomp and decoration and scenic effect of poetry: no gorgeous palaces nor solemn temples awe the imagination: no cities rise with glistering spires and pinnacles adorned: we meet with no knights pricked forth on airy steeds; no hairbreadth escapes and perilous accidents by flood or field. 40

It is evident from the poetry examined in this chapter that Wordsworth could never quite resolve this problem in his mind. When he gives way to the impulse to image pleasure domes and gardens, exotic citadels, heavenly courts, and angelic consistories, he will deprecate his fanciful vagaries in one text and delete the repudiation in a later version. He never seems quite willing to admit that these visions are properly within the province of the imagination. One passage in Book VIII of The Prelude does, however, constitute a tacit admission. Wordsworth is expounding the process by which his imagination transformed his first trivial impressions of London into "a thing divine" and enabled him to see through meanness and vulgarity to majesty and power (1805: 695-796). To demonstrate how the imagination acts upon and transforms the objects of sense, Wordsworth employs an extended Miltonic simile that shares with the supernatural visions and fabulous prospects previously examined: a Traveller, shifting forms and intermingled colors, a Canopy, Spectres, Towers, a Warrior, a throned King, an unending Spectacle. Wordsworth even adopts Milton's "sees Or dreams he sees (P. L., I. 783-784)[41] to justify such imaginings:

> As when a Traveller hath from open day
> With torches pass'd into some Vault of Earth,
> The Grotto of Antiparos, or the Den
> Of Yordas among Craven's mountain tracts;
> He looks and sees the cavern spread and grow,
> Widening itself on all sides, sees, or thinks
> He sees, erelong, the roof above his head,
> Which instantly unsettles and recedes
> Substance and shadow, light and darkness, all
> Commingled, making up a Canopy
> Of Shapes and Forms and Tendencies to Shape
> That shift and vanish, change and interchange
> Like Spectres, ferment quiet and sublime . . . .
> (Prel., 1805: VIII. 711-723)

"After a short space," the scene will lie before him "in perfect view"--reality "Exposed and lifeless." But should he "pause awhile, and look again

> . . . a new quickening shall succeed, at first
> Beginning timidly, then creeping fast
> Through all which he beholds; the senseless mass,
> In its projections, wrinkles, cavities,
> Through all its surface, with all colours streaming,
> Like a magician's airy pageant, parts,
> Unites, embodying everywhere some pressure
> Or image, recogniz'd or new, some type
> Or picture of the world; forests and lakes,
> Ships, Rivers, Towers, the Warrior clad in Mail,
> The prancing Steed, the Pilgrim with his Staff,
> The mitred Bishop and the throned King,
> A Spectacle to which there is no end.
> (724-741)

This is Wordsworth's figurative explanation of the process by which his imagination transformed the "vulgar forms" and "mean shapes" of London's "houses, . . . streets, . . . men and things" (1805: VIII. 695-697) into a "thing divine" (VIII. 710). The experience is one of Wordsworth's "spots of time":

> A weight of Ages did at once descend
> Upon my heart; no thought embodied, no
> Distinct remembrances; but weight and power,
> Power growing with the weight: alas! I feel
> That I am trifling: 'twas a moment's pause.
> All that took place within me, came and went
> As in a moment, and I only now
> Remember that it was a thing divine.
> (703-710)

Havens is of the opinion that this spiritual revelation is "most like" the even more famous "spot of time" that Wordsworth experienced in the Simplon Pass,[42] which occasioned his remarkable apostrophe to the "Imagination" (1805: VI. 525-548; 1850: VI. 592-616).

Around 1828, Wordsworth had some qualms about ascribing such visions in caves and grottos to the imagination. He inserts his usual reservation: these images were "Half seen, created half with wanton power." But recognizing by 1832 that this line controverts the purpose for which the Miltonic simile was designed--to illustrate the workings of the imagination upon the sights of London--he deletes the disparaging interjection, substitutes a "hooded monk" and "Veiled nun" for the "mitred Bishop" and the "throned King," and maintains that such "ghostly" congregations have a reality of their own for "Eyes that perceive through minds that can inspire" (1850: VIII. 586-589).[43]

The faculty that envisioned Towers, mail-clad Warriors, mitred Bishops, and throned Kings in the "projections, wrinkles, cavities" of a grotto enabled Wordsworth to penetrate his disillusionment with London and to perceive its true grandeur. And after the inner conflict that characterizes the changes in this passage from the 1805 text to its final version in 1832 (1805: VIII. 711-723; 1850: VIII. 560-589),[44] he decides that such visions are the achievement of imagination not fancy. But the images that Wordsworth employs to illustrate the process by which the imagination broke through to the truth of London have a kinship with the figures he uses to recount his childhood illusions regarding London:

> There was a time when whatsoe'er is feign'd
> Of airy Palaces, and Gardens built
> By Genii of Romance, or hath in grave
> Authentic History been set forth of Rome,
> Alcairo, Babylon, or Persepolis,
> Or given upon report by Pilgrim-Friars
> Of golden Cities ten months' journey deep
> Among Tartarian wilds, fell short, far short,
> Of that which I in simpleness believed
> And thought of London; held me by a chain
> Less strong of wonder, and obscure delight.
> I know not that herein I shot beyond
> The common mark of childhood . . . .
> (1805: VII. 81-93)

The "airy Palaces, and Gardens," the renowned metropolises of "Alcairo, Babylon, or Persepolis," and "Tartarian wilds" provide a double link, through "Gehol's Gardens" (Prel., VIII) and Milton's and Wordsworth's reading of Purchas, to Paradise Lost (I. 717-719; III. 501-551) and Paradise Regained (III. 280-284).[45]

In the same year (1832) that Wordsworth attributes the visions inspired by the surface of a cave to the imagination, he inserts a line into his account of his childhood image of London that characterizes this same process as "the bolt of childhood's Fancy" (1850: VII. 88).[46] The circle has come full round. These conflicting characterizations remain in the 1850 text, so that to the very end Wordsworth could not free himself from, nor rest easy with, his judgments and theories regarding the exotic and the supernatural.

We have traveled a long and tortuous way from the mark beside a single line in Paradise Lost, Book III, and the manuscript note that is one of the more pedestrian expressions of Wordsworth's rejection of Milton's cosmographic and exotic landscapes. From that one vantage point in Paradise Lost--where Milton compares Satan's first view, as he emerges from Chaos, of the newly-created earth, the "Sea . . . Of Jasper, or of liquid Pearl," and the golden stairs leading up to the Gate of Heaven to the first sight of a "goodly prospect of some foreign land" (III. 548)--we have traversed all of Milton's universe, with the exception of Hell. We have moved through Heaven and Earth, the Sun, and the earthly Paradise; we have seen a fabled city and a fabled garden. In our pursuit of the "familiar appearances" that Wordsworth claims will give the reader "far more pleasure" than Milton's supernatural or fabulous prospects--the "Hamlets, cottages & woods, with reaches of a river . . . displaying themselves here and there thru the vapour"--we have found that only the rural prospect in An Evening Walk conforms in every respect to the principles enunciated in his manuscript note in Paradise Lost and in his prefaces. The valley of Grasmere (The Recluse), the beauteous domain of his birth and Gehol's Gardens (Prel., VIII), and the rural prospects of The Excursion (II; IX) are modeled on Milton's Eden. The exotic citadels of Sonnet XI and The Excursion (II; V) take their pattern from Milton's "renown'd Metropolis." The heavenly consistories of The Prelude (X) and The Excursion (II; III; IX) hold their court in Milton's heaven. The landscape of Milton's Sun has contributed to the marvels of the heavenly visions of The Excursion (II; IX). And from the "Grotto of Antiparos" and the "Den of Yordas" (Prel., VIII) we have learned that these fabulous and supernatural prospects are as much a part of the "poet's province" as the "familiar appearances" of hamlet, cottage, and stream.

We have discovered that the features of Milton's cosmos--"Jehovah--with his thunder," the "choir Of shouting Angels," the "empyreal thrones," and "Paradise, and groves Elysian"--do find their way into the "haunts" and "regions" of Wordsworth's song despite his contrary declarations in the Prospectus of his philosophic poem.[47] And for the rich benefits that have accrued from his failure to exclude them, we can rejoice with Coleridge to find

> . . . how little a mere theory, though of his own workmanship, interferes with the processes of genuine imagination in a man of true poetic genius, who possesses, as Mr. Wordsworth, if ever man did, most assuredly does possess,
>
> "THE VISION AND THE FACULTY DIVINE."[48]

## 2. Manner and Matter

In Book XI of Paradise Lost, a description of an unnatural appearance, whose cause is supernatural and whose import is of great significance to the fallen Adam and Eve, catches Wordsworth's attention:

> why in the East  
> Darkness ere Day's mid-course, and Morning light  
> More orient in yon Western Cloud that draws  
> O'er the blue Firmament a radiant white,  
> And slow descends, with something heav'nly fraught. x  
> He [Adam] err'd not, for by this the heav'nly Bands  
> Down from a Sky of Jasper lighted now  
> In Paradise, and on a Hill made halt,  
> A glorious Apparition, had not doubt  
> And carnal fear that day dimm'd Adam's eye.  
> (203-212)

Although the "radiant white" apparition in a "Sky of Jasper" is reminiscent of the "Sea . . . Of Jasper, or of liquid Pearl" (III. 518-519), the image, this time, is the object of Wordsworth's praise not his criticism:

> It may however be observed that Gray in making his bards vanish in a bright path instead of a murky cloud has <? > given his picture too much sameness and lost that contrast which is so striking in Milton's. Besides as his figures are described as a griesly band with bloody hands it would have been more consonant to their nature to have represented them as disappearing in a <gloom> troubled and gloomy sky.

It is obvious that Wordsworth's concern is not with the choice of imagery, alone, but with its suitability to the idea, emotion, or event to be expressed and that it is on both counts that he finds Gray's treatment of a similar situation in his ode, The Bard, deficient by comparison with Milton's.

This passage in Paradise Lost marks the arrival of the Arch-Angel Michael and the band of Angels who are to guard Paradise after Adam and Eve are ejected from the Garden. The juxtaposition of light and dark, of white and jasper, is symbolic of the thoughts and emotions of Adam and Eve at this moment in their fall from bliss. After quarrels and mutual recrimination, they have finally been able to pray for forgiveness. They rise from their prayers, feeling "new hope to spring Out of despair, joy, but with fear yet linkt" (XI. 137-139). They have observed changes in nature that seem portentous of further alteration in their own condition: Morn in "Her rosy progress smiling" is "unconcerned" with their "unrest"; birds of prey have appeared in the sky; beast hunts beast; and Adam wonders whether these are omens of their own approaching death (XI. 173-203). The contrasting picture in the sky reflects the opposition of hope for life and fear of death, of joy in their renewed communion with God and despair for his forgiveness. It also represents the twofold character of Michael's mission: he is to tell Adam and Eve of their destined removal from Eden but also to allay their grief with an understanding of the paradise within them "happier far"; he is to show them the meaning of the death and woe that they have brought into the world, but he is also to inform them that through Eve's seed they will be the authors of the final atonement with God and of the everlasting life that will be achieved through that atonement.[49]

The situation in The Bard, to which Wordsworth refers in his manuscript note, reflects the same opposition of life and death, joy and despair, hope and fear. The poem is based on a Welsh tradition that Edward I, when he conquered Wales, ordered the execution of all the Bards who fell into his hands. The speaker in the ode calls on the dead Bards to join with him in weaving the story of Edward's house. The figures in the "griesly band" are the ghosts of the murdered Bards:

> 'On yonder cliffs, a griesly band,
> 'I see them sit, they linger yet,
> 'Avengers of their native land:
> 'With me in dreadful harmony they join,
> 'And weave with bloody hands the tissue of thy line.'
> (44-48) 50

Gray then proceeds with what Grierson calls an "eloquent text-book history"[51] of Edward's line: the murders and usurpations that culminate in the War of the Roses. With the rise of the Tudors, there is an end to bloodshed; and honor and sovereignty return to Wales. Gray marks the change with the disappearance of the "griesly band," who represent fear, guilt, death, and despair, and the appearance of the Tudor line, the "Visions of glory" who bring with them joy, hope, and life:

> 'In yon bright track, that fires the western skies,
> 'They melt, they vanish from my eyes.
> 'But oh! what solemn scenes on Snowdon's height
> 'Descending slow their glitt'ring skirts unroll?
> 'Visions of glory, spare my aching sight,
> 'Ye unborn Ages, crowd not on my soul!
> (103-108)

As Wordsworth remarked, there is no contrasting imagery to distinguish the divergent meanings of the two groups: the "griesly band" disappears in a "bright track" (a MS variant calls it a "bright cloud");[52] against the same bright sky the "Visions of glory . . . unroll . . . their glitt'ring skirts." Blake, who executed a series of illustrations of Gray's poems as a private expression of gratitude to

Joseph Flaxman,[53] evidently detected the same inconsonance in Gray's picture. The figures of Blake's "griesly band" have stark, deeply shadowed faces surrounded by streaming white hair; they are clothed in flowing white shrouds against a "jasper" sky.[54] I have investigated the possibility that Wordsworth may have seen the Blake drawings, although they were not published in Blake's lifetime and remained in Flaxman's private collection until his death,[55] but have turned up no evidence to this effect. Nor is there any indication that Lamb, who did see them, ever communicated his knowledge of the drawings to Wordsworth.[56]

There is more than chance association in Wordsworth's comparison of Milton and Gray. As Havens demonstrates, there are numerous borrowings from Milton in the volume of Gray's poems, "almost one to a page"; the borrowings are so slight, however, that the "average reader" would "not suspect any indebtedness . . . did he not remember Gray's slow, painstaking, self-conscious method of composition."[57] But the "best knower of Milton" was not an "average reader" and he would have easily discerned such obligations. Wordsworth was, as a matter of fact, involved with Samuel Rogers in making a collection of Gray's borrowings from other poets, and it was in connection with this project that Wordsworth expounded his method of determining "conscious obligations," quoted earlier in this study.[58]

Wordsworth would have been aware of the parallels, however slight, between Gray's "griesly band . . . Avengers . . . with bloody hands" and Milton's birds of prey; between Gray's "yon bright track, that fires the western skies" and Milton's "Morning light More orient in yon Western Cloud"; between Gray's "Visions of glory . . . Descending slow" and Milton's "glorious Apparition" that "slow descends." Wordsworth himself uses this same passage from Paradise Lost to express a similar alternation of life and death, hope and fear, joy and despair. He employs Milton's contrasting imagery of light and darkness in what is almost a direct quotation, but interestingly enough substitutes Gray's alteration, "Descending slow," for Milton's "And slow descends."

In Book VIII of The Prelude, Wordsworth explains how his love of nature led to love of man. He opens with the description of a gay country fair the wholesome sights and sounds of which are in sharp contradistinction to the corruption and strident confusion of the St. Bartholomew's Fair in London with which Book VII closes. The contrast between the vitality of life in Wordsworth's native region and the moral death of existence in London represents Wordsworth's hopes for what "we may become" as opposed to his fears for what we are. After reviewing the process by which the majesty of nature led him to appreciate the grandeur of the men who live close to nature, Wordsworth recounts the doubts induced by the examples of "guilt . . . vice, Debasement of the body or the mind" with which London life abounds. His return to the countryside has revived the essential respect for man that nature had fostered in his childhood and youth. He has second-thoughts regarding London; as he recalls the city's history and what great things had been accomplished there, he concludes that his first judgments had been trivial and that his trust in man was not a "vain conceit" nor a "dream." The elements of human conduct that prompted Wordsworth's doubts concerning what we are parallel the state of Adam's nature at the moment of Michael's arrival in Eden: "guilt" and "vice," "debasement" of his "body" and his "mind." Wordsworth's trust in what we may become corresponds to the greater man that Michael shows Adam he may yet be. The reassuring sights at Helvellyn's fair inspire "elevating thoughts Of human Nature":

> Neither guilt nor vice,
> Debasement of the body or the mind,
> Nor all the misery forced upon my sight,
> Which was not lightly passed, but often scann'd
> Most feelingly, could overthrow my trust
> In what we may become, induce belief
> That I was ignorant, had been falsely taught,
> A Solitary, who with vain conceits
> Had been inspired, and walk'd about in dreams.
> (1805: 801-810)

As Wordsworth turns from his gloomy London memories to the bright and promising country scene before him, he experiences a return of hope that is more triumphant by virtue of the contrast. The contention within his own mind reminds him of Adam's conflicting emotions of hope and fear as Adam ponders the opposition of light and darkness in the sky:

> When from that awful prospect overcast
> And in eclipse, my meditations turn'd,
> Lo! everything that was indeed divine
> Retain'd its purity inviolate
> And unencroach'd upon, nay, seem'd brighter far
> For this deep shade in counterview, that gloom
> Of opposition, such as shew'd itself
> To the eyes of Adam, yet in Paradise,
> Though fallen from bliss, when in the East he saw
> Darkness ere day's mid course, and morning light
> More orient in the western cloud, that drew
> ' O'er the blue firmament a radiant white,
> Descending slow with something heavenly fraught.'
> (811-823)

The scenes in London, "that awful prospect overcast And in eclipse," echo the changes in nature that Adam observes prior to the appearance of the "glorious apparition": "Signs, imprest On Bird, Beast, Air, Air suddenly eclips'd After short blush of Morn" (XI. 182-184). What Wordsworth finds "divine" in human nature, retaining "its purity inviolate" is referable not only to Adam's prelapsarian integrity but to the inner paradise that is yet available to him if he resists the encroachments of vice. Although the concluding five lines are an exceedingly close rendering of Milton's, Wordsworth places quotation marks only around the last two. The final line, with Gray's "Descending slow" instead of Milton's "And slow descends" is as much a paraphrase as the preceding lines and by the same process of thought no more deserving of such punctuation than they are. This oversight is all the more puzzling since the one line that Wordsworth marked as the point of departure for his comment on Gray and Milton is the line that reads: "And slow descends, with something heav'nly fraught."

Between 1805 and 1839, Wordsworth made several attempts to intensify the parallel meanings of his passage and Milton's; he also rectified certain omissions. Wordsworth's return to nature aroused his mind to a deeper and more hopeful understanding of life in London. In his comparison of his own state of mind with Adam's, he neglected to indicate the purpose of Michael's mission, which was to arouse Adam's reason to a more hopeful comprehension of future life on earth, to allay his fears and doubts, and to resurrect joy out of his despair. Soon after completing the first version of Book VIII, Wordsworth altered the impact of the heavenly apparition on Adam from visual effect to mental: the "gloom of opposition" no longer shows itself to "the eyes of Adam"; it "appalls" his "mind."[59] In 1828, Wordsworth decided to expand the details of Adam's state of mind; he also changed "opposition" to "contrast," the word he used in his manuscript note to characterize the essential quality of Milton's passage. The purity of country life seems "brighter" because it is "set off by contrast" with the scenes in London--the kind of contrast that "roused attention, damped at once and cheared The Mind of Adam."[60] In 1832, Wordsworth returned to the idea of "opposition," but he converted "gloom of opposition" to "portentous gloom . . . such opposition as aroused The Mind of Adam."[61] The scenes of man's inhumanity to man that Wordsworth had observed in London were gloomy portents regarding his hopes for the future of man. The sights that Adam observes before the strange apparition in the sky--the birds of prey, the beast hunting beast--are characterized in Milton's prose argument to Book XI as "ominous signs" and assumed by Adam to be "Forerunners" of God's "purpose" regarding his and Eve's future (XI. 194-203), and therefore the future of all mankind. In the same way that Adam misinterprets these portents, Wordsworth finds that he has misconstrued the significance of life in London. In the course of these revisions, Wordsworth must also have realized that he had used Gray's wording, "Descending slow" instead of Milton's "And slow descends," for he deleted the quotation marks from the last two lines. The total removal of any acknowledgement of indebtedness from a slightly amended quotation is just as puzzling as his earlier partial punctuation.[62]

In his final version, Wordsworth achieved an admirable contraction of language; at the same time he intensified the parallels between his imagery and meaning and Milton's:

> From those sad scenes when meditation turned,
> Lo! every thing that was indeed divine
> Retained its purity inviolate,
> Nay brighter shone, by this portentous gloom
> Set off; such opposition as aroused
> The mind of Adam, yet in Paradise
> Though fallen from bliss, when in the East he saw
> Darkness ere day's mid course, and morning light
> More orient in the western cloud, that drew
> O'er the blue firmament a radiant white,
> Descending slow with something heavenly fraught.
> (1850: 654-664)

In each poem--Milton's, Gray's, and Wordsworth's--there is a turning from something dark and ominous to bright promise and hope; only in Milton and Wordsworth is there an opposition of light and darkness to emphasize the contrast, and in Wordsworth's contrast we essentially have Milton's. It is an interesting sidelight on the complex workings of Wordsworth's mind that, having accorded to Milton's imagery an excellence that he denies to Gray's, he should favor Gray's diction over Milton's, retaining in his own lines Gray's modern paraphrase, "Descending slow," in preference to Milton's inverted "And slow descends."

The opposition of vice and virtue, of hope and despair, provided by the teeming life of London, inspired a late addition to Book VII of The Prelude; once again, Wordsworth uses Milton's contrasting imagery of light and shadow to achieve greater impact for the ideas that he is expressing. Wordsworth recounts his efforts toward a proper evaluation of human conduct in London; although "foolishness and madness in parade" are there "most at home in this their dear domain," Wordsworth prefers to "keep

> In memory, those individual sights
> Of courage, or integrity, or truth,
> Or tenderness, which there, set off by foil,
> Appeared more touching.
>
> (1850: 594-602)[63]

The very idea of contrast seems to summon Milton into Wordsworth's mind. The immediate association is with the "portentous gloom Set off" of the passage on London in Book VIII,[64] but both metaphors have their origin in "the glistering foil Set off to th' world" of Lycidas (79-80).[65] Wordsworth goes on to develop his metaphor in greater detail:

> As the black storm upon the mountain top
> Sets off the sunbeam in the valley, so
> That huge fermenting mass of human-kind
> Serves as a solemn back-ground, or relief,
> To single forms and objects, whence they draw,
> For feeling and contemplative regard,
> More than inherent liveliness and power.
>
> (1850: VII. 619-625)

Although this is not the contrasting imagery that greeted Adam's view or roused his mind, the terms of contrast originate in Milton. There are two possible sources, each of which Wordsworth singled out for notice: one in a recorded conversation; the other, marked off but without comment, in the volume of Paradise Lost that contains his markings. The first possibility is what Wordsworth called a "contrast . . . divine" -- "One of the noblest things in Milton" -- "the description of that sweet, quiet morning in the 'Paradise Regained,' after that terrible night of howling wind and storm."[66] The circumstances provide a suggestive parallel to Wordsworth's situation, Jesus being the prototype of "those individual sights Of courage, or integrity, or truth" and Satan, the author of the "foolishness and madness in parade." Satan raises a storm in the wilderness to shake Jesus' faith and hope; Jesus, however, remains "unshaken" and "unappall'd in calm and sinless peace" (*P. R.*, IV. 409-425). Milton enforces the contrast between Satan's mad attempt and Jesus' "calm and sinless peace" with the images of storm and sunlight:

> And now the Sun with more effectual beams
> Had cheer'd the face of Earth, and dried the wet
> From drooping plant, or dropping tree; the birds
> Who all things now behold more fresh and green,
> After a night of storm so ruinous,
> Clear'd up their choicest notes in bush and spray
> To gratulate the sweet return of morn.
> (*P. R.*, IV. 432-438)

The second possible source for Wordsworth's contrasting imagery of storm and sunlight is a passage in Book II of *Paradise Lost*. Here the alternation of hope and fear parallels the opposition of "dusky clouds" on "mountain tops" and sunlight extending its "beams" to the "valley" below. The Fallen Angels have concluded their consultations in Pandemonium; they have passed from fear of the misery and pain that they will suffer in Hell to hopes for an amelioration of their circumstances through conquest of the newly-created world and its human inhabitants:

> Thus they thir doubtful consultations dark
> Ended rejoicing in their matchless Chief:
> As when from mountain tops the dusky clouds x[67]
> Ascending, while the North wind sleeps, o'erspread
> Heav'n's cheerful face, the low'ring Element
> Scowls o'er the dark'n'd lantskip Snow, or show'r;

> If chance the radiant Sun with farewell sweet
> Extend his ev'ning beam, the fields revive,
> The birds thir notes renew, and bleating herds
> Attest thir joy, that hill and valley rings.
> (P.L., II. 486-495)

These sequences from Paradise Regained and Paradise Lost present in every respect as divine a contrast as the passage in Paradise Lost, Book XI, marked by Wordsworth for comparison with Gray's. It should be no surprise, therefore, that as Wordsworth develops his metaphor, the procession of Gray's visionary figures on the mountainside of Snowdon should, by an almost imperceptible association of ideas, enter the picture:

> Thus have I looked, nor ceased to look, oppressed
> By thoughts of what and whither, when and how,
> Until the shapes before my eyes became
> A second-sight procession, such as glides
> Over still mountains, or appears in dreams . . . .
> (1850: VII. 630-634)

There is another sequence in The Prelude where Wordsworth seems to associate the juxtaposition of opposites with Milton and Gray. In this instance, it is probably mere coincidence, but it provides an interesting sidelight. Following his heavenly vision on receiving the news of Robespierre's fall, Wordsworth visits the grave of the "Teacher of . . . [his] youth." On the gravestone, inscribed by his teacher's desire, is "A fragment from the Elegy of Gray," and the sight draws "some few tears" from Wordsworth in his own "despite" (1805: X. 491-507; 1850: X. 531-544). In the course of his revisions of The Prelude in 1832,[68] Wordsworth was obviously struck by the contrast between the bright, heavenly vision of the Robespierre incident and the somber reality of the churchyard experience. He may well have been unconsciously aware of the

Miltonic origins of the one[69] and the associations with Gray of the other. At any rate, he interpolates a comment upon the contrast as a kind of transition from the "fulgent spectacle" inspired by his joy to the sad sight that draws his tears:

> . . . but brightest things are wont to draw
> Sad opposites out of the inner heart,
> As even their pensive influence drew from mine.
> (1850: X. 528-530)

It was not always possible, however, to match matter and manner, emotion and imagery, and yet avoid giving a scene the "too much sameness" that Wordsworth's marginal note finds so faulty in Gray's bright-on-bright picture. In the 1793 version of Descriptive Sketches, Wordsworth describes a stormy sunset in the Alps. All the elements for an opposition of emotion and imagery are present: storm and sadness; sunlight and joy. But Wordsworth does not avail himself of the opportunity; instead, he pours light upon dazzling light without the relief of a single shadow:

> 'Tis storm; and hid in mist from hour to hour
> All day the floods a deeper murmur pour,
> And mournful sounds, as of a Spirit lost,
> Pipe wild along the holly-blustering coast,
> 'Till the Sun walking on his western field
> Shakes from behind the clouds his flashing shield.
> Triumphant on the bosom of the storm,
> Glances the fire-clad eagle's wheeling form;
> Eastward, in long perspective glittering, shine
> The wood-crown'd cliffs that o'er the lake recline;
> Wide o'er the Alps a hundred streams unfold,
> At once to pillars turn'd that flame with gold;

> Behind his sail the peasant strives to shun
> The west that burns like one dilated sun,
> Where in a mighty crucible expire
> The mountains, glowing hot, like coals of fire.
> (332-347)

Storm, sunlight flashing on western clouds, mountain tops hidden in clouds and then glowing with light--Wordsworth gives us a potpourri of images culled from all of Milton's pictures of contrast to which his manuscript note has led us; "his picture," nevertheless, has somehow "lost that contrast which is so striking in Milton's." We may properly assume that in 1793 Wordsworth was not a sufficiently experienced poet to make these distinctions; but the note that he appended to the 1793 edition tells us the contrary. Wordsworth is conscious of Milton's divine contrasts, is worried about the "sameness" of his picture, and excuses himself with a Miltonic expression that has figured largely in this chapter: the "images" of Alpine "scenery . . . disdain the pencil":

> Whoever, in attempting to describe their sublime features, should confine himself to the cold rules of painting would give his reader but a very imperfect idea of those emotions which they have the irresistible power of communicating to the most impassive imaginations. The fact is, that controuling influence, which distinguishes the Alps from all other scenery, is derived from images which disdain the pencil. Had I wished to make a picture of this scene I had thrown much less light into it. But I consulted nature and my feelings. The ideas excited by the stormy sunset I am here describing owed their sublimity to that deluge of light, or rather of fire, in which nature had wrapped the immense forms around me; any intrusion of shade, by destroying the unity of the impression, had necessarily diminished it's grandeur. 70

Wordsworth may have had second-thoughts regarding the validity of his contentions in this footnote, for he drops it in later texts[71] of the poem although he retains the unrelieved light of his imagery. The fact is that the considerations that dictated the substance of his comment on Milton's matching of matter and manner were in his mind, as the Descriptive Sketches and Wordsworth's explanatory footnote show, from the very beginning of his poetic endeavors. It is this continuity of thought from as early as 1793 to as late as 1839, at least, that makes it so difficult to date his manuscript notes in Paradise Lost.

## 3. An Eye For Nature

Aubrey de Vere reported Wordsworth as having remarked to him in conversation that many who love nature "had yet no eye to discern her," and that he had "indeed . . . hardly ever known anyone" but himself "who had a true eye for Nature, one that thoroughly understood her meaning and her teachings."[72] Wordsworth took pride not only in his exceptional abilities as an interpreter of Nature but in his unique capacity for reproducing her manifold appearances. He tells us that as early as age fourteen he was conscious "of the infinite variety of natural appearances which had been unnoticed by the poets of any age or country, so far as I was acquainted with them; and I made a resolution to supply, in some degree, the deficiency."[73] And in the Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads* he calls attention to this aptitude as one of the values to be derived from a reading of his poems: "I have at all times endeavoured 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."[74] We should expect Wordsworth to have something to say, therefore, on Milton's eye for nature and on the accuracy of his descriptions. Forewarned by De Quincey and experience, we can anticipate that his remarks will be scanty by comparison with his interest; but experience should also have alerted us by now to seek the clues to his full thoughts on the subject in his poetry.

Among the many appearances of nature that caught Wordsworth's attention and stimulated his appreciation, the swan was a favorite. There are some twenty-three references to the swan scattered through Wordsworth's poetry:[75] some are mere mentions; others are fullblown descriptions of varying length and detail. It is in connection with his delineation of swans, moreover, that Wordsworth repeatedly demonstrates the unusual qualities of his "eye for nature." It was the image of the swan in Yarrow Unvisited--"The swan on still St. Mary's Lake Float double, swan and shadow!" (ll. 43-44)--that occasioned his remarks to Aubrey de Vere. And it was the eyewitness account of the swans in An Evening Walk, "taken from the daily opportunities" he "had of observing their habits, not as confined to the gentlemen's park, but in a state of nature" that prompted him in later life to record that it was the observation of such appearances at the age of fourteen that made him conscious of his special powers.[76]

Wordsworth would therefore regard himself as distinctively qualified to comment upon the sole description of a swan that appears in all of Milton's poetry. It occurs in the story of the fifth day of creation; and, brief as the picture is, it is to the swan, among the many species of birds that come to life at the command of God, that Milton devotes so much of even this economy of detail:

> Others on Silver Lakes and Rivers Bath'd
> Thir downy Breast; the Swan with x Arched neck
> Between her white wings mantling proudly, Rows
> Her state with Oary feet: yet oft they quit
> The Dank, and rising on stiff Pennons, tow'r
> The mid Aerial Sky . . . .
> (P. L., VII. 437-442)

Wordsworth places an x over the word "Arched" and makes the following meager comment:

> That as the male swan is infinite [sic] more majestic Milton ought rather to have said between his white wings mantling &c.--
> (Italics W.'s)

We should note, with reference to Wordsworth's method of marking and commenting, that, while he marks line 438, it is line 439 that receives critical observation.

In objecting to Milton's assignment of majesty to the female of the species, Wordsworth seems to have forgotten the epithet, always capitalized, with which Milton most frequently adorns the first woman: Eve has a "Virgin Majesty" (IX. 270); in her humblest postures, Eve has a "lowliness Majestic" (VIII. 42); in "obsequious Majesty" (VIII. 509) she has a "conscience of her worth" (VIII. 502). And it is strange indeed that the poet, who in his youth "sought that beauty, which, as Milton sings, Hath terror in it" (Prel., 1805: XIII. 225-226), should have lost sight of the fact that it is Eve's beauty that conveys this terror (P. L. IX. 490-491). It does not seem unreasonable to expect that Wordsworth should have discerned Milton's intention: that the first of any species--even the female--being the handiwork of God Himself, would have a majesty unknown to later generations. But perhaps it was Wordsworth's resistence to the myth of the corruption of nature after the fall that dimmed his perception in this instance.[77]

At any rate, those of us who do not have Wordsworth's eye for the subtle distinctions in nature may well complain that his comment furnishes no indication as to how the female swan should properly be represented. For enlightenment we must turn to Wordsworth's earliest description of swans: in An Evening Walk we find the full train of thought that lies behind the mental shorthand of his note in Paradise Lost; as added treasure trove, we come upon the unexpected pleasure of observing the young poet in the act of correcting his revered preceptor. Wordsworth gives us two swans and, with an exactness that we can anticipate from his literalmindedness, details the particularities by which he distinguishes the male from the female of the species. He begins with the male:

> He swells his lifted chest, and backward flings
> His bridling neck between his tow'ring wings;
> Stately, and burning in his pride, divides
> And glorying looks around, the silent tides:
> On as he floats, the silver'd waters glow.
> Proud of the varying arch and moveless form of snow.
> (1793 text: 201-206)

Wordsworth's male swan duplicates Milton's female in every respect but one: Milton's swan "bath'd . . . on Silver Lakes and Rivers" while Wordsworth's "floats" in the "glow" of "silver'd waters"; Milton's "Arched neck" is matched by Wordsworth's "bridling neck" and "varying arch." And the same conjunction of "Arched neck," whiteness, and pride occurs in both descriptions: Milton's swan has an "Arched neck Between . . . white wings mantling proudly"; Wordsworth's swan is "Proud of" his "varying arch and moveless form of snow," "burning in his pride," and "glorying." Milton's swan "Rows Her state with Oary feet"; Wordsworth's "Stately . . . divides . . . the silent tides." Milton's swan has "stiff Pennons" that "tow'r The mid Aerial Sky"; Wordsworth's male swan has "tow'ring wings." But Wordsworth makes one significant emendation: he omits the "downy Breast" that might more aptly belong to a description of a female swan and substitutes a "lifted chest" that "swells" with masculine vigor.

In Wordsworth's revision of An Evening Walk after 1832,[78] he contracts the description of the male swan from six lines to five. Commenting on Wordsworth's revisions of the poem as a whole, de Selincourt remarks that "it is worth noting (1) that despite many debts to the poets of the eighteenth century the greatest debt to any single poet is to Milton; (2) that many of the borrowings disappear from the revised texts."[79] I might add that it is also worth noting that among the many Miltonic borrowings noted by the editors, none is recorded for this passage on the swans; moreover, Wordsworth retains the salient features of Milton's swan--the "varying arch," the "towering wings," and the "pride"--in his revised text:

> winding on along some secret bay,
> The swan uplifts his chest, and backward flings
> His neck, a varying arch, between his towering wings:
> The eye that marks the gliding creature sees
> How graceful, pride can be, and how majestic, ease.
> (1849 text: 217-221)

Despite the contraction of his description, Wordsworth adds two new elements: the swan's "pride" is "graceful"; his motion "majestic." "Majestic" is the word that Wordsworth, not Milton, uses to characterize the swan in Paradise Lost, and it is the quality on which Wordsworth bases his conclusion that Milton's "eye for nature"--at least as regards the characteristics of female swans--was faulty. The temptation to hazard a date for Wordsworth's critical note in Paradise Lost, on the basis of this revised text, is great were it not for the fact that the swan passage in the 1793 text of An Evening Walk seems so clearly to provide a detailed poetic gloss on the scant prose note.

Wordsworth pictures the female swan in one of those tender, maternal-domestic scenes that so delighted him to the end of his life:[80]

> While tender Cares and mild domestic Loves,
> With furtive watch pursue her as she moves;
> The female with a meeker charm succeeds,
> And her brown little ones around her leads,
> Nibbling the water lilies as they pass,
> Or playing wanton with the floating grass:
> She in a mother's care, her beauty's pride
> Forgets, unweary'd watching every side,
> She calls them near, and with affection sweet
> Alternately relieves their weary feet;
> Alternately* they mount her back, and rest
> Close by her mantling wings' embraces prest.
> (1793 text: 207-218)

The asterisk over "Alternately" signals a footnote in the 1793 edition in which Wordsworth emphasizes the matter-of-fact accuracy of his observations by averring: "This is a fact of which I have been an eyewitness."[81] It is as if he were defending his challenge of Milton before a court. The need to argue the justness of his illustration of the proper way to depict a female swan may account for the disproportionately greater attention he gives to the female of the species: in the 1793 text, he devotes twelve lines to the female to six lines to the male; in the contracted text after 1832, he maintains a similar disproportion, ten to five. Or perhaps it was due to what Coleridge considered one of the defects of Wordsworth's poetry, his "laborious minuteness and fidelity in the representation of objects," a precision more suitably employed in the "line by line" construction of a "diagram . . . for a long geometrical proposition." What Coleridge finds lacking in representations of this kind is the "mode of poetic painting" that appeals primarily to the imagination, that creates rather than paints --the best examples of which may be found in the "masterpieces" of creative description that "abound in the writings of Milton."[82]

In any case, what impresses the reader in the distinctions that Wordsworth makes between the female and male swans is their conventionality rather than their truth to nature: the emphasis on her maternal duties, her "meeker charm," her ability to forget "her beauty's pride . . . in a mother's care," in contrast to the male swan's burning pride in his stately beauty. Should there be any lingering doubts as to the relevance of these descriptions to Milton's swan, the "mantling wings" of the closing line should dispel them. The use of "mantling" in this sense was unique to Milton, as the O. E. D. notes, occurring for the first time in Comus (l. 294) and twice again in Paradise Lost, in this passage on the swan and earlier in a description of Raphael (V. 279).[83]

There are two features that distinguish Milton's treatment of the swan from Wordsworth's. Milton describes his swan, first in the water and then in the air, and he uses the metaphor of a boat to convey her movement: she "Rows Her state with Oary feet." Wordsworth depicts his swans in the water only; and he seems to have overlooked the vivid metaphor of the boat. But if we cast our eyes backward to the couplet that opens the scene in which Wordsworth sets the swans, we will find the boat metaphor and the "Pennons" of Milton's swan in flight:

> Now while the solemn evening Shadows sail,
> On red slow-waving pinions down the vale,
> . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
> I love . . .
> . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
> Along the 'wild meand'ring' shore to view,
> Obsequious Grace the winding swan pursue.
> (1793 text: 191-200)

Wordsworth's metaphor is a complex involution of Milton's: the clouds are likened to a bird on the wing--"slow-waving pinions" evoking the "stiff Pennons" of Milton's swan; and that flight parallels the progress of a boat, the movement of Milton's swan through the water. It is hardly coincidental that Milton also prefaces his picture of the swan with a scene in the sky, the first flight of the birds whose number is so great that, viewed from the earth below, they give the appearance of a cloud;[84] the young birds:

> soaring th' air sublime
> With clang despis'd the ground, under a cloud
> In prospect . . . .
> (P. L., VII. 421-423)[85]

Wordsworth has merely reversed Milton's order of relationship from birds like clouds to clouds like birds.

In transferring the boat-like motion of the swan from water to sky, Wordsworth would have been aware that Milton had often used the same metaphor and language to describe flight. Satan voyaging through Chaos "his Sail-broad Vans . . . spreads for flight" (P. L., II. 927-928); "half on foot, Half-flying; behoves him now both Oar and Sail" (II. 941-942). Summanus, traditionally associated with Pluto,[86] "oared away on pitch-black wings through the liquid air" (On The Fifth of November, 1. 45); Fame, in the same poem, "goes oaring through the yielding air" (1. 208). Milton uses the same figure for angels in flight: "back with speediest Sail Zophiel, of Cherubim the swiftest wing, Came flying" (P. L., VI. 534-536); to rescue Jesus from "his uneasy station" on the pinnacle where Satan has set him, "a fiery Globe Of Angels on full sail of wing flew nigh" (P. R., IV. 581-584).

Some five years later, Wordsworth picks up Milton's swan-boat metaphor and uses it, in reverse relationship, in one of the most-read and most-discussed sequences in The Prelude, that famous spot of time, the boat-stealing scene of Book I.[87] In preparing for the figure of the swan (1805 text) Wordsworth has considerable difficulty with the gender of the boat: sometimes feminine, sometimes masculine. To begin with, the boat is traditionally female:

> No sooner had I sight of this small Skiff,
> Discover'd thus by unexpected chance,
> Then I unloos'd her tether and embark'd.
> (I. 380-382)

As he recalls his vigorous rowing, Wordsworth has sensations of manly strength, even heroic and "majestic" manliness:

> from the Shore
> I push'd, and struck the oars and struck again
> In cadence, and my little Boat mov'd on
> Even like a Man who walks with stately step
> Though bent on speed.
> (I. 384-388)

Nothing more heroic nor "majestic" can be evoked than this image, for it is descriptive of Milton's Michael[88] as he pauses in his account of the future history of man:

> As one who in his journey bates at Noon,
> Though bent on speed, so here the Arch-Angel paus'd
> Betwixt the world destroy'd and world restor'd . . . .
> (P. L., XII. 1-3)

Wordsworth, in ascribing his own emotions to the character of the boat's movement, forgets that he has earlier characterized his "small Skiff" as a woman; suddenly she has the motions of a Man with more than human stateliness. The quality of stateliness does not derive from Milton's image of Michael but from his figure of the swan.

The oars, the act of rowing, the stately motion of the boat have recalled Milton's swan who "Rows Her State with Oary Feet"; the swan's pride has its echo in Wordsworth's own demeanor, "as suited one who proudly row'd" (I. 396); and the "Silver Lakes and Rivers" in which Milton's swan "Bath'd" her "downy Breast" find their counterpart in the glitter of the boat's wake:

> not without the voice
> Of mountain-echoes did my Boat move on,
> Leaving behind her still on either side
> Small circles glittering idly in the moon . . . .
> (*Prel.*, I. 389-392)

When Wordsworth reverts to the description of his rowing, the oars recall the "stiff Pennons" on which Milton's swan rose into the "mid Aerial Sky"; his boat becomes a swan and its motion is a rising one:

> lustily
> I dipp'd my oars into the silent Lake,
> And, as I rose upon the stroke, my Boat
> Went heaving through the water, like a Swan . . . .
> (I. 401-404)

The distinctions between male and female swan have been confused, and when Wordsworth concludes his account of this childhood experience, the boat is again female--"There, in her mooring place, I left my Bark" (I. 415). Wordsworth is caught between the traditional feminine gender of boats, his vivid metaphor by which the boat and the proud boy operating her oars become one in the swan, and his own dictum that a swan possessing this kind of majesty and pride should be masculine.[89]

At some time between 1832 and 1839, the confused gender of his boat must have attracted Wordsworth's attention, for he removes the first description of his rowing (I. 384-388) with its manly sensations and its heroic allusion to the Arch-Angel Michael.[90] Perhaps he recognized, too, that an analogy between a boy, a "small Skiff," and an Arch-Angel constituted what Coleridge described as one of the defects of his poetry: "thoughts and images too great for the subjects."[91] The boat now remains consistently female throughout the account; although Wordsworth still clings to his synthesis of boy, boat, and swan, the simile is not so well prepared for, and the train of associations with Milton's swan, and with Wordsworth's judgment that it should have been a masculine swan, has now become blurred.

Milton's image of the swan as boat persists in Wordsworth's later poetry. In The Excursion, Book VI, we find one of his briefer descriptions; as in The Prelude, the swan as boat, or boat as swan, is female:

> smooth and still
> As the mute swan that floats adown the stream,
> Or, on the waters of the unruffled lake,
> Anchors her placid beauty.
> (292-295)

We should note that for Milton's "Lakes and Rivers" Wordsworth gives us a "stream" or "lake"; but, consistent with his own distinctions between male and female, this swan has neither state, majesty, nor pride; she has a "placid beauty" consonant with her femininity.

Wordsworth's most detailed description of a swan occurs in a nineteen-line stanza, originally planned as the opener of Dion (1816), discarded "on account of its detaining the reader too long from the subject," and restored as a footnote to the poem at the urgent request of Wordsworth's friends.[92] In his note to An Evening Walk, Wordsworth tells us that "the picture of the swan" which he "discarded from the poem of Dion" derived from the same observations that produced the pair of swans in the earlier poem.[93] The swan in Dion is male and alone; the pointed emphasis on the female's absence, however, is a certain indicator that Wordsworth has his criticism and correction of Milton's swan in mind. The word "majesty" in the very first line confirms this, as do the links between this description and others of Wordsworth's swans already discussed:

> Fair is the Swan, whose majesty, prevailing
> O'er breezeless water, on Locarno's lake,
> Bears him on while proudly sailing
> He leaves behind a moon-illumined wake:
> Behold! the mantling spirit of reserve
> Fashions his neck into a goodly curve;
> An arch thrown back between luxuriant wings
> Of whitest garniture, like fir-tree boughs
> To which, on some unruffled morning, clings
> A flaky weight of winter's purest snows!
> --Behold!--as with a gushing impulse heaves
> That downy prow, and softly cleaves
> The mirror of the crystal flood,
> Vanish inverted hill, and shadowy wood,
> And pendent rocks, where'er, in gliding state,
> Winds the mute Creature without visible Mate
> Or Rival, save the Queen of night
> Showering down a silver light,
> From heaven, upon her chosen Favourite![94]

The stanza is a composite of all the images that have characterized the swan of Paradise Lost, the male and female swans of An Evening Walk, the boy-boat-swan of The Prelude, and the female swan of The Excursion. The various strands are so intricately interwoven that a table of relationships seems to be the only means of achieving a fair degree of clarity:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| majesty or stateliness | female swan | *P. L.* |
| | male swan | *E. W.* |
| | female-male boat-swan | *Prel.* |
| | male swan | *Dion* |
| pride | all swans, male and female | *P. L.* |
| | | *E. W.* |
| | | *Prel.* |
| | | *Dion* |
| swan-boat or bird-boat | female swan | *P. L.* |
| | clouds | *E. W.* |
| | female-male boat-swan | *Prel.* |
| | female swan | *Exc.* |
| | male swan | *Dion* |
| silvery waters | | *P. L.* |
| | | *E. W.* |
| | | *Prel.* |
| | | *Dion* |
| downy breast | female swan | *P. L.* |
| lifted chest | male swan | *E. W.* |
| heaving prow | female-male boat-swan | *Prel.* |
| downy prow | male swan | *Dion* |
| mute swan | female | *Exc.* |
| mute Creature | male | *Dion* |

The confusion of male and female qualities, clarified by Wordsworth in *An Evening Walk*, muddled in the early text of *The Prelude* and blurred even in its late revision, is implicitly clarified in *Dion* by the mention of the absent female and then either partially obfuscated or partially reconciled by the "downy prow" of the male swan's breast. That the white wings and "Arched neck" of Milton's swan should persist in Wordsworth's various descriptions of swans is not so noteworthy, for how else is a swan to be pictured? But the persistent use of images not essential to the depiction of swans--stateliness, pride, and silvery waters in three out of four of Wordsworth's swan-portraits; the boat metaphor in all four--and most notably the use of "mantling" in Milton's unique sense in *An Evening Walk* (1793) and in *Dion* (1816) seem to demand a recognition of Wordsworth's enduring dependence, despite his unequaled "eye for nature," upon Milton's deficient perception. In his attempt to reveal those natural appearances that had escaped previous poets, Wordsworth nevertheless must draw on Milton's metaphors and images.

Here, as in the conflict between natural and supernatural prospects discussed earlier in this chapter, Wordsworth is caught between the desire to correct and improve upon Milton and the pertinacious admiration of Milton that draws him back again and again to the very concepts of which he has been critical. Wordsworth once remarked that he could point to "twice five hundred" passages "in Milton . . . to which additional labour would have been serviceable";[95] and Milton's description of the swan was evidently one of them. But after due reflection over the course of years he may have concluded that Milton's image of the swan was "a permanent one, not dependent upon accident."[96] For, after making the attempt to improve upon Milton's female swan in An Evening Walk, what persists in Wordsworth's sequent descriptions of swans are Milton's "permanent images" and not the touching maternal-domestic scene that must indeed have been "dependent upon accident" despite the fact that Wordsworth had personally witnessed it.

The story of the fifth day of Creation (P. L., VII) was undoubtedly of great interest to Wordsworth because of the many natural appearances recorded there. The flight of the birds, already commented upon,[97] came in for further brief notice from Wordsworth:

> Part loosely wing the Region, part more wise
> In common, rang'd in figure wedge thir way.
> (P. L., VII. 425-426; underline W.'s)

In the margin, besides the three underlined words, Wordsworth writes: "very beautiful." How disconcerting it is that, in an instance where Wordsworth gives high approbation to Milton's eye for nature, he should be so niggardly in his comment; particularly frustrating is the failure to find in Wordsworth's poems any allusion to this figure that might provide further insight into the grounds of his approval. There are, for example, many echoes of Paradise Lost in Wordsworth's magnificent description of the waterfowl in flight (Recluse, I. 203-229),[98] but not a single image derives from the birds that take wing in Book VII.

The appearances of the first fish receive double notice from Wordsworth; he marks two lines, but does not divulge his reason for doing so:

Forthwith the Sounds and Seas, each Creek and Bay
With Fry innumerable swarm, and Shoals
Of Fish that with thir Fins and shining Scales
Glide under the green Wave, in Sculls that oft
Bank the mid Sea: part single or with mate
Graze the Seaweed thir pasture, and through Groves
Of Coral stray, or sporting with quick glance x
Show to the Sun thir wav'd coats dropt with Gold,
Or in thir Pearly shells at ease, attend
Moist nutriment, or under Rocks thir food
In jointed Armor watch[x]. . . .
(VII. 399-409)

As a representation of the gleaming lights that are reflected in the happy motions of the fish, "sporting with quick glance"[99] is a masterpiece of vivid, economical expression that must have impressed Wordsworth with its truth of description, for the figure with its combination of light and joy recurs in his poetry on a number of occasions. In The Prelude, he describes a night of dance; and this is "sporting with quick glance" indeed:

I had pass'd
The night in dancing, gaiety and mirth;
With din of instruments, and shuffling feet,
And glancing forms, and tapers glittering . . . .
(1805: IV. 319-322)[100]

In the Song At The Feast of Brougham Castle (1807), a pair of "glancing, gleaming" fish inspires delight:

And both the undying fish that swim
Through Bowscale-tarn did wait on him;
The pair were servants of his eye
In their immortality;
And glancing, gleaming, dark or bright,
Moved to and fro, for his delight.
(II. 122-127)

And in The Excursion, the glancing fish elicit a loving response:

Birds and beasts,
And the mute fish that glances in the stream,
. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
In his capacious mind, he loved them all . . . .
(II. 41-46)

Where there is flashing light or joyous movement, one or the other image, or both--"sporting" and "glance"--repeatedly make their appearance.[101] In their swift flight, the waterfowl "tempt the sun to sport among their plumes" (Recluse, I. 222). In the famous passage on mythmaking in Book IV of The Excursion, light, joyous movement, "sporting," and "glance" appear in several interesting combinations:

> The nightly hunter, lifting a bright eye
> Up towards the crescent moon, with grateful heart
> Called on the lovely wanderer who bestowed
> That timely light, to share his joyous sport:
> And hence, a beaming Goddess with her Nymphs,
> . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
> Swept in the storm of chase; as moon and stars
> Glance rapidly along the clouded heaven . . . .
> . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
> Sunbeams, upon distant hills
> Gliding apace, with shadows in their train,
> Might, with small help from fancy, be transformed
> Into fleet Oreads sporting visibly.
> (IV. 861-876)

The "shining Scales" and "jointed Armor" of Milton's fish have a possible echo, but a rather melancholy one, in a poem commemorating a gift to Wordsworth of Gold and Silver Fishes In A Vase (1829). Contrasted to the joyous and unbounded freedom of Milton's "Fry innumerable" are these fish "in lasting durance pent . . . For something more than dull content, Though haply less than joy" (ll. 5-8). Wordsworth's attempt to resurrect the glancing lights and gleeful sport of Milton's fish seems to intensify the sadness of these imprisoned creatures, gold and silver though they may be:

> Yet might your glassy prison seem
> A place where joy is known,
> Where golden flash and silver gleam
> Have meanings of their own . . . .
> (ll. 9-12)

And his effort to extract joy and love from this picture of artificial confinement places too great a strain on the reader's credulity:

> Type of a sunny human breast
>   Is your transparent cell;
> Where Fear is but a transient guest,
>   No sullen Humours dwell;
> Where, sensitive of every ray
>   That smites this tiny sea,
> Your scaly panoplies repay
>   The Loan with usury.
> (ll. 17-24)

It is a woeful conclusion for the poet of the unequaled "eye for nature" that he should see reflected in two fish--isolated and imprisoned in a glass bowl--the joyous freedom and rich profusion of Milton's "Fry innumerable" as they sport and glance in their natural habitat. Unhappy, too, for the poet of the "language used by men," is his exchange of "scaly panoplies" for "jointed Armor," false adornment for grand simplicity. Most sorrowful of all, is the fact that neither "jointed Armor" nor "scaly panoplies" can protect the gold and silver creatures against death, for they begin to die in their confinement and must be transferred to an outdoor pool.[102]

It is no doubt unfair to the great nature poet that Wordsworth truly was to conclude with this depressing sample from his later poetry. But one fact seems evident: as unique as his eye for nature may have been, Wordsworth often chose, in his efforts to achieve truth of description, to see through Milton's eye, blind though it was and dependent upon memory. Milton's perception and understanding of nature's varied appearances must therefore have kindled Wordsworth's profound respect despite his criticism.

## 4. The Language Of Men

Closely related to Wordsworth's theories of poetic realism and truth of description was his conception of the language to be employed in conveying these realities and truths. His object, as he explains in the Preface to the Lyrical Ballads is to choose his poetic diction from the "language really spoken by men," and he is confident that wherever "this selection . . . is made with true taste and feeling," it "will of itself form a distinction far greater than would at first be imagined, and will entirely separate the composition from the vulgarity and meanness of ordinary life."[103] Anticipating that his postulate would meet with great opposition from the critics, especially with respect to the language of humble and rustic men, Wordsworth assures his readers that the language that he has adopted has been "purified indeed from what appear to be its real defects, from all lasting and rational causes of dislike or disgust."[104] To support his claim, he turns to the authority of "our elder writers":

> Readers of superior judgment may disapprove of the style in which many of these pieces are executed . . . . It will perhaps appear to them, that wishing to avoid the prevalent fault of the day, the author has sometimes descended too low, and that many of his expressions are too familiar, and not of sufficient dignity. It is apprehended, that the more conversant the reader is with our elder writers . . . the fewer complaints of this kind will he have to make. 105

And arguing against the judgment that occasional prosaisms constitute a defect in poetry, he turns to the authority of Milton:

> . . . it would be a most easy task to prove . . . that not only the language of a large portion of every good poem, even of the most elevated character, must necessarily, except with reference to the metre, in no respect differ from that of good prose, but likewise that some of the most interesting parts of the best poems will be found to be strictly the language of prose when prose is well written. The truth of this assertion might be demonstrated by innumerable passages from almost all the poetical writings, even of Milton himself. 106

This was the center of his quarrel, throughout his life, with the poets and critics of his time, even with Coleridge;[107] and as Coleridge maintains, it was "the true origin of the unexampled opposition which Mr. Wordsworth's writings have been since doomed to encounter."[108]

Considering the frequency with which Wordsworth resorts to the authority of Milton on matters of poetic diction in his letters, conversations,[109] and prefaces, and the uninhibited use that he makes of Miltonic language, considering it to be as publicly available to him as the dictionary,[110] we should expect a rich harvest of marked lines and commentary from his manuscript notes in Paradise Lost. The opposite, unfortunately, is almost entirely the case. His comments upon Milton's choice of diction concern one line only; and his painfully spare remarks are surprisingly disapproving. The passage that he selects was of great interest to him and Coleridge, and to Byron as well; it recounts the murder of Abel by Cain. The center of Wordsworth's concern, however, is not the murder, but the sacrifices offered by Cain and Abel and the setting in which they take place:

> a field,
> Part arable and tilth, whereon were Sheaves
> New reapt, the other part sheep-walks and folds;
> I' th' midst an Altar as the Land-mark stood
> Rustic, of grassy sward; thither anon
> A sweaty Reaper from his Tillage brought
> First Fruits, the green Ear, and the yellow Sheaf,
> Uncull'd, as came to hand; a Shepherd next
> More meek came with the Firstlings of his Flock
> Choicest and best; then sacrificing, laid
> The Inwards and thir Fat, with Incense strew'd, x
> On the cleft Wood, and all due Rites perform'd.
> His Off'ring soon propitious Fire from Heav'n
> Consum'd with nimble glance, and grateful steam;
> The other's not, for his was not sincere . . . .
> (P. L., XI. 429-443)

Wordsworth places an x alongside "The Inwards and thir Fat, with Incense strew'd" and makes this observation:

> This is inelegant and reminds one too strongly of a Butchers stall, it is the more to be lamented as the rest of the description is a pattern of simplicity; it is a language which seems lost, to modern tongues

It is something of a shock to find a poet of Wordsworth's views disapproving Milton's down-to-earth language and implying, furthermore, that it is "too low . . . too familiar, and not of sufficient dignity." Milton has indeed used "the language really spoken by men," men, moreover, from humble and rustic life. In failing to purify their language "from what appear to be its real defects, from all lasting and rational causes of dislike or disgust," Milton did not, in Wordsworth's opinion, exercise "true taste and feeling." Milton's bad taste might, in addition, have been gratuitous, since he obviously elaborated upon the simple recital in Genesis:

> . . . it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect.
> (4:3-5)

From what source, it is reasonable to ask, did Milton derive the details with which he embellished this account: Cain's "green Ear, and . . . yellow Sheaf, Uncull'd"; the judgment that Cain's offering "was not sincere"; Abel's arrangement of "The Inwards" as well as "thir Fat, with Incense strew'd"; "the cleft Wood"; and the "due Rites perform'd"? Did he select these butcher-stall details from his own observation of the ways of real men? And is it really his "taste and feeling" that must be brought to task?

Wordsworth obviously did not ask these questions, nor did it seem to occur to him to seek an explanation in the Bible. He was most certainly aware of Milton's prodigious Biblical scholarship, and he could have solved the riddle by the most rudimentary investigation, had he only assumed that there must have been Scriptural authority for what seemed to be Milton's inventions--as in fact there is. For Milton draws on Mosaic Law for his explanation of the Lord's attitude towards Cain's offering and for the details of Abel's sacrifice as well.

According to Leviticus, 2:1 and 2:14-15, Cain was very negligent in his offering and careless of the rites to be performed in connection with that offering. Cain should have offered "fine flour," poured "oil upon it, and put frankincense thereon"; or if the offering were of "first fruits" then it should have been "green ears of corn dried by the fire, even corn beaten out of full ears"; and he should have "put oil upon it, and lay frankincense thereon." The "Law of Peace Offerings," which deals with the sacrifice of animals, is even more specific and detailed, repeating the instructions three times to guarantee that no item of the ritual is overlooked whether the offering is of cattle, sheep, or goats. We can judge of the "taste and feeling" that Milton has exercised, and the degree to which he has "purified" the language "from all lasting and rational causes of dislike or disgust," by merely quoting one set of the instructions:

> And he shall lay his hand upon the head of his offering, and kill it at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: and Aaron's sons the priests shall sprinkle the blood upon the altar round about. And he shall offer of the sacrifice of the peace offering an offering made by fire unto the Lord; the fat that covereth the inwards, and all the fat that is upon the inwards, And the two kidneys, and the fat that is on them, which is by the flanks, and the caul above the liver, with the kidneys, it shall he take away. And Aaron's sons shall burn it on the altar upon the burnt sacrifice, which is upon the wood that is on the fire: it is an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor unto the Lord.
>
> (Leviticus, 3:2-5)

It is important also to note that these butcher-stall details as to the proper method of slaughter, the sprinkling of blood around the altar, and the selection of those parts of the inwards and their surrounding fat that are to be offered in sacrifice, are not the terms selected by the humble and rustic men to whom the instructions are directed, but the words of God as directly spoken to Moses.

It was essential to Milton's purpose that he include a modicum of these details as a kind of gloss on God's attitude towards Cain's offering, which Genesis does not explain. In Milton's account, Abel obviously knows the prescribed method for making an offering to God;[111] Cain, as the elder of the two, must obviously have known it as well, and if he neglected to perform the rites, his offer must have been insincerely made. These considerations aside, it is questionable whether Milton would have considered the diction inelegant since it is recorded as the word of God. Furthermore, had Milton regarded the language of the King James Bible as infelicitous, inaccurate, or unnecessarily crude, he was thoroughly capable of translating directly from the Hebrew, as he did on occasion when his sense of a passage differed from the King James translation.[112]

If Wordsworth often resorted to the authority of Milton to defend his choice of poetic diction, Milton just as often turned to the authority of the Scriptures to justify some of the ruder expressions that occur in his prose.[113] From his reading of Milton's political and religious tracts, Wordsworth should have known this; and this knowledge, in turn, should have deterred a too hasty and injudicious assumption that bad taste, rather than Biblical authority, was responsible for the alleged indelicacy of Milton's choice of poetic diction. When Wordsworth remarked that he "could point to . . . twice five hundred" passages in Paradise Lost "to which additional labour would have been serviceable," he also added that he did not "regret the absence of such labour, because no poem contains more proofs of skill acquired by practice."[114] Had he checked his Bible for the details of Abel's sacrifice, Wordsworth would have been impressed by the skill and discretion with which Milton accommodated Biblical language to modern taste and sensibility.

Germane to Wordsworth's comment on Milton's inelegant language, is another line that he marks, in this case without comment:

> Now Morn her rosy steps in th' Eastern Clime
> Advancing, sow'd the Earth with Orient Pearl,
> When Adam wak'd, so custom'd, for his sleep
> Was Aery light, from pure digestion bred, x
> And temperate vapors bland, which th' only sound
> Of leaves and fuming rills, Aurora's fan,
> Lightly dispers'd, and the shrill Matin Song
> Of Birds on every bough . . . .
> (P. L., V. 1-8)

That Wordsworth should have felt, at the very least, a certain incongruity in the conjunction of Morn's "rosy steps," "Eastern Clime," "Orient Pearl," "Aurora's fan," the "Matin Song Of Birds," and Adam's "pure digestion," would, it seems to me, be far more justified than his objections to the rites performed by Abel. But I rather suspect that this is not a mark of disapproval; more likely, it is a citation of Milton's authority in Wordsworth's own defense--a rejoinder, possibly, to Coleridge's criticism, in the Biographia Literaria, of his prosaisms. Coleridge lists "INCONSTANCY of . . . style" as "the first characteristic, though only occasional defect" that he finds in Wordsworth's poems:

> Under this name I refer to the sudden and unprepared transitions from lines or sentences of peculiar felicity (at all events striking and original) to a style, not only unimpassioned but undistinguished. He sinks too often and too abruptly to that style, which I should place in the second division of language . . . that which is only proper in prose . . . . [115]

Since Coleridge seems particularly to resent Wordsworth's citation of Milton's example as authority for his theory[116] that "there neither is, nor can be, any essential difference between the language of prose and metrical composition,"[117] Wordsworth may well have marked the passage in Paradise Lost on the alimentary sources of Adam's "Aery" sleep as concrete evidence of his contentions and as reassurance regarding his own practice. He may even have concluded that Milton's momentary shift in tone was an intentional device for intensifying by contrast the lyrical quality of the preceding and succeeding lines. The Hon. Mr. Justice Coleridge reports a conversation with Wordsworth in the summer of 1836 that gives substance to such a supposition:

> He talked of Milton, and observed how he sometimes indulged himself, in the 'Paradise Lost,' in lines which, if not in time, you could hardly call verse, instancing,
> "And Tiresias and Phineus, prophets old;"
> and then noticed the sweet-flowing lines which followed, and with regard to which he had no doubt the unmusical line before had been inserted. 118

More important than its stylistic considerations, however, is the conceptual interest that this sequence in Paradise Lost may possibly have had for Wordsworth. Milton had a very definite purpose for inserting this strange observation on the physiology of Adam's sleep in an otherwise lyrical description of the dawning day in Eden. It will later serve to emphasize the consequences of the fall[119] to Adam and Eve and to nature:

> Soon as the force of that fallacious Fruit,
> That with exhilarating vapor bland
> About thir spirits had play'd, and inmost powers
> Made err, was now exhal'd, and grosser sleep
> Bred of unkindly fumes, with conscious dreams
> Encumber'd, now had left them, up they rose
> As from unrest . . . .
> (P. L., IX. 1046-1052)

Milton intends us to understand how fallacious are the outer attractions of evil, and how foul is its inner essence, even to being obnoxious to the olfactory sense. He means us to feel a physical as well as moral revulsion from the contrast between the "grosser sleep Bred of unkindly fumes" and the "sleep" that is "Aery light" because it is "bred" from "temperate vapors bland." For this alteration from "Aery" lightness to gross "unrest" is the ominous beginning of a series of changes in physical nature that betoken the more consequential alterations to come: the exclusion of Adam and Eve from Eden, the death of their former joy, and the rupture of their happy communion with the natural world surrounding them. It is indeed a sleep of death[120] for which Wordsworth sought a solution other than the Christian one offered by Milton:

> 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 . . . .
> (Prospectus, 58-62)

It is of more than corollary interest that the quality of Adam's sleep--so prosaic a symbol of bliss and the fall from bliss--should possibly have provided the striking metaphor in which Wordsworth expresses the central purpose of his life's work, his philosophic song.

In Book X of Paradise Lost, Wordsworth marks without comment a line that he may well have invoked as an authoritative answer to Coleridge's criticism that he occasionally employed "thoughts and images too great for the subject."[121] Milton is, in fact, offering an apology for using a figure too small for the subject, but from Wordsworth's point of view the equation of great and small might well be justified in inverse ratio as well. The occasion is the construction, by Sin and Death, of a bridge between Hell and Earth. Impatient of the dominion on Earth that Satan had promised them, they follow his path through Chaos, building a bridge in the process. They hope thereby to speed Satan's triumphant return to Hell and to ease the regular "intercourse" between the two regions that can be expected from the success of Satan's mission (X. 252-261). Milton employs a series of images of great magnitude and power to describe the building of this bridge (X. 282-305). Recognizing that such an aggregation of superhuman exploits might be too overwhelming for containment and comprehension by the human imagination and that his efforts at metaphorical illustration might therefore fail of their purpose, he concludes his account with a comparison that is so minute by comparison with his previous similes, that it is anticlimactic. Milton, anticipating the criticism that such a practice might well elicit, calls attention to what he has done so that we may understand that it is intentional:

> Deep to the Roots of Hell the gather'd beach
> They fasten'd . . . .
>
> . . . a Bridge
> Of length prodigious joining to the Wall
> Immoveable of this now fenceless World
> Forfeit to Death; from hence a passage broad,
> Smooth, easy, inoffensive down to Hell.
> x So, if great things to small may be compar'd,
> Xerxes, the Liberty of Greece to yoke,
> . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
>
> . . . over Hellespont
> Bridging his way, Europe with Asia join'd,
> And scourg'd with many a stroke th' indignant waves.
> (P. L., X. 299-311)

It is Milton's explanatory interjection that Wordsworth marks for notice: "if great things to small may be compar'd." And in his mental argument with Coleridge's criticism, he may well have declared: "Why not small with great?" This line may have provided additional support to his contention that prosaic matter and language can mix with poetry "of the most elevated character" and that such combinations in his own poetry did not constitute, as Coleridge claimed, an "INCONSTANCY of . . . style."

Wordsworth's earliest use of the Miltonic explanation occurs in the Prospectus to his philosophic song.[122] After explaining that "the main region of his song" is more awesome than anything that Heaven, Hell, or Chaos can produce, Wordsworth prepares, as Milton does, for the introduction of lowlier matter:

> And if with this
> I mix more lowly matter; with the thing
> Contemplated, describe the Mind and Man
> Contemplating; and who, and what he was--
> The transitory Being that beheld
> This Vision; when and where, and how he lived;--
> Be not this labour useless. If such theme
> May sort with highest objects . . . .
> (ll. 93-100)

The analogy between Milton's appeal to the reader's indulgence--"if great things to small may be compar'd"--and Wordsworth's twofold entreaty--"if with this I mix more lowly matter"; "If such theme May sort with highest objects"--seems too close to be unconscious.

Some twenty years later (1819-20), Wordsworth builds an entire sonnet around this combination of small and great, inverting Milton's ratio of great to small. Just as Milton deliberately employs an image too small for his subject, Wordsworth as purposefully uses an image too great, equating "frail snow-drops" with an "Emathian phalanx" and a "bright immortal Theban band." Interestingly enough, Wordsworth puts his comparison of unequal powers to auxiliary service, as Milton did, to interject the additional idea of a struggle between freedom and tyranny; and surely it is no accident that the object of this struggle--in Milton and in Wordsworth--is the liberty of Greece:

> When haughty expectations prostrate lie,
> And grandeur crouches like a guilty thing,
> Oft shall the lowly weak, till nature bring
> Mature release, in fair society
> Survive, and Fortune's utmost anger try;
> Like these frail snow-drops that together cling,
> And nod their helmets, smitten by the wing
> Of many a furious whirl-blast sweeping by.
> Observe the faithful flowers! if small to great
> May lead the thoughts, thus struggling used to stand
> The Emathian phalanx, nobly obstinate;
> And so the bright immortal Theban band,
> Whom onset, fiercely urged at Jove's command,
> Might overwhelm, but could not separate! 123

After an interval of another nineteen years, Wordsworth makes explicit the conjunction in his mind of "great and small," Milton, and Coleridge. In a letter to Sir Robert Peel, May 3, 1838, Wordsworth is arguing for "lengthening the term of copyright." He explains that although his poems and Coleridge's have been in demand for many years, until lately the profits to the publisher were small, "and the residue to the author almost insignificant." Arguing that it takes many years before such writings become profitable to the author or his family and that under existing circumstances these benefits would cease just at the point when they were of some significance, he "ascends" from "small" to "great" by citing the example of Milton:

> I have gained much more from my long-published writings within the last five or six years than in the thirty preceding, and the copyright of much the greatest portion of them would die with me, or within the space of four years. And if from small things we may ascend to great, how slowly did the poetry of Milton make its way to public favour . . . . 124

It seems unlikely that Wordsworth could ponder the propriety of combining small with great, whether it was a question of style, or subject, or his theoretical differences with Coleridge, without thinking of the effectiveness of Milton's deliberate coupling of these inequalities. For a period of forty years--from the earliest text of the Prospectus (1798),[125] to the sonnet of 1819,[126] to the letter of 1838--it provided Wordsworth with a confirming authority for his own practices. And, slight as this material is, it furnishes additional testimony regarding Wordsworth's consistent adherence to certain ideas and principles throughout his creative life.

Footnotes

[1] Preface to 2nd ed., Lyrical Ballads (1800), PW, II, 390.

[2] Letter Preface to Peter Bell (April 7, 1819), PW, II, 331.

[3] This is Wordsworth's usual method of marking one line and commenting on the nearest interleaved page, usually opposite or following the page on which the marked text appears. See "Table of Marks and Comments," Appendix B, for the page locations of the manuscript notes.

[4] All quotations from Milton's poetry refer to John Milton Complete Poems and Major Prose, ed. Merritt Y. Hughes (New York, 1957). In his "Preface," p. vii, Hughes advises that the text of Paradise Lost in this edition was compared with the edition of 1674 (the same used by Wordsworth for his comment) in the Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, D. C.; the text is essentially the same except for modernized spellings. I have spot-checked the Hughes text against the text in Wordsworth's volume and have found this to be true.

[5] See Key To Abbreviations And Sigla, p. 1.

[6] The golden stairs come in for further comment by Wordsworth in connection with Milton's Satan, and are discussed in Chapter III, pp. 107-109.

[7] I quote the 1849 text because the changes that Wordsworth introduced into this text bring it into closer consonance with the ideas expressed in his marginal note.

[8] PW, I, 4; app. crit., p. 19.

[9] The 1793 text, l. 128, reads "verdant," the kind of "poetic diction" that the Preface to the Lyrical Ballads deplores.

[10] PW, I, 18, app. crit.; see Chapter III, pp. 128, 137 for further discussion of this image.

[11] PW, V, 317.

[12] Miscellaneous Sonnets, Part II, XI; PW, III, 25-26.

[13] The concluding lines of Book I, written in 1798 and later published in the Preface to The Excursion as the Prospectus of Wordsworth's philosophic song; PW, V, 4, ll. 47-48.

[14] Miscellaneous Sonnets, Part II, XII; PW, III, 26.

[15] Prel., p. 569.

[16] Prel., pp. 568-569; de Selincourt cites P. L., IV. 208-247; IX. 115-118; all other sources, unless indicated by footnote, result from my independent research.

[17] Milton is distinguishing between the "real" or "historical" garden of Solomon and the "mythological" garden of Adonis; see Hughes's note, John Milton Complete Poems, p. 388.

[18] Prel., p. 569.

[19] For Wordsworth's and Coleridge's reading of Purchas, see John Livingston Lowes, The Road to Xanadu: A Study in the Ways of the Imagination (Vintage Books, New York, 1959; orig. pub. 1927), pp. 325, 328-329; for the suggestion that Wordsworth and Coleridge were aware of Milton's use of Purchas, see pp. 341-343 and 542-543. See also "Appendix III," The Correspondence of Henry Crabb Robinson with the Wordsworth Circle (1808-1866), ed. Edith J. Morley (Oxford, 1927), II, 870, for a firsthand description of the volume of Purchas listed in the Catalogue of the sale of the Rydal Mount Library. On Milton's reading of Purchas, see Hughes's note, John Milton Complete Poems, p. 285; Robert Ralson Cawley, Milton and the Literature of Travel (Princeton, 1951), pp. 69-70, 96-98.

[20] Essay, Supplementary to the Preface (1815), PW, II, 411.

[21] Prospectus, ll. 42-44, PW, V, 4.

[22] Prel., p. 600.

[23] Prel., p. 395, app. crit.; $D^3$ text after 1839: see "Introduction," p. xxiii.

[24] PW, V, 416; all other citations in this discussion of sources in P. L. are mine.

[25] PW, V, 431; the notes cite L'Allegro (77-78): "Towers and Battlements it sees Bosom'd high in tufted trees."

[26] *PW*, V, 415.

[27] See Elsie Smith, *An Estimate of William Wordsworth by His Contemporaries 1793-1822* (Oxford, 1932), p. 362. The notes for *Exc.*, II in *PW*, V, 415-418 do not cite any Miltonic sources for this passage.

[28] *PW*, V, 72, app. crit.

[29] See pp. 19-20 and f. n. 12 and 14 above.

[30] See pp. 21-23 and f. n. 18 and 19 above.

[31] See f. n. 14 above.

[32] See discussion of Gehol's Gardens, p. 23 above.

[33] See discussion pp. 25-27 above.

[34] cf. *Exc.*, II. 832 and III. 720; see *PW*, V, 422.

[35] *The Works of John Milton*, ed. Frank Allen Patterson (New York, 1931-1942), III, 256-257.

[36] See discussion pp. 33-34 above.

[37] For this passage, *Exc.*, IX. 590-608, *PW*, V, 474 notes the following Miltonic phraseology only: "orb" (593) *P. L.* *passim*; "blue firmament" (596) *P. L.*, XI. 206; "unapparent fount" (605) *P. L.*, VII. 103. I believe that I have demonstrated that there is considerably more Miltonic influence, not only of diction but of concepts as well. I have not explored the sources cited by E. de Selincourt and Helen Darbishire because they lead to passages in *Paradise Lost* that are irrelevant to the question under discussion here.

[38] *PW*, V, 474 cites the following Miltonic allusions for *Exc.*, IX. 614-624: "effluence of thyself" (617) *P. L.*, III. 6; "paternal splendours" (620) *P. L.*, VII. 219. My comments on Miltonic influence, f. n. 37 above, apply here as well.

[39] *Poems Dedicated to National Independence and Liberty*, Part II, XXXIX. The notes in *PW*, III, 460-461, record no Miltonic allusions.

[40] "On Mr. Wordsworth's 'Excursion,'" The Examiner (London, Oct. 2, 1814), p. 636; article signed "W.H." I half suspect that Wordsworth himself supplied the criteria on the basis of which Hazlitt found his poetry deficient. In a letter to Thomas Manning, Feb. 1801, The Works of Charles and Mary Lamb, ed. E. V. Lucas, VI: Letters 1796-1820 (London, 1905), 213, Lamb reports a letter recently received from Wordsworth in which Wordsworth gave forth "a deal of stuff about a certain Union of Tenderness and Imagination, which in the sense he used Imagination was not the characteristic of Shakespeare, but which Milton possessed in a degree far exceeding other Poets: which Union, as the highest species of Poetry, and chiefly deserving that name, 'He was most proud to aspire to . . . .'" The "Union of Tenderness and Imagination" that Wordsworth requires for "the highest species of Poetry" and that he concludes was possessed by Milton "in a degree far exceeding other Poets" is remarkably like Hazlitt's combined "excellences" of "imagination" and "sentiment" that make for the "perfection of poetry" that he finds in Milton and Shakespeare, but lacking in Wordsworth. Wordsworth's letter was a reply to Lamb's mild criticism of the second edition of Lyrical Ballads. It is not entirely unlikely that Hazlitt, during his visit with Coleridge and Wordsworth in 1798 when the Lyrical Ballads were a matter of daily discussion, could have been an auditor to some such discussion between the two poets in which it was concluded that "the highest species of Poetry" as exemplified in Milton required this "Union of Tenderness and Imagination." If this is so, then Hazlitt in making his criticism of Wordsworth's poetry had the added pleasure of seeing Wordsworth "hoist by his own petard." On Hazlitt's visit in 1798, see Mary Moorman, William Wordsworth, A Biography: The Early Years 1770-1803 (Oxford, 1957), pp. 379-381, 397-399.

[41] Prel., p. 584.

[42] The Mind Of A Poet (Baltimore, 1941), p. 470.

[43] Prel., p. 305; see app. crit., D and $D^2$ texts; for dating see p. xxiii.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Prel., p. 562; notes cite Purchas and P. L., I. 717-719 only.

[46] Prel., p. 225, app. crit.

[47] PW, V, 4, ll. 33-41; 47-48.

[48] Biographia Literaria, ed. J. Shawcross (London, 1949; orig. pub. 1907), II, 45.

[49] See John E. Parish, "Milton and God's Curse on the Serpent," *JEGP*, LVIII (1959), 241-247 for a discussion of the gradual, dramatic revelation of the meaning of these prophecies through the panorama of future history that Michael reveals to Adam and of the way in which Adam's mounting joy parallels his growing understanding.

[50] *The Poems of Gray and Collins*, ed. Austin Lane Poole, 4th ed. rev. (Oxford Univ. Press, London and New York, 1948).

[51] *William Blake's Designs for Gray's Poems*, Reproduced Fullsize in Monochrome or Colour from the Unique Copy Belonging to His Grace the Duke of Hamilton, introd. H. J. C. Grierson (Oxford Univ. Press, London, 1922), p. 18.

[52] *A Concordance to the English Poems of Thomas Gray*, ed. for the Concordance Society, Albert S. Cook (Boston and New York, 1908), p. 16.

[53] Grierson assigns a probable date of 1800 to the drawings, "Introduction," *William Blake's Designs for Gray's Poems*, pp. 5, 16-17, 18.

[54] *Ibid.*, Plate No. 6, p. 98 (verse text); Plate No. 10, p. 102.

[55] *Ibid.*, p. 18.

[56] Letter to Bernard Barton, May 15, 1824, *The Works of Charles and Mary Lamb*, ed. E. V. Lucas, VII: *Letters 1821-1834* (London, 1905), 642.

[57] *The Influence of Milton on English Poetry* (New York, 1961; orig. pub. 1922), p. 458.

[58] Letter to Henry Taylor, Dec. 26, 1823, *LY*, I, 131; see pp. 9-10 above.

[59] This emendation made in the $A^2$ text (1806) remains through the C text (1819); see app. crit., *Prel.*, p. 309; for dating of texts see "Introduction," pp. xxi-xxii.

[60] *Prel.*, p. 309, app. crit. D text; see p. xxiii.

[61] *Ibid.*

[62] In the 1850 edition of The Prelude, the final line, "Descending slow with something heavenly fraught," is footnoted with the remark that this comes from Paradise Lost , XI. 204. This adds confusion to mystery since P. L., XI. 204 reads: "Darkness ere Day's mid-course, and Morning Light." In his comments on this notation, de Selincourt calls attention to the fact that Wordsworth has quoted more than one line, and he gives the entire passage, P. L., XI. 203-207, ending with "And slow descends"; see Prel., p. 584. In my comparison of Milton's lines and Wordsworth's, I find that the only two lines quoted verbatim are XI. 204 quoted above and XI. 206: "O'er the blue Firmament a radiant white"; the others are a close paraphrase. If the reasoning behind the strange absence of quotation marks and the acknowledgement of the single line rests on the fact that three of the concluding lines in this passage are a paraphrase of Milton's lines, there still remains the puzzle of Wordsworth's failure to acknowledge XI. 206.

[63] These lines were originally in Book VIII (1805: 839-842); they were transferred to Book VII in the $E^2$ text (1839 or after); see Prel., app. crit. pp. 254, 311, and p. xxiv; also Raymond Dexter Havens, The Mind of A Poet (Baltimore, 1941), p. 446.

[64] Since these lines were originally part of the London reminiscences of Book VIII. 801-842 ff. (1805 text), they can be considered as one line of thought and one metaphor; see The Mind of A Poet, p. 446 on the repetitions that resulted from the numerous revisions that Wordsworth made in Books VII and VIII of The Prelude between 1805 and 1839.

[65] See The Mind of A Poet, p. 477.

[66] Christopher Wordsworth, Memoirs of William Wordsworth (London, 1851), II, 472.

[67] This marginal notation is discussed more fully in Chapter III, pp. 139-142.

[68] Prel., p. 395 app. crit.

[69] See discussion of Robespierre passage, pp. 25-27 above.

[70] PW, I, 62.

[71] de Selincourt's note, PW, I, 324 indicates that Wordsworth made important changes in Descriptive Sketches in 1820 and again in 1836, but does not indicate when Wordsworth eliminated this footnote.

[72] "Recollections of Wordsworth," The Prose Works of William Wordsworth, ed. Alexander B. Grosart (London, 1876), III, 488.

[73] I. F. note to An Evening Walk, PW, I, 319.

[74] PW, II, 390.

[75] As recorded in A Concordance to the Poems of William Wordsworth, ed. for the Concordance Society, Lane Cooper (London, 1911).

[76] See footnote to 1793 edition, PW, I, 24 and I. F. note on the same passage (1793 text: 191-218), p. 319.

[77] Aubrey de Vere, "Recollections of Wordsworth," The Prose Works of William Wordsworth, III, 493, comments that "It was to Nature as first created, not to Nature as corrupted by 'disnatured' passions, that his song had attributed such high and healing powers."

[78] See app. crit., PW, I, 22-23.

[79] PW, I, 320.

[80] Cf. Prel., V. 246-256; same text and line numbers 1805 and 1850:

> Behold the parent hen amid her brood,
> Though fledged and feathered, and well pleased to part
> And straggle from her presence, still a brood,
> And she herself from the maternal bond
> Still undischarged; yet doth she little more
> Than move with them in tenderness and love,
> A centre to the circle which they make;
> And now and then, alike from need of theirs
> And call of her own natural appetites,
> She scratches, ransacks up the earth for food,
> Which they partake at pleasure.

"Fledged and feathered" derive from Milton's description of the birth and growth of the first birds that precedes the description of the swan: the "callow young . . . feather'd soon and fledge . . . summ'd thir Pens . . . soaring th' air sublime" (P. L., VII. 420-421). Although de Selincourt takes no note of this parallel, Raymond Dexter Havens does; see The Influence Of Milton On English Poetry, p. 610.

[81] PW, I, 24.

[82] Biographia Literaria, II, 101-103.

[83] See Hughes's note, p. 357.

[84] See Hughes's note, p. 356.

[85] These lines evidently made a deep impression on Wordsworth, for he uses them again in The Excursion, IV. 456-461:

> the sedentary fowl
> That seek yon pool, and there prolong their stay
> In silent congress; or together roused
> Take flight; while with their clang the air resounds.
> And, over all, in that ethereal vault,
> Is the mute company of changeful clouds . . . .

See editor's note, PW, V, 426, and f. n. 80 above.

[86] See Hughes's note, p. 16.

[87] de Selincourt dates it 1798-1799; see Prel., p. xxvi.

[88] de Selincourt cites this indebtedness, Prel., p. 517, but takes no note of the parallels to the swan passage, P. L., VII. 437-442.

[89] Wordsworth had previously disregarded the traditionally feminine gender of boats in An Evening Walk (1793 text: 319-320; dropped after 1820): "The talking boat that moves with pensive sound, Or drops his anchor down with plunge profound . . . ."

[90] See app. crit., Prel., p. 25 and "Introduction," p. xxiii.

[91] Biographia Literaria, II, 109.

[92] See I. F. note and note to 1837 edition for further particulars, PW, II, 520.

[93] See PW, I, 319; II, 520.

[94] See app. crit., PW, II, 272-273.

[95] See Letter to William Rowan Hamilton, Nov. 22, 1831, LY, II, 586.

[96] After a similar impulse to improve upon another Miltonic metaphor, in this case relating to Satan, Wordsworth decided that Milton's image was better because it was "permanent" and "not dependent upon accident." He records the incident in a letter to Sir George Beaumont, Aug. 28, 1811, MY, II, 464-470. Wordsworth describes a "fine sight" that he observed "one evening, walking along a rising ground about two miles distant from the shore [near Bootle Cumberland]. It was about the hour of sunset, and the sea was perfectly calm, and in a quarter where its surface was indistinguishable from the western sky, hazy, and luminous with the setting Sun, appeared a tall sloop-rigged vessel, magnified by the atmosphere through which it was viewed, and seeming rather to hang in the air than to float upon the waters. Milton compares the appearance of Satan to a Fleet descried far off at sea; the visionary grandeur and beautiful form of this single vessel, could words have conveyed to the mind the picture which Nature presented to the eye, would have suited his purpose as well as the largest company of Vessels that ever associated together with the help of a trade wind, in the wide Ocean. Yet not exactly so, and for this reason, that this image is a permanent one, not dependent upon accident." (Italics W.'s)

[97] See f.n. 80 and p.71 and f.n. 84 above.

[98] This passage was published separately as the Water Fowl in 1823; see PW, II, 522, for the Miltonic parallels.

[99] The O. E. D., in defining "glance" as "a sudden movement producing a flash or gleam of light; also, the flash or gleam itself," quotes this line in Paradise Lost as an example of the word in this sense.

[100] The lines remain the same in the 1850 text, Prel., IV. 311-314.

[101] In Loving and Liking, a poem "By My Sister" published in the 1835 edition of Wordsworth's poems, Dorothy Wordsworth expresses the same combination of joyous movement and sparkling light in the word "glancing"; she advises a child to take the example of the frog:

> Learning from him to find a reason
> For a light heart in a dull season.
> And you may love him in the pool,
> That is for him a happy school,

In which he swims as taught by nature,
Fit pattern for a human creature,
Glancing amid the water bright,
And sending upward sparkling light.
(21-28)

Wordsworth's note to the 1837 edition advises that a few lines are not Dorothy's, but presumably his; neither he nor de Selincourt indicate which lines they are. See *PW*, II, 485.

[102] See I. F. Note, *PW*, IV, 437.

[103] *PW*, II, 392.

[104] *Ibid.*, p. 387.

[105] *Ibid.*, pp. 383-384.

[106] *Ibid.*, pp. 390-391.

[107] See *Biographia Literaria*, II, 28-45.

[108] *Ibid.*, I, 51.

[109] See, for example, *EY*, p. 312; *MY*, I, 134; *MY*, II, 474; *The Autobiography of Leigh Hunt* (New York, 1850), II, 40, cited by Markham L. Peacock, *The Critical Opinions of William Wordsworth* (Baltimore, 1950), p. 348.

[110] See Raymond Dexter Havens, *The Influence of Milton on English Poetry*, pp. 199-200.

[111] It may seem that I am charging Milton with a glaring anachronism. For how could Adam or his sons know anything about Mosaic Law? But this seems to be the underlying assumption in these lines, and it is confirmed by Adam's first comment on the murder of Abel: "some great mischief hath befall'n To that meek man, who well had sacrific'd" (*P. L.*, XI. 450-451). This is not an invention of Milton's, however, but a matter of Christian tradition. *Job Expounded by Theodore Beza, partly in manner of a Commentary, partly in manner of a Paraphrase*, Faithfully translated out of Latine into English, Printed by John Legatt, Printer to the Universitie of Cambridge (London, 1589?), sig. B [8], maintains that "the doctrine of true godlines" was "naturallie engrafted" in Adam: "It is therefore most true that *Adam* had naturallie engrafted in him from his creation the perfit knowledge of all good and profitable learning . . . which God had given him, to the true end, namely to the glorie of God his

Creator. . . . I am therefore of opinion, that the most auncient Patriarkes, as they learned the creation of the world of our first parents, so also that they were most skillful in the true naturall philosophie . . . as also more principallie the doctrine of true godlines"; italics Beza's. According to this line of thought, Milton could well assume that the proper method of sacrifice, that had later to be taught to the Isrealites in the form of Law transmitted to Moses by God, was part of "the doctrine of true godlines" that was "naturallie engrafted" in Adam. For further information on Milton's reading of Beza and the possible influence of Job Expounded on his thinking, see my article, "Beza and Milton: New Light on the Temptation of Learning," Bulletin of the New York Public Library, LXVI (Oct. 1962), 485-498.

[112] See Harris F. Fletcher, Milton's Rabbinical Readings (Urbana, Ill., 1930), pp. 302-303.

[113] See Animadversions, The Works of John Milton, III, 105-106; The Reason of Church Government, III, 231-232; An Apology Against A Modest Confutation, III, 308-320; Pro Se Defensio, IX, 107-113; The Christian Doctrine, XVII, 245.

[114] Letter to William Rowan Hamilton, Nov. 22, 1831, LY, II, 586.

[115] II, 97; italics and capitalization are Coleridge's.

[116] II, 48, 69.

[117] Preface to Lyrical Ballads, PW, II, 392; italics Wordsworth's.

[118] Memoirs of William Wordsworth, II, 311.

[119] See Hughes's note, p. 302.

[120] On awakening from their "grosser" sleep, Adam and Eve do in fact expect that they will die shortly; see P. L., IV. 425-427; IX. 1167; X. 210.

[121] Biographia Literaria, II, 109.

[122] I am using the text published in the Preface to The Excursion (1815); it differs only slightly from the B text (1800), and no changes are noted between the B text and the earliest MS. of 1798. See PW, V, 338-339; for dating see p. 372. Miss Darbishire records no Miltonic influence for these lines.

[123] Miscellaneous Sonnets, Part II, Sonnet XXI (1819-1820); the notes in PW, III, 428-429 do not indicate Miltonic influence.

[124] LY, II, 936.

[125] See f. n. 122 above.

[126] See pp. 92-93 and f. n. 123 above.

# III

# THE DEVIL'S PARTY

The group of manuscript notes that concern Satan represents one-third of Wordsworth's rare and spare commentary. Considered in light of the unusual interest that this character excited in the writers of his day, Wordsworth's comments are of a strangely technical nature, pointing to what he considered contradictions, inconsistencies, and failures of taste in Milton's development of the powers and qualities of one of the "great personages" of his cosmic epic.

The first comment refers to Milton's description of Satan's first view of the golden stairs that dropped from Heaven to the newly-created Earth. Although, as Milton explains, the stairs were sometimes "drawn up to Heav'n . . . Viewless," at the moment of Satan's arrival in the new world:

> The Stairs were then let down, whether to dare
> The Fiend by easy ascent, or aggravate x
> His sad exclusion from the doors of Bliss.
> (III. 523-525)

Wordsworth places an x at the conclusion of the second of these three lines and remarks:

> This is injudicious; a Spirit who was able to make such a voyage as Satan has just performed who "at one slight bound could high overleap all bound"[1] could not have his access to heaven either facilitated or obstructed by the letting down or drawing up of a pair of stairs. --

It is almost startling that so perceptive a reader of Milton, as Wordsworth was reputed to have been, should have missed all the subtle ironies implicit in the circumstances of Satan's departure from Hell and his subsequent voyage through Chaos:[2] the Gates of Hell that fly open by themselves (II. 879-883); Satan's helpless floundering in the "vast vacuity" (930-940) until "half lost" he seeks aid from the "Anarch" of the region (957-977); the ease with which Sin and Death later make the same passage, building a bridge as they go (X. 282-305). Even more noteworthy is the insight that his comment affords into the literalism that so often beset Wordsworth's imagination and for which he was so often criticised and parodied by the critics and poets of his time. Judged by the criteria of workaday reality, Jacob's Ladder is indeed an irrelevancy to Arch-Angelic power--of equal inconsequence to the "angels of God" whom Jacob saw "ascending and descending" upon it, as it is to Satan. But most of us would be as unwilling to relinquish Jacob's dream of the golden stairs as we are to forego Wordsworth's dream of the Arab. We are inclined to plead, "O reason not the need," for Milton's use of a Biblical image famous in poetic metaphor, allegory, and sacred art.[3]

Wordsworth himself could not entirely resist the need to dress his thought in this metaphor, although the conflict between his poetic inclinations and his poetic theories is evident. On "An Evening of Extraordinary Splendor and Beauty,"[4] he is prompted to say:

> And, if there be whom broken ties
> Afflict, or injuries assail,
> Yon hazy ridges to their eyes
> Present a glorious scale,

> Climbing suffused with sunny air,
> To stop--no record hath told where!
> And tempting Fancy to ascend,
> And with immortal Spirits blend!
> (41-48)

A MS variant makes the reference to Jacob's Ladder and its poetic appeal more explicit:

> And with those happy spirits blend
> Whose motions smitten with glad awe
> By night the dreaming Patriarch saw . . . . [5]

To ease his discomfort, Wordsworth surrounds his supernatural image with the realities of life. The golden stairs are mountain ridges, made golden by the suffusion of "sunny air." Only "Fancy" makes of them a "glorious scale" traversed by "immortal Spirits." In a note appended to the poem, he makes further excuse:

> The multiplication of mountain-ridges, described at the commencement of the third Stanza of this Ode as a kind of Jacob's Ladder, leading to Heaven, is produced either by watery vapours, or sunny haze;--in the present instance by the latter cause. [6]

But Wordsworth was really of two minds--poetical and critical--and the conflict within his imagination is not completely silenced by this rationalization. He cannot unqualifiedly depreciate this "Fancy" that converts sunlit mountain ridges into golden stairs reaching to heaven. The concluding stanza hails this fanciful impulse as a return of the "visionary splendour" for whose gradually fading glories Wordsworth consoles himself in the "Immortality Ode." And if we have missed the point, his appended note informs us that the allusions to "Intimations of Immortality" were intentional.[7]

Wordsworth once again runs afoul of his literalmindedness when he marks for comment Raphael's description of the first wound inflicted on Satan in the Battle in Heaven, when Michael's sword met

> The sword of Satan with steep force to smite
> Descending, and in half cut sheer, nor stay'd,
> But with swift wheel reverse, deep ent'ring shear'd
> All his right side; then Satan first knew pain . . . . /
> (VI. 323-327)

Wordsworth comments:

> I am not sure that it has ever been observed that Milton here is guilty of an oversight. He forgets the expressions which he puts into the mouth of Sin descriptive of her own birth. "All on a sudden miserable pain [sic] surprized thee &c.

What Milton is supposed to have forgotten is the story of her birth that Sin recounts to Satan in Book II in order to identify herself as his daughter:

> All on a sudden miserable pain
> Surpris'd thee, dim thine eyes, and dizzy swum
> In darkness, while thy head flames thick and fast
> Threw forth, till on the left side op'ning wide,
> Likest to thee in shape and count'nance bright,
> Then shining heav'nly fair, a Goddess arm'd
> Out of thy head I sprung . . . .
> (752-758)

Here, however, Wordsworth is himself guilty of oversights in regard to the poet's use of personae and his management of time--two elements about which in his own poetry he was very sensitive. Raphael carries the burden of narrative in this passage in Book VI, and it is his memory alone that can be called into question.

It must always be borne in mind that in Milton's cosmos God is the sole being capable of omniscience, all other creatures however high in the heavenly hierarchy having limitations as to the nature and extent of their knowledge. Milton is very careful to establish these limitations. Neither Raphael nor Satan, for instance, witnessed the creation of Adam. Satan can only learn the circumstances of the creation and the conditions under which Adam and Eve were placed in the Garden of Eden by eavesdropping on their conversations. Raphael, although he has been informed of the event by other angels, does not consider that his knowledge is complete, and he requests that Adam review the details from his point of view (VIII. 228-229). How can Raphael be aware of the circumstances under which Sin was brought into being when Satan himself must be reminded of her birth and must be informed of the means by which she was so transformed that she is unrecognizable to her father-husband? It is very proper, therefore, that Raphael, who has never himself felt pain, should believe that the wound inflicted by Michael was the first pain that Satan experienced.

Wordsworth's failure to distinguish between the narrative voices of Milton and of his several characters is especially curious in a poet who appended so lengthy an apologia to The Thorn, explaining the tone of that poem by a detailed description of its *persona* and stubbornly opposing the poetic theory underlying the use of such *personae* to all criticisms of the poem, including Coleridge's.[8]

Wordsworth's implied criticism of Milton's handling of time also deserves consideration. Although Raphael's account of the Battle in Heaven occurs in Book VI, this event preceded in time the meeting at Hell's Gate between Satan and Sin, described in Book II; and the event that Sin recalls to Satan's memory on this occasion is the forerunner and precipitating cause, in allegorical terms, of the battle that Raphael is recounting. Within the framework of this involuted time sequence, the characters involved in the knowledge of Satan's first pain have never been all together in the same place at the same time. Wordsworth was keenly aware of the problems and complications that arise between chronological time and thematic time in the writing of a long poem. In Book IX of The Prelude he interrupts his narrative to explain the necessity for his "motions retrograde," his turns, returns, and "intricate delay."[9] It is therefore a source of wonder that Wordsworth the critic should so forget the practices of Wordsworth the poet that he can misunderstand Milton's design in having two characters claiming two different events as the occasion for Satan's first experience of pain.

In Book IX of Paradise Lost, Wordsworth reverts to the problem of Milton's assessment of Satan's powers. Evidently Wordsworth must have considered this alleged inconsistency a more serious lapse than that remarked in Book III,[10] for he marks two lines rather than his usual one. In this passage Satan is explaining to himself why he chooses to tempt Eve rather than Adam:

> Then let me not let pass
> Occasion which now smiles, behold alone
> The Woman, opportune to all attempts,
> Her Husband, for I view far round, not nigh,
> Whose higher intellectual more I shun, x
> And strength, of courage haughty, and of limb x
> Heroic built, though of terrestrial mould,
> Foe not informidable, exempt from wound,
> I not; so much hath Hell debas'd, and pain
> Infeebl'd me, to what I was in Heav'n.
> (479-488)

And Wordsworth protests:

> This language seems inconsistent with the character & powers ascribed by Milton to his two great personages Satan & Adam. Though Adam might be exempt from wound, a being whose hand's dispatch was outgrown even in the precincts of his bower, which were unsightly & unsmooth,[11] could not as far as related to corporeal strength be supposed a formidable antagonist to one who is gifted with power to subvert systems, the poet tells us that of whom God & his son except created thing nought valued nor shunned [sic]. 12

Here, again, Wordsworth confuses Milton's voice with his persona's. It is Satan, not Milton, who is assessing the comparative powers of Adam and Satan under circumstances conducive to self-deception. Satan is about to accomplish the mission that he and Beelzebub had earlier described as a "perilous attempt" filled with "unknown dangers" that are so great that Satan to merit his position as Hell's Potentate must assume the hazard alone.[13] The perilous adventure is now reduced to an ignoble assault on a lone woman, defenseless because like Satan she has willfully misconstrued her powers and those of her antagonist and thus deprived herself of her husband's protection. No wonder that Satan must make excuses even to himself. Wordsworth misses both the irony and the comedy in Satan's rationalization. Inconsistent the language is, but the inconsistency is Satan's not Milton's. Milton has more than once alerted us to expect deception and contradiction from the Fallen Angels. Beelzebub's speech in Pandemonium (Book II) is a case in point. To avert the hazardous counterattack on Heaven that Moloch has proposed, Beelzebub puts forward Satan's plan for the destruction of man as an easier means to revenge. When first projected, the exploit must have as heroic and manly a sound as Moloch's call for a fight to extinction:

> Thither let us bend all our thoughts, to learn
> What creatures there inhabit, of what mould,
> Or substance, how endu'd, and what thir Power,
> And where thir weakness, how attempted best,
> By force or subtlety . . . .
> (II. 354-358)

At this point it is a problematic mission: the new creatures of earth have unknown powers and their weakness is doubtful. But mindful that Belial's counsel of passive acceptance and gradual inurement to misery and pain have very likely won support, Beelzebub takes another tack and minimizes the difficulties of the project:

> Some advantageous act may be achiev'd
> By sudden onset, either with Hell fire
> To waste his whole Creation, or possess
> All as our own, and drive as we were driven,
> The puny habitants, or if not drive,
> Seduce them to our Party . . . .
> (363-368)

Still later in the debate, when the time has come for Satan to offer himself as a sacrifice for the future welfare of Hell's inhabitants, the mission is again fraught with extreme dangers (II. 402-466). That Wordsworth should have mistaken Satan's self-deceptive rationalization for Milton's actual assessment of the comparative powers of his characters is again attributable to his literal cast of mind.

How Milton felt about Satan's assault upon creatures who, failing a reliance on the providence of God, were puny indeed in comparison with Satan, is indicated by the horrifying punishment he inflicts upon Satan and his followers--a punishment consonant with Milton's ideas of freedom of choice and justice. Since Satan debased his spirit by conceiving the destruction of lesser beings for fear of confronting One more powerful, and since he also elects to exchange the form of "Arch-Angel ruined" for that of the serpent, a creature very low on the scale of being, his punishment is to experience again and again the ignominies of his self-debasement. From the moment of his arrival in the newly-created world, Satan on his own volition goes through a series of transformations that are progressively lower on the chain of being. In each case he does so for the purpose of deception: he takes the shape of a "stripling Cherub" to hide his identity from the Arch-Angel Uriel, the guardian of the Sun (P. L., III. 634-644); in order to eavesdrop on the conversation of Adam and Eve, he makes himself one of the "fourfooted kinds," alternately a Lion and a Tiger (IV. 396-410); he squats in the form of a Toad "close at the ear" of the sleeping Eve in order to stimulate in the form of a dream the kind of "Vain hopes, vain aims, inordinate desires" that will later lead to her fall (IV. 800-809). It is only for the last of his self-debasing metamorphoses--his assumption of the serpent's form to accomplish the seduction of Eve--that Satan expresses repulsion from the degradation to which his evil course constrains him:

> O foul descent! that I who erst contended
> With Gods to sit the highest, am now constrain'd
> Into a Beast, and mixt with bestial slime,
> This essence to incarnate and imbrute,
> That to the highth of Deity aspir'd . . . .
> (P. L., IX. 163-167)

And it is exquisitely ironic that his punishment should take the form of the one humiliation that is most distasteful to him. Milton's description of the punishment is long and deliberate; he exhausts every device for piling horror upon horror, combining with his catalogue of snakes and crawling things an even more terrible catalogue of repulsive sensations (X. 504-570).

Wordsworth, who protests that Milton did not properly estimate the unequal powers possessed by his characters, does not quite appreciate the disgust that Milton intends us to feel at Satan's triumph in this unequal contest. He marks line 533 in this passage, "they all Him follow'd issuing forth to th' open Field," but comments on the entire description:

> Here we bid farewell to the first character, perhaps ever exhibited in Poetry. And it is not a little to be lamented that, he leaves us in a situation <little in> so degraded in comparison with the grandeur of his introduction. Milton's fondness [? ] for the Metamorphoses probably induced him to draw this picture which <I cannot exc> excellently as it [is] executed I cannot but think unworthy of his genius. The "spattering noise" &c. are images which can <not but> only excite disgust. The representation of the Fallen Angels wreathing their jaws filled with soot and cinders with hatefullest disrelish contains in it nothing that can afford pleasure. Had the poet <chosen to> determined to inflict upon them a so bestial punishment certainly one more noble more consonant to the dignity of the beings might easily [sic]

In speaking of Satan as "the first character, perhaps ever exhibited in Poetry," Wordsworth is undoubtedly using the word "first" in its meaning of foremost and in the same superlative sense that Hazlitt calls Milton's Satan "the most heroic subject that ever was chosen for a poem."[14] As to the grandeur of Satan's introduction that Wordsworth feels should have merited for Satan an equally grand departure, Hazlitt informs us that "Wordsworth once said that he could read the description of Satan in Milton [Paradise Lost, I. 587 ff.] till he felt a certain faintness come over his mind from a sense of beauty and grandeur."[15] Wordsworth makes some excuse for Milton by recognizing that Milton's choice of punishment was influenced by Ovid's account of the transformation of Cadmus into a serpent

(Metamorphoses, IV. 575-589);[16] he considers the choice in poor taste, nevertheless. What he evidently was not aware of were the even more influential Christian sources and precedents on which Milton was drawing. The images that Wordsworth finds "unworthy" of Milton's genius, disgusting, and containing "nothing that can afford pleasure" did not originate with Milton; they were well established in Christian tradition[17] long before Milton gave them the poetic form that Wordsworth concedes is so "excellently executed."

Are we to assume from his distaste for this treatment of Satan that Wordsworth shared his contemporaries' admiration for Satan's heroic qualities? On the surface it would seem so. While the others cite the grandeur of Milton's conception and execution as proof that Milton intended Satan to be the hero of his epic, Wordsworth seems to complain that Milton is at times too negligent of the dignities and eminence due to his great character. Little or nothing has been said regarding Wordsworth's position in the almost one-sided Satanist controversy that agitated the nineteenth century.[18] But that Wordsworth shared Blake's view that Milton was "of the Devil's party without knowing it" or Hazlitt's extravagent admiration for Satan as Promethean-Napoleonic hero is difficult to believe.[19] Nor could Wordsworth have sanctioned Shelley's claim that Milton alleged "no superiority in moral virtue as to his God over his Devil, that he had done all that could be done to "excite the sympathy . . . of succeeding generations of mankind" for the rebel Satan, and that, having given "the Devil all imaginable advantage," whether "Milton was a Christian or not, at the period of the composition of Paradise Lost," was open to question.[20] Any hasty conclusion that would make Wordsworth a party to a view of Satan that grew out of religious concepts and political sympathies to which Wordsworth was so antipathetic would be foolhardy indeed.

We have nothing so direct from Wordsworth in the way of an evaluation of Satan's character as we have from Coleridge, but what Coleridge states explicitly will, I believe, provide insight into what Wordsworth says by implication. By way of Coleridge's attempt to analyze Napoleon's character[21] for the "Letters on the Spaniards" that appeared in the Courier (Dec. to Jan. 1809-10), we have one of Coleridge's earliest interpretations of Milton's Satan:

> . . . it is indispensable, that men should have clear conceptions of what the main power of a remorseless tyrant, such as Bonaparte, consists in. This cannot lie in vice as vice, for all injustice is in itself feebleness and disproportion; but . . . the abandonment of all principle of right enables the soul to choose and act upon a principle of wrong, and to subordinate to this one principle all the various vices of human nature. . . . . He who has once said with his whole heart, Evil, be thou my good! has removed a world of obstacles by the very decision, that he will have no obstacles but those of force and brute matter.[22]

Coleridge was to expand these ideas in the succeeding years and in Appendix A to The Statesman's Manual (1816) his appraisal of Milton's Satan can hardly be considered sympathetic to current opinion on the subject:

> But in its utmost abstraction and consequent state of reprobation, the Will becomes satanic pride and rebellious self-idolatry in the relations of the spirit to itself, and remorseless despotism relatively to others; the more hopeless as the more obdurate by its subjugation of sensual impulses, by its superiority to toil and pain and pleasure; in short, by the fearful resolve to find in itself alone the one absolute

> motive of action, under which all other motives from within and from without must be either subordinated or crushed.
>
> This is the character which Milton has so philosophically as well as sublimely embodied in the Satan of his Paradise Lost. Alas! too often has it been embodied in real life! Too often has it given a dark and savage grandeur to the historic page! And wherever it has appeared, under whatever circumstances of time and country, the same ingredients have gone to its composition; and it has been identified by the same attributes. Hope in which there is no cheerfulness; stedfastness within and immovable resolve, with outward restlessness and whirling activity; violence with guile; temerity with cunning; . . . interminableness of object with perfect indifference of means; . . . these are the marks that have characterized the masters of mischief, the liberticides and mighty hunters of mankind, from Nimrod to Napoleon.[23]

Hazlitt, in fact, took occasion to remark upon Coleridge's characterization of Satan in his own essay on Milton:

> . . . a noted political writer of the present day has exhausted nearly the whole account of Satan in the "Paradise Lost," by applying it to a character* whom he considered as after the devil (though I do not know whether he would make even that exception), the greatest enemy of the human race. This may serve to show that Milton's Satan is not a very insipid personage.
>
> *The first Napoleon.[24]

In his lectures on Milton in 1818, Coleridge added further refinements to his analysis of Satan. They show that grandeur and sublimity can go along with great evil and that to call Satan sublime is not necessarily to find him admirable or heroic:

> The character of Satan is pride and sensual indulgence, finding in self the sole motive of action. It is the character so often seen in little on the political stage. It exhibits all the restlessness, temerity, and cunning which have marked the mighty hunters of mankind from Nimrod to Napoleon. The common fascination of men is, that these great men, as they are called, must act from some great motive. Milton has carefully marked in his Satan the intense selfishness,

> the alcohol of egotism, which would rather reign in hell than serve in heaven. To place this lust of self in opposition to denial of self or duty, and to show what exertions it would make, and what pains endure to accomplish its end, is Milton's particular object in the character of Satan. But around this character he has thrown a singularity of daring, a grandeur of sufferance, and a ruined splendour, which constitute the very height of poetic sublimity.[25]

What reason have we to assume that Wordsworth shared Coleridge's view of Milton's Satan as the prototype of all "the masters of mischief, the liberticides and mighty hunters of mankind, from Nimrod to Napoleon"? The Wordsworth and Coleridge letters give ample evidence that this question must have been a matter of almost daily conversation in the years 1808-9. Coleridge was living with the Wordsworths during this period when Wordsworth was writing The Convention of Cintra and Coleridge his Letters on the Spaniards. We may even conclude that Coleridge's Spanish Letters were a by-product of his involvement in the composition of Wordsworth's pamphlet. Coleridge was not only instrumental in the publication of extracts of The Convention in the Courier,[26] but he also claims to have written portions of The Convention, even to dictating the substance of De Quincey's explanatory note.[27] While composing the Letters on the Spaniards, Coleridge writes Thomas Poole that he can "safely refer" him to Wordsworth's pamphlet "for my [sic] opinions, feelings, hopes, & apprehensions."[28] Later in the year, while he is still engaged on the Spanish Letters, he recommends The Convention of Cintra as "containing sentiments & principles matured in our [his and Wordsworth's] understanding by common energies & twelve years' intercommunion."[29]

It was not Wordsworth's purpose in The Convention to make a philosophic analysis of Napoleon's character, but what little he says bears interesting analogies to Coleridge's statements on Satan and Napoleon. Wordsworth is attacking the myth of Napoleon's superior talents:

> . . . I shall at present content myself with noting . . . that this basis is not laid in any superiority of talents in him, but in his utter rejection of the restraints of morality --in wickedness which acknowledges no limit but the extent of its own power. Let any one reflect a moment; and he will feel that a new world of forces is opened to a Being who has made this desperate leap. It is a tremendous principle to be adopted, and steadily adhered to, by a man in the station which Buonaparte occupies; and he has taken the full benefit of it. What there is in this principle of weak, perilous, and self-destructive--I may find a grateful employment in endeavouring to shew upon some future occasion. 30

Wordsworth speaks of the "utter rejection of the restraints of morality"; Coleridge calls it an "abandonment of all principle of right." Wordsworth feels that "a new world of forces is opened to a Being who has made this desperate leap"; Coleridge explains what this "desperate leap" is. The "tremendous principle," the "desperate leap" is Satan's "Evil, be thou my Good" (P. L., IV. 110).[31]

Both men are insistent on the inherent weakness of evil; on this point it is Wordsworth who gives the details:

> It was a high satisfaction to behold demonstrated . . . to what a narrow domain of knowledge the intellect of a Tyrant must be confined; that if the gate by which wisdom enters has never been opened, that of policy will surely find moments when it will shut itself against its pretended master imperiously and obstinately. To the eyes of the very peasant in

> the field, this sublime truth was laid open--not only that a Tyrant's domain of knowledge is narrow, but melancholy as narrow; inasmuch as --from all that is lovely, dignified, or exhilarating in the prospect of human nature --he is inexorably cut off; and therefore he is inwardly helpless and forlorn.[32]

The origin of this melancholy portrait is the situation of Milton's Satan on his arrival in the newly-created world. As Satan's gaze alternates between Eden and Heaven, his looks are "griev'd" and "sad" (IV. 27-28). His "domain" is indeed "confined," "narrow," and "melancholy as narrow";

> Me miserable! which way shall I fly
> Infinite wrath, and infinite despair?
> Which way I fly is Hell; myself am Hell;
> And in the lowest deep a lower deep
> Still threat'ning to devour me opens wide,
> To which the Hell I suffer seems a Heav'n.
> . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
> While they adore me on the Throne of Hell,
> With Diadem and Sceptre high advanc'd,
> The lower still I fall, only Supreme
> In misery; such joy Ambition finds.
> (_P. L._, IV. 73-92)

"From all that is lovely, dignified, or exhilarating in the prospect of human nature," Satan "is inexorably cut off":

> Beneath him with new wonder now he views
> To all delight of human sense expos'd
> In narrow room Nature's whole wealth, yea more,
> A Heaven on Earth: for blissful Paradise
> Of God the Garden was, by him in the East
> Of _Eden_ planted . . . .
> (IV. 205-210)
>
> O Hell! what do mine eyes with grief behold,
> Into our room of bliss thus high advanc't
> Creatures of other mould . . . .
> (IV. 358-360)

> Sight hateful, sight tormenting! thus these two
> Imparadis't in one another's arms
> The happier Eden, shall enjoy thir fill
> Of bliss on bliss, while I to Hell am thrust,
> Where neither joy nor love, but fierce desire,
> Among our other torments not the least,
> Still unfulfill'd with pain of longing pines . . . .
> (IV. 505-511)

"Inwardly helpless and forlorn," Satan makes the "desperate leap" that proves that "policy" has "surely shut itself against its pretended master imperiously and obstinately":

> All hope excluded thus, behold instead
> Of us out-cast, exil'd, his new delight,
> Mankind created, and for him this World.
> So farewell Hope, and with Hope farewell Fear,
> Farewell Remorse: all Good to me is lost;
> Evil be thou my Good . . . .
> (IV. 105-110)

Satan has made the tyrant's choice; from Wordsworth's point of view it is a choice lacking both wisdom and policy. Wordsworth, therefore, could hardly have shared Hazlitt's admiration for Satan's boast that "To reign is worth ambition though in Hell: Better to reign in Hell, then serve in Heav'n" (I. 262-263).[33] Satan's intransigence in the face of insuperable odds, which for most of the Romantics became a symbol of courageous resistance to tyranny, was for Wordsworth no criterion of virtue at all. As he states in The Convention, "courage and enthusiasm have equally characterized the best and the worst beings, a Satan, equally with an ABDIEL--a BONAPARTE equally with a LEONIDAS."[34]

The consistency with which The Convention associates Napoleon and his followers with Satan and the Fallen Angels makes

Wordsworth as eligible a candidate for Hazlitt's "political writer" as Coleridge. To Wordsworth's mind, the atrocities committed by Napoleon in Spain have hitherto been known to men only through the fictions written about "reprobate Spirits":

> Merciless ferocity is an evil familiar to our thoughts; but these combinations of malevolence historians have not yet been called upon to record; and writers of fiction, if they have ever ventured to create passions resembling them, have confined, out of reverence for the acknowledged constitution of human nature, those passions to reprobate Spirits.[35]

Although Wordsworth may have "felt a certain faintness come over his mind from a sense of beauty and grandeur" in Milton's introduction of Satan, what he felt very likely was dismay and terror over the perversion of so much that was beautiful and good. What Wordsworth must have admired in the "Arch-Angel ruined" was the Arch-Angel, not the ruin. Once again, as in the case of Coleridge, we learn what Wordsworth thought of Milton's Satan by way of what he says about Napoleon:

> In the person of our enemy and his chieftains we have living examples how wicked men of ordinary talents are emboldened by success. There is a kindliness, as they feel, in the nature of advancement; and prosperity is their Genius. But let us know and remember that this prosperity, with all the terrible features which it has gradually assumed, is a child of noble parents--Liberty and Philanthropic Love. Perverted as the creature is which it has grown up to (rather, into which it has passed),--from no inferior stock could it have issued. It is the Fallen Spirit, triumphant in misdeeds, which was formerly a blessed Angel.[36]

Wordsworth's poetry provides earlier evidence than The Convention of Cintra that Wordsworth regarded Milton's Satan as a tyrant and liberticide, not a heroic freedom fighter. In the earliest text of The Prelude, Book X, he describes an encounter between Robespierre and Louvet, with Louvet playing Abdiel to Robespierre's Satan:

> When Robespierre, well knowing for what mark
> Some words of indirect reproof had been
> Intended, rose in hardihood, and dared
> The Man who had an ill surmise of him
> To bring his charge in openness, whereat
> When a dead pause ensued, and no one stirr'd,
> In silence of all present, from his seat
> Louvet walked singly through the avenue
> And took his station in the Tribune, saying
> 'I, Robespierre, accuse thee!' Tis well known
> What was the issue of that charge, and how
> Louvet was left alone without support
> Of his irresolute Friends . . . .
> (1805: X. 91-103)

Abdiel also takes a single station in an otherwise silent audience to accuse Satan "in a flame of zeal severe" (P. L., V. 803-807), although "his zeal None seconded" (849-850): "The flaming Seraph" is "fearless, though alone Encompass'd round with foes," and he answers "bold" (875-876):

> Among the faithless, faithful only hee;
> Among innumerable false, unmov'd,
> Unshak'n, unseduc'd, unterrifi'd
> . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
> Though single.
> (897-903)

Wordsworth introduces changes into his final version of the Louvet incident that sharpen the parallels between his description of Louvet and Milton's of Abdiel. He adopts Milton's use of an adjective for an adverb: "Louvet walked single" (1850: X. 111) instead of "singly" (1805: X. 98). He emphasizes Louvet's boldness; and for Louvet's "irresolute Friends" (1805: X. 103) he substitutes "men Who to themselves are false" (1850: X. 119-120), in consonance with Milton's stress on the falseness, rather than the irresolution, of those who fail to support Abdiel. Wordsworth also picks up the note of peril implied in Abdiel's attitude: "Unshak'n, unseduc'd, unterrifi'd"; and, just as Milton reiterates the isolation of Abdiel's position, so does Wordsworth:

> The one bold man, whose voice the attack had sounded,
> Was left without a follower to discharge
> His perilous duty, and retire lamenting
> That Heaven's best aid is wasted upon men
> Who to themselves are false.[37]
> (1850: X. 116-120)

As Wordsworth continues his account of his experiences in Revolutionary France he once again draws on Milton's Satan, here to characterize the hypocrisy of tyranny. Britain's entry into the war against France has given Robespierre further "excuse" for atrocities:

> In France, the Men who for their desperate ends
> Had pluck'd up mercy by the roots were glad
> Of this new enemy. Tyrants strong before
> In devilish pleas were ten times stronger now,
> And thus beset with Foes on every side
> The goaded Land wax'd mad; the crimes of few
> Spread into madness of the many, blasts
> From hell came sanctified like airs from heaven . . . .
> (1805: X. 308-315)

Satan, too, must "pluck up mercy by the roots," must sanctify his "devilish deeds" with the "Tyrant's plea." The sight of Adam and Eve fills him with "wonder" for their beauty and grace; he could "love" them for their "Divine resemblance"; he is not their "purpos'd foe" and could "pity" them though he is "unpitied." But the exigencies of war require that Satan extirpate his feelings of admiration, love, and pity. If "Hell shall unfold . . . her widest Gates" to "entertain" Adam and Eve, they are to "Thank him who puts me loath to this revenge On you who wrong me not for him who wrong'd" (P. L., IV. 358-387). And Milton comments on the "sanctified . . . airs" of this "blast from hell":

> So spake the Fiend, and with necessity,
> The Tyrant's plea, excus'd his devilish deeds.
> (P. L., IV. 393-394)

In the 1805 version of The Prelude the identification of Robespierre with Satan is specific. Robespierre "wielded the sceptre of the atheist crew" (X. 458). Milton calls the rebellious angels "The Atheist crew" (P. L., VI. 370). Robespierre is the "chief Regent" of "this foul Tribe of Moloch" (X. 469-470); Milton's description of Moloch makes his name the most pertinent metaphor for Robespierre's infamies:

> First Moloch, horrid King besmear'd with blood
> Of human sacrifice, and parents' tears,
> Though for the noise of Drums and Timbrels loud
> Thir children's cries unheard, that pass'd through fire
> To his grim Idol.
> (P. L., I. 392-396)

After 1832,[38] Wordsworth removed all references to Satan and Moloch from this passage on Robespierre's atrocities (Prel., 1805: X. 308-315), presumably because Napoleon had replaced Robespierre in Wordsworth's mind as the most suitable candidate for Satan's regency.

Satan appears again and again in Wordsworth's poetry as the prototype of Napoleonic tyranny. His sonnet on the *Spanish Guerillas* (1811) hails these brave men who fight like Milton's faithful Angels against the Satanic Foe:

> They seek, are sought; to daily battle led,
> Shrink not, though far outnumbered by their Foes,
> For they have learnt to open and to close
> The ridges of grim war . . . .[39]

Arrayed against their "grand Foe" (*P. L.*, VI. 149, 559) Milton's angels are "expert

> When to advance, or stand, or turn the sway
> Of Battle, open when, and when to close
> The ridges of grim War; no thought of flight,
> None of retreat . . . .[40]
> (VI. 234-237)

In an "Ode," *Poems Dedicated to National Independence and Liberty*, XXVIII (1816), Napoleonic France is a dragon who carries Satan's spear and shield:

> I marked the breathings of her dragon crest:
> My Soul, a sorrowful interpreter,
> In many a midnight vision bowed
> Before the ominous aspect of her spear;
> Whether mighty beam, in scorn upheld,
> Threaten'd her foes, --or, pompously at rest,
> Seemed to bisect her orbèd shield,
> As stretches a blue bar of solid cloud
> Across the setting sun and all the fiery west.
> (21-29)

We can identify the spear and shield as Satan's from a MS. variant of *An Evening Walk*, written in 1794:[41]

> Just where a cloud above the mountain rears
> An edge all flame, the broadening sun appears;
> A long blue bar its aegis orb divides,
> And breaks the spreading of its golden tides;
> Such the dark spear that crossed the sunbroad shield
> Of Satan striding o'er the empyreal field.

The Thanksgiving Ode, written and published in 1816, continues the implied association of Satan and Napoleon:

> less than power unbounded could not tame
> That soul of Evil--which, from Hell let loose,
> Had filled the astonished world with such abuse
> As boundless patience only could endure . . . .
> (94-97)

The allusion is complex and subtle, for it recalls the Satan of Paradise Lost who, powerful and triumphant, can astonish Adam and Eve and the Satan of Paradise Regained who, weakened and ultimately defeated, is himself astonished by the singular endurance of Jesus' "boundless patience."

In 1845, Wordsworth added four lines to the Thanksgiving Ode, extending the parallel between Napoleon and Satan:

> As springs the lion from his den,
> As from a forest-brake
> Upstarts a glistering snake,
> The bold Arch-despot re-appeared . . . .[42]
> (145-148)

In the same year, he dictated a note to Isabella Fenwick explaining "the view taken of Napoleon's character" in this poem:

> The view taken of Napoleon's character and proceedings is little in accordance with that taken by some historians and critical philosophers. I am glad and proud of the difference, and trust that this series of poems, infinitely below the subject as they are, will survive to counteract, in unsophisticated minds, the pernicious and degrading tendency of those views and doctrines that lead to the idolatry of power, as power, and, in that false splendour to lose sight of its real nature and constitution as it often acts for the gratification of its possessor without reference to a beneficial end--an infirmity that has characterized men of all ages, classes, and employments, since Nimrod became a mighty hunter before the Lord.[43]

He might have added with equal pride that the view of Satan that this poem implies was equally "little in accordance with that taken by some" writers and "critical philosophers" of his time.

Although some thirty years separated Coleridge's Statesman's Manual from Wordsworth's Thanksgiving Ode note, it is clear that their analysis of Napoleon is identical, the product of their mutual discussions in the early years of their friendship. One need only remark the close resemblance of Coleridge's statement:

> . . . these are the marks ["philosophically" and "sublimely embodied in the Satan of . . . Paradise Lost"] that have characterized the masters of mischief, the liberticides and mighty hunters of mankind, from Nimrod to Napoleon

to Wordsworth's:

> . . . infirmity that has characterized men of all ages, classes, and employments, since Nimrod became a mighty hunter before the Lord

to recognize that on this question at least they never disagreed.[44] If both Wordsworth and Coleridge saw a direct line of descent from Satan to Nimrod to Napoleon, the geneology of murder, oppression, and tyranny by which they are related can be traced back to Paradise Lost.[45] Milton's Nimrod is the human counterpart of his Satan in every important detail: Nimrod is of "proud ambitious heart," seeking unmerited dominion over his brothers; he is a destroyer of peace, a violator of nature's law, a hunter and oppressor of men:

> Of proud ambitious heart, who not content
> With fair equality, fraternal state,
> Will arrogate Dominion undeserv'd
> Over his brethren, and quite dispossess
> Concord and law of Nature from the Earth;
> Hunting (and Men not Beasts shall be his game)

> With War and hostile snare such as refuse
> Subjection to his Empire tyrannous:
> A mighty Hunter thence he shall be styl'd
> Before the Lord, as in despite of Heav'n . . . .
> (XII. 25-34)

What is suggestive, in this description, of an identification of Nimrod and Satan, Milton makes more explicit in his account of the construction of the Tower of Babel. This symbol of the excesses of human pride and ambition has, in very literal terms, its origins in Hell; Nimrod finds

> The Plain, wherein a black bituminous gurge
> Boils out from under ground, the mouth of Hell;
> Of Brick, and of that stuff they cast to build
> A City and Tow'r, whose top may reach to Heav'n;
> And get themselves a name, lest far disperst
> In foreign Lands thir memory be lost,
> Regardless whether good or evil fame.
> (XII. 40-47)

Wordsworth does not note nor comment upon these passages which were of such interest to him and Coleridge. He does mark without comment one line in Adam's remarks on the meaning of Nimrod's story:

> O execrable Son so to aspire
> Above his Brethren, to himself assuming
> Authority usurpt, from God not giv'n: x
> He gave us only over Beast, Fish, Fowl
> Dominion absolute; that right we hold
> By his donation; but Man over men
> He made not Lord; such title to himself
> Reserving, human left from human free,
> But this Usurper his encroachment proud
> Stays not on Man; to God his Tower intends
> Siege and defiance: Wretched man!
> (XII. 64-74)

We have here an interesting indicator of Wordsworth's method in marking and commenting upon the passages in Paradise Lost that exerted significant influences on his thinking and on his poetry.

Although he marks the line that emphasizes in capsule form the significance of the Nimrod story, the story (XII. 25-34), as well as Adam's remarks upon it (64-74), turn up in Wordsworth's poetry as early as 1796.

Nimrod's pride leads him to "arrogate Dominion undeserv'd Over his brethren." By hunting and destroying men, he violates nature's law and usurps "Authority . . . from God not giv'n," who "gave us only over Beast, Fish, Fowl Dominion absolute." In The Borderers, Oswald justifies murder in a sophistical reversal of this point of view, perverting in satanic fashion the same terms of argument for opposite purposes; abrogation of human rights and freedom takes on the sanctified air of an extension of human freedom; to usurp the law of nature is, like Satan, to "overleap all bound" (P. L., IV. 181)--to have the power, as Wordsworth notes in his first manuscript note on Satan, that cannot be "facilitated or obstructed" by the devices needed by men:

> Murder!--what's in the word!--
> I have no cases by me ready made
> To fit all deeds . . . .
> you of late have seen
> More deeply, taught us that the institutes
> Of Nature, by a cunning usurpation
> Banished from human intercourse, exist
> Only in our relations to the brutes
> That make the fields their dwelling. If a snake
> Crawl from beneath our feet we do not ask
> A license to destroy him: our good governors
> Hedge in the life of every pest and plague
> That bears the shape of man; and for what purpose,
> But to protect themselves from extirpation?--
> This flimsy barrier you have overleaped.
> (1571-1585)

Among the Poems Dedicated to National Independence and Liberty is a sonnet (1827) that traces Napoleonic tyranny back to its origins in Satan and his human counterpart, Nimrod. Raphael calls

Satan the "proud Aspirer" (P. L., VI. 89-90); Adam uses the same term to characterize Nimrod's crimes, "O execrable Son so to aspire Above his Brethren" (XII. 64-65); and Wordsworth uses the "rash Spirit" of both "Aspirants" to expose the true character of Napoleon:

> Go back to antique ages, if thine eyes
> The genuine mien and character would trace
> Of the rash Spirit that still holds her place,
> Prompting the world's audacious vanities!
> Go back, and see the Tower of Babel rise;
> The pyramid extend its monstrous base,
> For some Aspirant of our short-lived race,
> Anxious an aery name to immortalize.
> . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
> See the first mighty Hunter leave the brute--
> To chase mankind, with men in armies packed
> For his field-pastime high and absolute,
> While, to dislodge his game, cities are sacked![46]

There is one more passage in Paradise Lost that provides a link between Wordsworth's conception of Satan and his thoughts on liberty and tyranny. It is the encounter between Gabriel and Satan after Satan has been discovered tempting the sleeping Eve with a dream foreshadowing the actual temptation. Satan makes motions threatening combat when Gabriel calls his attention to the "golden Scales" that God has suspended in the sky as a sign that resistance will be useless (IV. 988-1004). Wordsworth marks one line without comment:

> for proof look up,
> And read thy Lot in yon celestial Sign
> Where thou are weigh'd, and shown how light, how weak,
> If thou resist. The Fiend lookt up and knew
> His mounted scale aloft; nor more, but fled x
> Murmuring, and with him fled the shades of night.
> (IV. 1010-1015)

Wordsworth uses the figure of the scales to assess the strengths of liberty and tyranny at the beginning[47] and toward the end of Napoleon's career. In The Prelude, Book X (1805: 792-797), he describes the consequences to human freedom of France's early forays of conquest:

> And now, become Oppressors in their turn,
> Frenchmen had changed a war of self-defence
> For one of conquest, losing sight of all
> Which they had struggled for; and mounted up,
> Openly, in the view of earth and heaven,
> The scale of Liberty. I read her doom . . . . 48

In 1816, Wordsworth hails the final defeat of Napoleon in his Thanksgiving Ode. Here, although the nations aligned against Napoleon are equally weighed in their opposition to tyranny, the privilege of effecting Napoleon's final defeat falls to England because of her long-established traditions of liberty:

> All States have glorified themselves;--their claims
> Are weighed by Providence, in balance even;
> And now, in preference to the mightiest names,
> To Thee the exterminating sword is given.
> Dread mark of approbation, justly gained!
> Exalted office, worthily sustained!
> (155-160)

The last four lines seem to echo Paradise Lost (VI. 700-716) where God tells his Son that He has "ordain'd . . . that the Glory . . . Of ending this great War" in Heaven shall fall to Him; and to effect this, God gives His "Bow and Thunder . . . Almighty Arms . . . and Sword" to His Son. The "mightiest names" of Wordsworth's lines may recall that such names as Michael and Gabriel have for the previous two days fought with Satan and his forces and their relative strengths have remained "in balance even." Satan's final defeat has been reserved to the Son who has "justly gained" this "dread mark of approbation" and who later "worthily sustains" it.

Wordsworth is almost perversely silent on the grandeur of Satan's introduction in Paradise Lost, the description that brought "a certain faintness" over his mind "from a sense of beauty and grandeur." He marks the following lines in Book I, without comment:

> Thus Satan talking to his nearest Mate
> With Head up-lift above the wave, and Eyes
> That sparkling blaz'd$^{x}$. . . .
> (192-194)

In the most quoted segment of Satan's portrait, Wordsworth places an asterisk over what appears to be the most insignificant word in the entire passage:

> he above the rest
> In shape and gesture proudly eminent
> Stood like a Tow'r; his form had not yet lost
> All *her Original brightness, nor appear'd
> Less than Arch-Angel ruin'd, and th' excess
> Of Glory obscur'd: As when the Sun new ris'n
> Looks through the horizontal misty Air
> Shorn of his Beams . . . .
> (589-596)

And he underlines a description of the Fallen Angels Hazlitt quoted in his essay on Milton to illustrate what he considered Satan's most admirable quality, his adherence to principle:[49]

> and from Eternal Splendors flung
> For his revolt, yet faithful how they stood,
> Thir Glory wither'd. As when Heaven's Fire
> Hath scath'd the Forest Oaks, or Mountain Pines,
> With singed top thir stately growth though bare
> Stands on the blasted Heath.
> (610-615; underline W.'s)

We require no comment from Wordsworth to understand why he was affected by the sparkling blaze of Satan's eyes. We have the right to wonder, however, that the prosaic word "her" should be the one word that caught Wordsworth's attention in the lines on Satan's form and that his mind could be diverted by so pedestrian a detail from so sublime a description. Wordsworth is very likely noting the curious fact that Satan's form has a feminine gender. He no doubt knew that

Milton had used the feminine pronoun to point up his Latinate usage of the word "form" so that in forma he could convey the combined ideas of figure and beauty. But the use of English words in their Latinate meanings is a commonplace in Milton, and this instance of his practice is surely less noteworthy than others. What we can perhaps share with Wordsworth is the sense of incongruity inspired by the ascription of a feminine attribute to masculine qualities of such superhuman grandeur. Wordsworth himself employed a figure in The Convention of Cintra in which the word "soul" used in the sense of anima has feminine gender but masculine vigor, power, and dignity:

> . . . the vigour of the human soul is from without and from futurity, --in breaking down limit, and losing and forgetting herself in the sensation and image of Country and of the human race; and, when she returns and is most restricted and confined, her dignity consists in the contemplation of a better and more exalted being, which, though proceeding from herself, she loves and is devoted to as to another. 50

The disconcerting conjunction of "his" and "her" as modifiers of the same noun is more strikingly illustrated in At Vallambrosa (Memorials Of A Tour In Italy, 1837, XVIII). Here again, Wordsworth utilizes "Spirit" in the sense of anima; as in Milton's description of Satan's "form," the feminine noun has masculine qualities of superhuman "grandeur." Even more interesting is the fact that it is Milton's "Spirit" that Wordsworth is describing:

> his Spirit is here;
> In the cloud-piercing rocks doth her grandeur abide,
> In the pines pointing heavenward her beauty austere . . . .
> (11. 10-12)

What we may have in Wordsworth's strange notation of so famous a passage in Paradise Lost is his usual practice of adverting to the authority of Milton to justify a usage of his own that may be questionable. This seems especially true of the illustration in At Vallambrosa where the assumption that Satan's masculine-feminine "form" provided the model for Milton's masculine-feminine "Spirit" is enforced by the metaphor of the pine that Milton often uses in connection with Satan and his followers and that Wordsworth employs again in a poem on Milton--a point to be discussed more fully later in this chapter.[51] We should also remark that, although Wordsworth takes no notice of Milton's concluding simile in this passage--the comparison of Satan's obscured glory with the appearance of the sun peering through a horizontal bar of misty air--this figure remains in his mind and finds its way into two poems, An Evening Walk and the "Ode" on Napoleonic France,[52] separated in time of composition by some twenty-two years.

Although Wordsworth did not share Hazlitt's idolatry of Satan and Napoleon, the description of the Fallen Angels, quoted by Hazlitt and underlined by Wordsworth, made an equally deep impression on him. This image of battered endurance appears in Wordsworth's poetry as early as 1791:

> The unimaginable touch of time
> Or shouldering rend had split with ruin deep
> Those towers that stately stood, as in their prime,
> Though shattered stood of undiminished height,
> And plumed their heads with trees that shook
>       before the night. [53]
>                                 (66-70)

He uses it again in an unfinished sonnet on Milton (1806-7? ):

> Amid the dark control of lawless sway
> Ambition's rivalry, fanatick hate,
> And various ills that shook the unsettled State,
> The dauntless Bard pursued his studious way,
> Not more his lofty genius to display
> Than raise and dignify our mortal date,

> And sing the blessings which the Just await
> That Man might hence in humble hope obey.
> Thus on a rock in Norway's bleak domain
> Nature impels the stately Pine to grow;
> Still he preserves his firm majestic [reign]
> And restless Ocean dashes all below.

Ernest de Selincourt refers us to the description of Satan's spear (P. L., I. 292ff.) for the source of Wordsworth's simile of the pine:[54]

> His Spear, to equal which the tallest Pine
> Hewn on Norwegian hills, to be the Mast
> Of some great Ammiral, were but a wand,
> He walkt with to support uneasy steps
> Over the burning Marl . . . .

But Wordsworth is no doubt combining this figure with the simile that illustrates the dauntless fidelity of the Fallen Angels to their cause, giving greater emphasis to the latter. In the one instance, the tallest pine dwindles to a mere wand so that Satan's spear may be magnified; in the other, the pine acquires greater stature by comparison with Satan's followers. And since Wordsworth's purpose is to exalt Milton, the lines he himself underlined seem more applicable. We may wonder that Wordsworth uses an image associated with Satan to describe Milton: is this an indication that he shared Blake's belief that Milton was of Satan's party? The entire tenor of the poem controverts such an inference. The "stately Pine," that Milton is, has not been "scath'd" by "Heaven's Fire"; its "glory" is not "wither'd"; its "stately growth" preserves its "firm majestic reign"; storm and turbulence are "all below."[55] This is a picture of Satan's followers before rebellion had dimmed their glory.

There is a passage in An Evening Walk (1793) that seems to show the influence of Satan's sparkling eye and the pine-like stateliness of Satan's followers in a parodic mood we would least expect from a poet who had no reputation for humor. Émile Legouis suggests a more direct source for the passage in Rosset's description of the cock in L'Agriculture ou Les Géorgiques Francaises, and the resemblances seem indisputable.[56] Nevertheless, it is tempting to believe that there was a brief moment in Wordsworth's youth when his imagination did not faint before the beauty and sublimity of Satan's introduction--when he could adorn a barnyard tyrant, in rare Chaucerian playfulness and surprising irreverence for Milton's sublimities, with all the majesty and grandeur of Satan and the Fallen Angels:

> Sweetly ferocious round his native walks,
> Gaz'd by his sister-wives, the monarch stalks;
> Spur-clad his nervous feet, and firm his tread,
> A crest of purple tops his warrior head.
> Bright sparks his black and haggard eye-ball hurls
> Afar his tail he closes and unfurls ;
> Whose state, like pine-trees , waving to and fro,
> Droops , and o'er canopies his regal brow,
> On tiptoe rear'd he blows his clarion throat,
> Threaten'd by faintly answering farms remote.
> (129-138)

If we can entertain the supposition of parody, our minds rebound in a merry volley from "sister-wives" to Satan's daughter-wife; from the cock's "nervous feet" to Satan's "uneasy steps Over the burning Marl" (P. L., I. 295-296); from the "black and haggard eye-ball" that "hurls . . . Bright sparks" to Satan's "Eyes That sparkling blaz'd" (I. 193-194) or Satan's "baleful eyes" that "round he throws" (I. 56); from the "tail . . . Whose state" is "like pine-trees" to Satan's followers whose stance is like the "stately growth" of "Mountain Pines" (I. 610-615); from the "clarion throat" whose call is "Threaten'd by faintly answering farms remote" to Satan's call "so loud, that all the hollow Deep Of Hell resounded" (I. 314-315).

It would be inconsonant with Wordsworth's usually serious nature to conclude this discussion on such a note of levity. We can poet who had no reputation for humor. Émile Legouis suggests a more direct source for the passage in Rosset's description of the cock in L'Agriculture ou Les Géorgiques Francaises, and the resemblances seem indisputable.[56] Nevertheless, it is tempting to believe that there was a brief moment in Wordsworth's youth when his imagination did not faint before the beauty and sublimity of Satan's introduction--when he could adorn a barnyard tyrant, in rare Chaucerian playfulness and surprising irreverence for Milton's sublimities, with all the majesty and grandeur of Satan and the Fallen Angels:

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It would be inconsonant with Wordsworth's usually serious nature to conclude this discussion on such a note of levity. We can return to graver matters with the remaining passage concerning Satan and the Fallen Angels that Wordsworth marks without comment. Milton is describing the response of Satan's Host to his plan for mankind's destruction:

> Thus they thir doubtful consultations dark
> Ended rejoicing in their matchless Chief:
> As when from mountain tops the dusky clouds[x]
> Ascending, while the North wind sleeps, o'erspread
> Heav'n's cheerful face, the low'ring Element
> Scowls o'er the dark'n 'd lantskip Snow, or show'r;
> If chance the radiant Sun with farewell sweet
> Extend his ev'ning beam, the fields revive,
> The birds thir notes renew, and bleating herds
> Attest thir joy, that hill and valley rings.
> (II. 486-495)

These lines have understandable appeal to Wordsworth as an example of the natural sublime[57] and of "that contrast that is so striking in Milton."[58] They also have significance with regard to his ideas of good and evil, of freedom and tyranny. In the Ecclesiastical Sonnets Wordsworth is concerned with the struggle for religious freedom, and he records a "Recovery" (Sonnet VII) from "Persecution" (Sonnet VI):

> As, when a storm hath ceased, the birds regain
> Their cheerfulness, and busily retrim
> Their nests, or chant a gratulating hymn
> To the blue ether and bespangled plain;
> Even so, in many a re-constructed fane,
> Have the survivors of this Storm renewed
> Their holy rites with vocal gratitude:
> And solemn ceremonials they ordain
> To celebrate their great deliverance;
> Most feelingly instructed 'mid their fear--
> That persecution, blind with rage extreme,
> May not the less, through Heaven's mild countenance,
> Even in her own despite, both feed and cheer;
> For all things are less dreadful than they seem. 59

Abbey Findlay Potts traces the diction of this sonnet to Fuller's Church History and Eusebius's Ecclesiastical History, while de Selincourt suggests Paradise Regained (IV. 432-438) as a source for the first four lines:[60]

> And now the Sun with more effectual beams
> Had cheer'd the face of Earth, and dried the wet
> From drooping plant or dropping tree; the birds
> Who all things now behold more fresh and green,
> After a night of storm so ruinous,
> Clear'd up their choicest notes in bush and spray
> To gratulate the sweet return of morn.

I suggest the passage marked off by Wordsworth in Paradise Lost as a more likely source for the sonnet, not only for the simile with which they both begin but for other parallel circumstances as well. Both open with the Miltonic "As when." They describe the clearing of a storm, not a morning after a storm. Paradise Lost particularizes a "radiant sun" extending "his ev'ning beam" over a "dark'n'd lantskip"; Wordsworth's "bespangled plain" implies such detail; whereas Paradise Regained does not specify the effects of the reemergent Sun. The setting in Paradise Lost is the newly-constructed Pandemonium; in Wordsworth's sonnet it is a "re-constructed fane"; in Paradise Regained it is a wilderness. Milton's Fallen Angels have imagined themselves the victims of "persecution, blind with rage extreme"; this is the true state of affairs for the Christians in Wordsworth's poem. The Christians' faith in God has convinced them that "things are less dreadful than they seem"; the Fallen Angels' decision to revenge themselves on God has brought them to the same conclusion. What is truth for Wordsworth's Christians, proves to be delusion for Milton's Fallen Angels, for God brings good out of their evil and greater misery out of their delusive joy. Wordsworth himself effects a godlike reversal by transposing the delusive "recovery" of the Fallen Angels to the real "Recovery" of the pious Christians; he brings good out of evil and restores joy to those who rightly merit it.

We can agree with De Quincey, after this examination of Wordsworth's manuscript notes on Satan, that "nothing could less illustrate his intellectual superiority." Taken by themselves, they are no true indicator of Wordsworth's interest in, or conception of, Milton's Satan. They do provide, however, a most valuable Baedeker for exploring a view of Satan in Wordsworth's poetry and prose that does illustrate his superior understanding. They have led us to the discovery that early as well as late in his life Wordsworth grasped Milton's purpose in his portrait of Satan, and that he and Coleridge were possibly unique in this distinction in the early part of the nineteenth century.

How strange, therefore, that the only forthright appraisal of Satan's character that we have from Wordsworth comes secondhand from Lady Richardson's report of a conversation toward the end of Wordsworth's life when the Satanist controversy was at a highpoint:

> . . . he thought [Dr. Arnold] was mistaken in the philosophy of his view of the danger of Milton's Satan being represented without horns and hoofs; that Milton's conception was as true as it was grand; that making sin ugly was a common-place notion compared with making it beautiful outwardly, and inwardly a hell. It assailed every form of ambition and worldliness, the form in which sin attacks the highest natures. 61

# Footnotes

[1] P. L., IV. 181.

[2] See Joseph H. Summers, The Muse's Method: An Introduction to Paradise Lost (Cambridge, Mass., 1962), pp. 46-48, 54-55 for an excellent analysis of the mock-heroic and comic elements in these sequences.

[3] See note, John Milton Complete Poems and Major Prose, ed. Merritt Y. Hughes (New York, 1957), pp. 270-271.

[4] Evening Voluntaries, IX (composed Summer 1817; pub. 1820).

[5] MS variant; PW, IV, 11.

[6] PW, IV, 13.

[7] Ibid.

[8] PW, II, 512-513; Biographia Literaria, ed. J. Shawcross (London, 1949; orig. pub. 1907), II, 36ff.

[9] 1805 text: IX. 1-9; 1850: IX. 1-17.

[10] See p. 107 above.

[11] P. L., IV. 623-633.

[12] P. L., II. 678-679.

[13] P. L., II. 402-466.

[14] "On Shakespeare and Milton," Lectures on the English Poets and the English Comic Writers, ed. William Carew Hazlitt (London, 1906), p. 83; lecture delivered 1818.

[15] The Collected Works of William Hazlitt, ed. A. R. Waller and Arnold Glover (London, 1904), XI, 457; Markham L. Peacock, The Critical Opinions of William Wordsworth (Baltimore, 1950), p. 311, dates the remark c. 1800.

[16] See Hughes's note, John Milton Complete Poems and Major Prose, p. 418.

[17] Ibid., pp. 178, 418-420. For a brief history of the Christian tradition and Milton's use of it, see John M. Steadman, "'Bitter Ashes': Protestant Exegesis and the Serpent's Doom," SP, LIX (1962), 201-210; cf. A. J. A. Waldock, Paradise Lost and Its Critics (Gloucester, Mass., 1959), pp. 91-92 for a view similar to Wordsworth's. Among Wordsworth's contemporaries Arthur Henry Hallam shared his reaction to Milton's punishment of Satan and the Fallen Angels, calling it "a fiction rather too grotesque," Introduction to the Literature of Northern Europe (New York, 1880), II, 225; orig. pub. 1839; cited by Calvin Huckaby, "The Satanist Controversy of the Nineteenth Century," Studies in English Renaissance Literature, ed. Waldo F. McNeir (Baton Rouge, 1962), p. 200.

[18] Huckaby, pp. 197-210, makes no mention of Wordsworth or Coleridge in his discussion of the origins and development of the controversy. He credits Walter Savage Landor and John Wilson with being the first critics in the nineteenth century to see the error of interpreting Satan as the hero of Paradise Lost although, as Benjamin T. Sankey, Jr. points out, "Coleridge on Milton's Satan," PQ, XLI (1962), 504-508, Coleridge's view of Satan as the prototype of evil and tyranny was made public as early as 1809. Sankey makes no mention of Wordsworth, nor does James G. Nelson, The Sublime Puritan: Milton and the Victorians (Madison, 1963) in his discussion of the origins of the concept of Satan as Faustian hero, pp. 61-70.

[19] "Marriage of Heaven and Hell," The Complete Writings of William Blake, ed. Geoffrey Keynes (New York, 1957), p. 150; William Hazlitt, "On Shakespeare and Milton," pp. 83-87.

[20] "On the Devil, and Devils," The Prose Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley, ed. Harry Buxton Forman (London, 1880), II, 388-390. This essay, which was prepared for publication in 1839, actually set up in type but never published (Forman's note, II, 382), echoes Shelley's statements in his Defense of Poetry and his Preface to Prometheus Unbound, but goes beyond them in unqualified admiration for Satan as rebel-hero and in the doubts expressed as to Milton's religious beliefs.

[21] See Sankey, p. 505.

[22] Essays on His Own Times, ed. Sara Coleridge (London, 1850), II, 657-658.

[23] "Appendix A," *The Statesman's Manual*, *Political Tracts of Wordsworth, Coleridge and Shelley*, ed. R. J. White (Cambridge, 1953), p. 34.

[24] "On Shakespeare and Milton," p. 87.

[25] Lecture X of the 1818 series, *Coleridge's Miscellaneous Criticism*, ed. Thomas M. Raysor (London, 1936), p. 163; italics C.'s. On several occasions, Coleridge used the simile of a vulture to convey Napoleon's predatory nature; its origin in Milton's description of Satan on his arrival in the newly-created world, "bent on his prey" (*P. L.*, III. 431-441) is evident. In the *Biographia Literaria*, I, 145-146, Coleridge discusses Napoleon's order for his arrest while he was in Italy because of his articles in the *Morning Post*, later the *Courier*: "Like a true vulture, Napoleon with an eye not less telescopic, and with a taste equally coarse in his ravin, could descend from the most dazzling heights to pounce on the leveret in the brake, or even on the field-mouse amid the grass." Milton's "Vultur on *Imaus* bred" who scents his prey of "Lambs or yeanling kids" across continents is very likely the source of Napoleon's "telescopic" eye that reaches across continents to pounce like a vulture on Coleridge. Coleridge uses the figure again in a letter to Lady Beaumont, April 3, 1815, Griggs, IV, 564-565: ". . . at the illumination for the peace I furnish'd a design for a friend's Transparency--a vulture with the Head of Napoleon chained to a rock"; the blending of the Promethean-Satanic metaphors for purposes opposite to Hazlitt's makes Coleridge's view of Milton's Satan incontrovertibly clear.

[26] Griggs III: Letters to Daniel Stuart, Dec. 6, 14, 28, 1808 and Jan. 23, 1809, pp. 135, 142, 151, 169; to T. G. Street, Dec. 7, 1808, p. 137.

[27] Griggs III: Letters to Daniel Stuart, Jan. 3, 8 and May 2, 1809, pp. 160, 164, 205-206; to Basil Montagu, Jan. 7, 1809, pp. 161-162; to Thomas Poole, Feb. 3, 1809, p. 174; to Henry Crabb Robinson, Nov. 18, 1811, p. 348.

[28] Griggs, III, 174.

[29] Letter to Thomas W. Smith, June 22, 1809, Griggs, III, 216. This intercommunion produced not only an affinity of ideas regarding Napoleon and Milton's Satan, but a joint use of a Miltonic prose style to convey those ideas. Coleridge points to Wordsworth's Miltonic style with pride, Letter to Thomas Poole, Jan. 12, 1810, Griggs, III, 273: ". . . let any man worthy of that name, contemplate William Wordsworth, let him only read his Pamphlet, assuredly the grandest politico-moral work since Milton's Defensio Pop. Anglic . . . . ." Southey, on the other hand, found Wordsworth's

Miltonic style an impediment to the pamphlet's effectiveness: "I impute Wordsworth's want of perspicuity to two causes,--his admiration of Milton's prose, and his habit of dictating instead of writing: . . . he goes on, unconscious either of the length of the sentence, or the difficulty a common reader must necessarily find in following its meaning to the end, and unravelling all its involutions"; see Letter to Walter Scott, July 30, 1809, *The Life and Correspondence of Robert Southey*, ed. Charles Cuthbert Southey (London, 1849-1850), III, 246-247; also Southey's review of *The Convention of Cintra* in *The Eclectic Review*, July 1809, cited in Elsie Smith, *An Estimate of William Wordsworth By His Contemporaries 1793-1822* (Oxford, 1932), pp. 114-117. Coleridge was subject to the same criticism on his own essays, and in answer to Thomas Poole's suggestion that he write in a more popular style like Addison's in *The Spectator*, Coleridge replies Jan. 28, 1810, Griggs, III, 281: " . . . it must be evident to you, that there is a class of Thoughts & Feelings . . . which it would be impossible to convey in the manner of Addison . . . . Read for instance Milton's prose tracts, and only *try* to conceive them translated into the style of The Spectator--or the finest parts of Wordsworth's pamphlet." Lamb agrees with Coleridge on the Miltonic stature of Wordsworth's pamphlet; Letter of Oct. 30, 1809, *The Works of Charles and Mary Lamb*, ed. E. V. Lucas, VI: *Letters 1796-1820* (London, 1905), 404: "Its power over me was like that which Milton's pamphlets must have had on his contemporaries, who were tuned to them. What a piece of prose!"

[30] Knight, I, 237.

[31] R. J. White in his introduction to *Political Tracts of Wordsworth, Coleridge and Shelley*, pp. xxxi-xxxii, concludes that Wordsworth "adopted precisely this view of Bonaparte," expressed by Coleridge, "and was even prepared to attribute to him the adoption of evil as a principle."

[32] Knight, I, 216-217.

[33] "On Shakespeare and Milton," pp. 84-86.

[34] Knight, I, 129.

[35] Knight, I, 137.

[36] Knight, I, 222-223. Coleridge expressed similar views in Essays Nos. 4, 5, and 6 of *The Friend*: " . . . it is bad policy . . . to represent a political system as having no charm but for robbers and assassins, and no natural origin but in the brains of fools and madmen,

when experience has proved that the great danger of the system consists in the peculiar fascination it is calculated to exert on noble and imaginative spirits . . . ." And again, "Let it be remembered . . . by controversialists on all subjects, that every speculative error which boasts a multitude of advocates, has its golden as well as its dark side; that there is always some truth connected with it"; see Political Tracts of Wordsworth, Coleridge and Shelley, p. xxxi. For Wordsworth's application of this "peculiar fascination" to Milton's Satan, see p.142.

[37] For a kindlier judgment on a young man who failed to play Abdiel to Napoleon's Satan, see D. W.'s letter to Sara Hutchinson, April 8, 1815, MY, II, 662, regarding Eustace Baudouin, the younger brother of Jean-Baptiste Martin Baudouin to whom Caroline Vallon was affianced; commenting on Eustace's return to Napoleon's camp, Dorothy "cannot be angry with him knowing that the virtue of an Abdiel was more than could be expected especially from one, who no doubt is still dazzled by his youthful recollections, whatever change his year's service of Louis may have brought about in his opinions."

[38] Prel., p. 394, app. crit. $D^2$ text; see also p. xxiii.

[39] Poems Dedicated to National Independence and Liberty, Part II, XXXI; PW, III, 139.

[40] See PW, III, 460; I have used the Hughes text.

[41] PW, I, 18, app. crit.; for the image of Satan's "sunbroad shield" see P. L., VI. 305.

[42] PW, III, 160, app. crit.

[43] PW, III, 464.

[44] Two letters written by Wordsworth to Benjamin R. Haydon, separated by some fifteen years, demonstrate the consistency with which Wordsworth regarded Napoleon, in the same philosophic terms as Coleridge did, as the spirit of evil, a type of Satan. In his letter of Oct. 5, 1816, MY, II, 751, he comments on the people's choosing Napoleon: "Some part of the people [ sic ] of France did indeed vote for him, as they would have voted for the Devil, but he was no more the choice of the wisdom and virtue of the nation, nor of their folly, than he was of the wisdom, virtue, or folly of the Chinese." On June 11, 1831, LY, II, 554, he explains his special view of Napoleon and once again he draws on Coleridge's language: "I think of Napoleon pretty much as you do, but with more dislike probably;

because my thoughts have turned less upon the flesh and blood man than yours and therefore have been more at liberty to dwell with unqualified scorn upon his various liberticide projects and the miserable selfishness of his spirit."

[45] Another likely source for the association of Napoleon and Nimrod as tyrants is Milton's *Pro Populo Anglicano Defensio*, the political tract with which Coleridge compared Wordsworth's *Convention of Cintra*; see f.n. 29 above. In this pamphlet, Milton cites the tradition that Nimrod "is said to have been the first tyrant"; see *The Works of John Milton*, ed. Frank Allen Patterson (New York, 1931-1942), VII, 397. The source of Milton's epithet for Nimrod, "A mighty Hunter . . . Before the Lord," is Genesis, 10:9; see Hughes's note, p. 454.

[46] Part II, Sonnet VI.

[47] See notes, *Prel.*, pp. 604-605; de Selincourt disagrees with the opinion of the majority of scholars that it is Napoleon who is referred to in this passage; he maintains that it covers the period after Robespierre but before Napoleon. What is important to the point that I am making, however, is the association of Satan with tyranny and oppression. With regard to wars of conquest, there does not seem to have been any distinction in Wordsworth's attitude either toward pre-Napoleonic or Napoleonic France. He explains his position to James Losh in a letter of Dec. 4, 1821, *LY*, I, 56-57: " . . . *I* [sic] abandoned France, and her Rulers, when *they* [sic] abandoned the struggle for Liberty, gave themselves up to Tyranny, and endeavoured to enslave the world. I disapproved of the war against France at its commencement, thinking, which was perhaps an error, that it might have been avoided--but after Buonaparte had violated the Independence of Switzerland, my heart turned against him, and against the Nation that could submit to be the Instrument of such an outrage." This is substantially the point of view expressed in *Prel.*, X. 792-797 (1805 text).

[48] The text of 1850 is substantially the same, with minor changes in connectives and punctuation. Raymond Dexter Havens, *The Mind Of A Poet*, p. 542, also points to the parallels between these lines and *P.L.*, IV. 996-1014.

[49] "On Shakespeare and Milton," p. 84.

[50] *Convention of Cintra*, Knight, I, 208.

[51] See pp. 137-138 below.

[52] Discussed on p. 128 above.

[53] Fragment of a "Gothic Tale," ll. 66-70, PW, I, 288; see notes, p. 371, which cite P. L., I. 613-614, the passage here under discussion, as the source for these lines. For dating, see p. 370.

[54] PW, III, 574.

[55] I am using the combined diction of Milton's description of the Fallen Angels and Wordsworth's tribute to Milton that is so suggestive of Milton's language.

[56] The Early Life of William Wordsworth 1770-1798: A Study of "The Prelude," trans. J. W. Mathews (London, 1897), p. 143. Legouis traces "clarion throat" to "the cock's shrill clarion" of Gray's Elegy, l. 19; see p. 141.

[57] Robert R. Cawley, Milton and the Literature of Travel (Princeton, 1951), p. 127, feels that these lines express Milton's personal experience in crossing the Pennine Alps. See Marjorie H. Nicolson, Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory: The Development of the Aesthetics of the Infinite (Ithaca, 1959), pp. 1-17, 92-108, 273-276, 371-393, for evidence that Milton's appreciation of Alpine scenery was unique for the seventeenth century and more typical of the Romantic attitude.

[58] See pp. 49, 58-60 above.

[59] Ecclesiastical Sonnets, Part I, VII (1821).

[60] PW, III, 559.

[61] Christopher Wordsworth, Memoirs of William Wordsworth (London, 1851), II, 454; see p. 446 for identification of Lady Richardson as the source of this information; also Mary Moorman, William Wordsworth, A Biography: The Later Years 1803-1850 (Oxford, 1965), p. 565. See statements by Wordsworth and Coleridge on the "golden" aspect of Napoleon's policy and its appeal to noble natures, p. 124 and f. n. 36 above.

# IV. THE SCALE OF LOVE

## 1. Angel Tears And Angel Laughter

In arguing that there is "no essential difference between the language of prose and metrical composition" Wordsworth employs a metaphorical illustration that seems to express, in addition, his rejection of all mythological or religious concepts of supernature. "Poetry," he says, "sheds no tears 'such as Angels weep', but natural and human tears; she can boast of no celestial ichor that distinguishes her vital juices from those of prose; the same human blood circulates through the veins of them both."[1] Since the Angel tears in this case are Satan's--tears that burst forth, despite three attempts to restrain them, when he sees for the first time the misery to which his ambition has reduced his loyal followers (P. L., I. 619-620)--we are likely to assume that Wordsworth's insistence on realism of manner implies a corresponding realism of matter and that this constitutes still another challenge to the substance of Milton's "great argument."

This is not the case; Wordsworth is merely reminding us that the only experience available to our understanding is human experience and that even the tears of angels must be described in terms of the human. Precisely with regard to the supernatural events of Paradise Lost, Wordsworth has Milton's authority for contending that poetry can only express the natural and the human. This is Milton's method throughout Paradise Lost: whether he is describing such momentous events as the battle in heaven or explicating the more private concerns of angel love or angel digestion, he does so "By lik'ning spiritual to corporal forms" (P. L., V. 573). Wordsworth is not necessarily disclaiming an interest in angel tears, nor is he denying the poetic effectiveness of suprahuman expressions of grief and sympathy under extremely tragic circumstances.

His manuscript note in Book XI of Paradise Lost presents us with enlightening evidence on this question. It concerns Michael's efforts to prepare Adam for his explusion from Eden. To enable Adam to grasp fully the consequences of his disobedience and to initiate his reeducation, Michael provides Adam with a vision of future history. Adam knows that his transgression carries with it the punishment of death, but he has no conception of its meaning. The first event that he witnesses therefore is the first death--the murder of Abel by Cain. Adam does not yet know that these will be his sons, and he cries out:

> O Teacher, some great mischief hath befall'n
> To that meek man, who well had sacrific'd;
> Is Piety thus and pure Devotion paid?
> T' whom Michael thus, hee also mov'd, replied. x
> (P. L., XI. 450-453)

Wordsworth marks the manner of Michael's reply and comments:

> He also moved <?> in reading this the manner in which Michael is introduced ought to be remembered "he kingly from his state inclined not." The sympathy of such a being in the spectacle gives it additional interest.

Wordsworth is not only interested in the reaction of an Arch-Angel to this "spectacle" of human crime and tragedy; he feels that the sympathy of a being of supernatural majesty gives "additional interest" to the human situation.[2]

There is, however, a restraint in the manner in which Wordsworth characterizes the importance of Michael's "sympathy" that is not in keeping with the point that he seems to be making. At the human level, the situation is tragic almost beyond the capacity for human response. Adam has no conception whatever of the nature of death; his first contact with this, his first legacy to mankind, is death in its most horrible form--murder, and murder moreover of one brother by another. Then, to crown dismay with horror, Michael must inform Adam that both the victim and the perpetrator of the fratricide are the sons that he and Eve are yet to bear. The situation cries out for more than human grief; and Michael's sympathetic response not only gives vent to such feelings; it intensifies them as well. Wordsworth's emphasis on Michael's previous majesterial reserve--"he kingly from his state inclined not"--seems to drive his point home. But this makes the coolness of his comment all the more puzzling, especially when we remember that the eleventh book of Paradise Lost so "impressed" Wordsworth that he "melted into tears."[3] It seems necessary to conclude therefore that despite his acknowledgment of the dramatic effectiveness of arch-angelic sympathy at this point in the narrative, there is still an undercurrent of his customary reluctance to employ supernatural agencies in the representation or explanation of human experience.

In the concluding lines of Laodamia, we find Wordsworth in the midst of just such a conflict between the need to express a grief beyond the capacity of human tears and his disinclination to fall back upon the resources of myth and supernature. Laodamia dies of her unassuageable passion for her departed husband, and whether we sympathize with or disapprove of her ungovernable emotions, Wordsworth feels that yet some tears are due:

> --Yet tears to human suffering are due;
> And mortal hopes defeated and o'erthrown
> And mourned by man, and not by man alone,
> As fondly he believes. --Upon the side
> Of Hellespont (such faith was entertained)
> A knot of spiry trees for ages grew
> From out the tomb of him for whom she died;
> And ever, when such stature they had gained
> That Ilium's walls were subject to their view,
> The trees' tall summits withered at the sight;
> A constant interchange of growth and blight!
> (11. 164-174)

Wordsworth is compelled to express a sympathy beyond the real the human, and the natural, but he feels equally constrained to disparage its expression as a "fond" belief. Yet he tells us himself that it was the myth of the "trees growing and withering" that put the subject of the poem into his thoughts and inspired the "hope of giving it a loftier tone than," so far as he knew, had "been given to it by any of the Ancients who . . . treated of it."[4]

His divided feelings may account for Wordsworth's having classified this poem, between 1815 and 1820, among those "founded on the Affections," an assignment that led Henry Crabb Robinson to conclude that Laodamia, by virtue of its belonging to this "inferior" class, was "not much esteemed" by Wordsworth.[5] Several years and revisions later, without any modification of the supernatural elements in the situation, Wordsworth moves toward a higher regard for the poem and its theme, ranking it with the "Poems of the Imagination." In old age, respect ripens into vanity; in reply to a suggestion that Lycidas is "the finest elegiac composition in the language," he expresses the opinion that "Milton's 'Lycidas'" and his "'Laodamia' are twin Immortals."[6]

In a sonnet written in 1821, "Edward Signing the Warrant for the Execution of Joan of Kent,"[7] Wordsworth seems to have no reservations about declaring that there is a species of human tears that can rightfully "Claim Heaven's regard"; in fact, it is divine sympathy that provides the touchstone for the degree of human suffering that Wordsworth desires to convey. Wordsworth expresses without restraint what was very likely in his mind when he wrote his manuscript note on Michael's sympathy: the sorrow so crushing that it requires a more than natural grief. Before coming to his point, however, Wordsworth in Miltonic fashion runs through an entire catalogue of human tears:

> The tears of man in various measure gush
> From various sources; gently overflow
> From blissful transport some--from clefts of woe
> Some with ungovernable impulse rush;
> And some, cöeval with the earliest blush
> Of infant passion, scarcely dare to show
> Their pearly lustre--coming but to go;
> And some break forth when others' sorrows crush
> The sympathising heart. Nor these, nor yet
> The noblest drops to admiration known,
> To gratitude, to injuries forgiven--
> Claim Heaven's regard like waters that have wet
> The innocent eyes of youthful Monarchs driven
> To pen the mandates, nature doth disown.

Wordsworth's vacillation between approval and disavowal of angel tears is also characteristic of his attitude toward angel laughter; he condemns it in *Paradise Lost*; he justifies or explains it away in his own poetry. As the story of future history rolls on in *Paradise Lost*, human presumption, rising to Satanic magnitude, provokes heavenly laughter as it brings on its own destruction. Wordsworth protests against this laughter; he forgets his objection to any but human tears and calls on the angels to weep. The incident occurs in Book XII of *Paradise Lost*: Nimrod is building a tower with materials that boil up from "the mouth of Hell"; he is a Tyrant who hunts "Men not Beasts"; he aims at a monument "whose top may reach to Heav'n" so that his fame "whether good or evil" may be immortalized (*P. L.*, XII. 30-47). Michael describes how God confounds this inordinate presumption:

> But God who oft descends to visit men
> Unseen, and through thir habitations walks
> To mark thir doings, them beholding soon,
> Comes down to see thir City, ere the Tower
> Obstruct Heav'n Tow'rs, and in derision sets
> Upon thir Tongues a various Spirit to rase
> Quite out thir Native Language, and instead
> To sow a jangling noise of words unknown:
> Forthwith a hideous gabble rises loud
> Among the Builders; each to other calls
> Not understood, till hoarse, and all in rage,
> As mockt they storm; great laughter was in Heav'n x
> And looking down, to see the hubbub strange
> And hear the din; thus was the building left
> Ridiculous, and the work Confusion nam'd.
> (*P. L.*, XII. 48-62)

No doubt losing sight of his own opinions of Nimrod[8] in the pity he feels for the plight of Nimrod's dupes, Wordsworth remarks:

> This picture is not consonant to what might be expected from superior beings spectators of such a scene; <to them? > Shakspear is far more rational & impressive "Oh! but man proud man -. -. -. - [sic] plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven as make the angels weep".
> (Italics W.'s)

Wordsworth is referring to Isabella's speech in Measure for Measure (II. 2):

> but man, proud man,
> Dress'd in a little brief authority,
> Most ignorant of what he's most assur'd--
> His glassy essence--like an angry ape,
> Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven
> As makes the angels weep; who, with our spleens,
> Would all themselves laugh mortal.
> (118-124)

Shakespeare reverses the traditional order of relationships; the angels weep for the fantastic presumption that would make humans laugh themselves to death. But the traditional Christian attitude de contemptu mundi took the position that human follies which were matter for tears in the sublunary world were, from the vantage point of heaven, deserving only of laughter. Consider the changed outlook of Chaucer's Troilus, when he observes from the eighth sphere the grief that his death has inspired among his friends on earth:

> And in hymself he lough right at the wo
> Of hem that wepten for his deth so faste;
> And dampned al oure werk that foloweth so
> The blynde lust, the which that may nat laste,
> And sholden al oure herte on heven caste. 9

Milton is following that tradition in this passage on the Tower of Babel, not so much out of a contempt for the affairs of the world as from a recognition that the point of view in heaven must necessarily differ from that on earth. And his attitude takes its sanction from the Scriptures, Psalm 2:4:[10] "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh;

the Lord shall have them in derision." There are several other incidents in Paradise Lost that provide occasion for divine laughter. In Book II, Belial argues against Moloch's proposal for a counter-attack on heaven; God he says "from Heav'n's highth All these our motions vain, sees and derides" (190-191). Later in the same book, as Satan and Death prepare for battle before Satan is aware that Death is the issue of his incestuous union with his daughter Sin, she argues that their fighting will only benefit him "who sits above and laughs the while" (II. 731). Again in Book V, God and His Son are discussing the rebellion of Satan and his followers, and it is the Son, the merciful aspect of God the Father, who says:

> Mighty Father, thou thy foes
> Justly hast in derision, and secure
> Laugh'st at thir vain designs and tumults vain . . . .
> (V. 735-737)

Even as early as his Cambridge days, Milton employed divine laughter in this connection. He comments on the devilish gunpowder plot:

> Meanwhile the Lord, who turns the heavens in their wide revolution and hurls the lightning from his skyey citadel, laughs at the vain undertakings of the degenerate mob and is willing to take upon himself the defence of his people's cause.
>
> (On The Fifth of November, 11. 166-169)[11]

Gunpowder, as we learn from Paradise Lost (VI. 478-491), is the invention of Satan, and those among men who devise a like instrument are of the "race" of Satan and inspired by "dev'lish machination" (VI. 501-505).

Milton employs divine laughter only in response to the presumptions of evil, and Satanic evil at that. With regard to all of the dreadful consequences of human sin and folly that Michael sets before

Adam in Book XI of Paradise Lost, from the murder of Abel to the Deluge, there is no talk of divine laughter. Only Satanic presumption, the worst of the cardinal sins, gives rise to heavenly laughter and elicits from Milton's God and Angels so harsh a judgment.[12]

It may be argued that Wordsworth was unaware of the Christian traditions regarding divine laughter and the difference between the heavenly and sublunary points of view; or, that fully cognizant of the tradition, Wordsworth rejected it as myth in favor of a more merciful and human outlook. The evidence in his own poetry, however, does not support these suppositions.

As early as 1798, in the Prologue to Peter Bell,[13] Wordsworth, sailing through the clouds in his "crescent-moon" boat, recognizes that it is only his common humanity with those on earth that prevents the laughter to which he is moved in his heavenly station at the "thousand fears" that those on earth feel for him:

> Meanwhile untroubled I admire
> The pointed horns of my canoe;
> And, did not pity touch my breast,
> To see how ye are all distrest,
> Till my ribs ached, I'd laugh at you!
> (11. 16-20)

In Book III of The Excursion (1806)[14] as the Solitary explains his disappointment with the New World, it is only the "gross spirit of mankind" and the gregariousness of man's nature that make laughter at the presumptions and pretensions of the Americans uncomfortable:

> On nearer view, a motley spectacle
> Appeared, of high pretensions--unreproved
> But by the obstreperous voice of higher still;
> Big passions strutting on a petty stage;
> Which a detached spectator may regard
> Not unamused. --But ridicule demands

7

> Quick change of objects; and, to laugh alone,
> At a composing distance from the haunts
> Of strife and folly, though it be a treat
> As choice as musing Leisure can bestow;
> Yet, in the very centre of the crowd,
> To keep the secret of a poignant scorn,
> Howe'er to airy Demons suitable,
> Of all unsocial courses, is least fit
> For the gross spirit of mankind, --the one
> That soonest fails to please, and quickliest turns
> Into vexation.
> (III. 897-913)

Here it is Wordsworth who reverses Shakespeare's order of relationship. Shakespeare's angels weep at what human nature would laugh; but only Wordsworth's "airy Demons" can maintain their laughter at what inevitably must vex the grosser spirit of man.

In Book IV of The Excursion the presumptuous follies of men come closer to the situation in Paradise Lost, and Wordsworth has no hesitation in evoking divine laughter at "man, proud man." The Wanderer is arguing that men must believe in a power "Beyond their own poor natures and above" and must depend on "divine Bounty and government" (928-936). He reviews the spiritual blindness that has resulted from the presumptions of the scientific mind:

> Shall men for whom our age
> Unbaffled powers of vision hath prepared,
> To explore the world without and world within,
> Be joyless as the blind? Ambitious spirits--
> Whom earth, at this late season, hath produced
> To regulate the moving spheres, and weigh
> The planets in the hollow of their hand;
> And they who rather dive than soar, whose pains
> Have solved the elements, or analysed
> The thinking principle--shall they in fact
> Prove a degraded Race? and what avails
> Renown, if their presumption make them such?
> Oh! there is laughter at their work in heaven!
> Enquire of ancient Wisdom; go, demand

> Of mighty Nature, if 'twas ever meant
> That we should pry far off yet be unraised;
> That we should pore, and dwindle as we pore,
> Viewing all objections unremittingly
> In disconnexion dead and spiritless;
> And still dividing, and dividing still,
> Break down all grandeur, still unsatisfied
> With the perverse attempt, while littleness
> May yet become more little; waging thus
> An impious warfare with the very life
> Of our own souls![15]
>
> (Exc., IV. 944-968)

An alternate draft, MS 58,[16] makes the analogy between this kind of ambition and Satanic presumption more explicit:

> Shall Men for whom our age
> The Optic glass[17] of Science hath prepared,
> Both for the world within and world without,
> Be joyless as the blind? Ambitious souls
> Whom Earth as if to recompense her loss
> Of bodily Stature, has produced at length
> To wage with heaven a second war, to weigh
> The planets in the hollow of their hand
> And tame the elements--shall they, in fact,
> Be but a dwindled race.[18]

For the source of Wordsworth's heavenly laughter in this passage, Miss Darbishire refers us to Paradise Lost, XII. 59, the "'great laughter . . . in Heaven', at the 'presumption' of the builders of the Tower of Babel and their discomfiture"[19]--the very line that Wordsworth marked for critical comment in his manuscript note, preferring as "more rational & impressive" the tears of Shakespeare's angels to the laughter of Milton's.

Although Wordsworth's prying scientists share their "presumption" with Satan and Nimrod, the Wanderer's deploring criticism of their blind searches comes closer to Raphael's warning to Adam not to seek after knowledge that does not concern him or his being

(*P. L.*, VIII. 66-178).[20] Since this discussion provides another instance where there is occasion for heavenly laughter, and since the desire to pry into God's secrets is the basis on which Satan successfully engineers the fall of Eve and Adam (IX. 599-732), the link to the "presumption" of Satan and Nimrod is implicit. In response to Adam's inquiries concerning the celestial motions, Raphael replies:

> To ask or search I blame thee not, for Heav'n
> Is as the Book of God before thee set,
> Wherein to read his wond'rous Works, and learn
> His Seasons, Hours, or Days, or Months, or Years:
> This to attain, whether Heav'n move or Earth,
> Imports not, if thou reck'n right; the rest
> From Man or Angel the great Architect
> Did wisely to conceal, and not divulge
> His secrets to be scann'd by them who ought
> Rather admire; or if they list to try
> Conjecture, he his Fabric of the Heav'ns
> Hath left to thir disputes, perhaps to move
> His laughter at thir quaint Opinions wide
> Hereafter, when they come to model Heav'n
> And calculate the Stars, how they will wield
> The mighty frame, how build, unbuild, contrive
> To save appearances, how gird the Sphere
> With Centric and Eccentric scribbl'd o'er,
> Cycle and Epicycle, Orb in Orb . . . .
> (*P. L.*, VIII. 66-84)

Wordsworth's "Ambitious spirits . . . at this late season" parallel Milton's men who may "list to try Conjecture . . . Hereafter." Wordsworth's scientists seek "To regulate the moving spheres, and weigh The planets"; Milton's desire to "calculate the Stars" and "wield The mighty frame" of the universe. Wordsworth's Wanderer inquires "if 'twas ever meant That we should pry far off yet be unraised"; Raphael advises that God did "not divulge His secrets to be scann'd by them who ought Rather admire." Wordsworth's scholars, "still dividing, and dividing still, Break down all grandeur" and make "littleness . . . more little"; the "Centric and Eccentric" scribblings, the "Cycle and Epicycle, Orb in Orb" of Milton's schoolmen achieve the same triviality.[21] And both Wordsworth's Wanderer and Milton's Raphael agree that there should be laughter in heaven at such work.

When viewed from the proper perspective, there is no great reversal of opinion involved in Wordsworth's adopting the view that inordinate presumption, however tragic the consequences, is deserving of more than human derision. Between 1820 and 1827, however, a strange alteration takes place in Wordsworth's attitude toward a less reprehensible human frailty--that of loving not very wisely but too well. The change is recorded in the penultimate stanza of Laodamia. Laodamia, exhorted by the spirit of her husband Protesilaus to desist from her prolonged and passionate grief over his death, nevertheless dies at the moment of his spirit's departure. From 1815 to 1820 the poet's plea is for sympathetic understanding:

> Ah, judge her gently who so deeply loved!
> Her, who, in reason's spite, yet without crime,
> Was in a trance of passion thus removed;
> Delivered from the galling yoke of time
> And these frail elements--to gather flowers
> Of blissful quiet 'mid unfading bowers.[22]
> (158-163)

The tragic heroine is sent to her happy rest. The poem closes with compassionate human tears, and the hope for a corresponding sympathy in nature or supernature is gently dismissed as a fond belief.

If Wordsworth were to make any changes in this stanza, we would expect from his manuscript note in Paradise Lost that he would allow for divine sympathy, even though he might still want to discount the myth of the growth and blight of the trees on Protiselaus' grave. In 1827, Wordsworth does introduce the element of divine response to Laodamia's tragedy, but it is a harsh reversal from what we would anticipate. He eliminates the appeal for human sympathy; Laodamia's deep love that is "without crime" although "in reason's spite" in 1815 becomes "the crime Of Lovers that in Reason's spite have loved"; the Gods are not to be moved by "weak pity"; Laodamia is removed from "blissful quiet 'mid unfading bowers" and "doomed to wander in a grosser clime" for an unlimited time.[23] Wordsworth's readers were understandably shocked at this strange alteration; he discusses one such reaction in a letter to his nephew, John Wordsworth, written in the autumn of 1831. Wordsworth explains that Mr. Rose, a preacher who criticized the change, is mistaken in thinking that he omitted a stanza in the 1827 edition:

> The last but one is, however, substantially altered. R disliked the alteration; but I cannot bring my mind to reject it. As first written the heroine was dismissed to happiness in Elysium. To what purpose then the mission of Protesilaus? He exhorts her to moderate her passion; the exhortation is fruitless, and no punishment follows. So it stood; at present she is placed among unhappy ghosts for disregard of the exhortation. Virgil also places her there; but compare the two passages, and give me *your* opinion. R said any punishment stopping short of the future world would have been reasonable, but not the melancholy one I have imposed, as she was not a voluntary suicide. Who shall decide, when doctors disagree? 24
>
> (Italics W.'s)

In 1840, Wordsworth makes further changes in the poem; he takes the stand that the Gods are "just" in their punishment of Laodamia;

to justify their justice her passionate mourning becomes a "wilful" crime. He does, however, modify her doom; it has an "appointed time." As de Selincourt notes, Wordsworth's "last reading is a compromise between the positions taken up in the previous two; if the second was too severe upon his heroine, the first was clearly both un-Virgilian and also inconsistent with the ethos of the poem":[25]

> Thus, all in vain exhorted and reproved,
> She perished; and, as for a wilful crime,
> By the just Gods whom no weak pity moved,
> Was doomed to wear out her appointed time,
> Apart from happy Ghosts, that gather flowers
> Of blissful quiet 'mid unfading bowers.
> (158-163)

In this final version, it is clear that although the concluding stanza will allow for human tears, it rules out entirely any possibility of divine sympathy, pagan or Christian. It is a mystifying puzzle to me how the poet who would have angels weep over the folly and presumption of Nimrod's followers could characterize pity for Laodamia's suffering as "weak" and consider the Gods who could not be moved by such pity "just." It must also be borne in mind that these revisions were probably responsible for Wordsworth's changed attitude toward the poem, giving it the "loftier tone"[26] that induced him to classify it among the "Poems Of The Imagination."

Out of regard for the poet of "pervading love," it seems proper to close this discussion of Wordsworth's views of divine sympathy and justice in a mood that is more representative of the usual, compassionate tenor of his poetry. In Book X of Paradise Lost Wordsworth marks a passage of notable pathos that demonstrates

Milton's capacity for deep human sympathy in a situation where imminent death is a justly expected punishment for inordinate presumption and gross disobedience to God. Adam and Eve have quarreled after the fall; Eve makes the first move toward reconciliation, and the success of her efforts is also the first step toward their reconciliation with God:

> Forsake me not thus, Adam, witness Heav'n
> What love sincere, and reverence in my heart
> I bear thee, and unweeting have offended,
> Unhappily deceiv'd; thy suppliant
> I beg, and clasp thy knees; bereave me not,
> Whereon I live, thy gentle looks, thy aid,
> Thy counsel in this uttermost distress,
> My only strength and stay: forlorn of thee,
> Whither shall I betake me, where subsist?
> While yet we live, scarce one short hour perhaps, x
> Between us two let there be peace . . . .
> (P. L., X. 914-924)

It is a deeply moving line--"While yet we live, scarce one short hour perhaps"--and it is unfortunate that Wordsworth did not put to paper the thoughts and feelings that prompted him to place his mark beside that line. There is, however, a passage in The Prelude, written very much in the same mood. Here, the imminent death is the passing of Wordsworth's poetic powers; Wordsworth, metaphorically at least, is making a last effort at communication and understanding that seems reminiscent in tone of Eve's:

> The days gone by
> Come back upon me from the dawn almost
> Of life: the hiding-places of my power
> Seem open; I approach, and then they close;
> I see by glimpses now; when age comes on,
> May scarcely see at all, and I would give,
> While yet we may, as far as words can give,
> A substance and a life to what I feel . . . . [27]
> (1805: XI. 334-341)

## 2. From Beast To Angel

One of the conclusions that emerges from H. J. C. Grierson's comparison of Milton and Wordsworth is that Milton "with all his greatness" lacks "sympathy with poor human nature--its blended greatness and weakness." Wordsworth, he claims, "supplies what we seek in vain in Milton," for Wordsworth "is, at the centre, one of the great poets of love. With Shelley he finds in love the ultimate solution of the problem of life; but he has not Shelley's impatience, nor Milton's intellectuality."[28]

It is rather doubtful that Wordsworth would have agreed to this characterization of Milton. As early as February 1801, Lamb reports Wordsworth as saying that "Milton possessed in a degree far exceeding other Poets . . . a certain Union of Tenderness and Imagination . . . which Union, as the highest species of poetry, and chiefly deserving that name, 'He was most proud to aspire to.'"[29] In his Preface to the Edition of 1815, Wordsworth is still of the opinion that the distinction of Milton's poetry is its combination of emotion and thought: "The grand store-houses of enthusiastic and meditative Imagination, of poetical, as contra-distinguished from human and dramatic Imagination, are the prophetic and lyrical parts of the Holy Scriptures, and the works of Milton; to which I cannot forbear to add those of Spenser."[30]

Nor would Wordsworth have appreciated Grierson's judgment that his conception of love lacked the intellectuality of Milton's.

Wordsworth does, after all, declare toward the conclusion of The Prelude that:

> Imagination having been our theme,
> So also hath that intellectual love,
> For they are each in each, and cannot stand
> Dividually.
>
> (1805: XIII. 185-188)[31]

In light of his remarks to Lamb and his characterization of Milton in the Preface of 1815, it does not seem capricious to infer that The Prelude has been telling the story of the making of just such a poet as Wordsworth thought that Milton was.

This is not to say that Wordsworth's conception of the qualities and functions of love in human life and in the natural world were identical to Milton's, but to suggest that Wordsworth would not have considered them in conflict. He might in fact have thought of his own principle of love as an outgrowth from Milton's, taking its authority from philosophical rather than theological truths--a development made possible by the larger storehouse of knowledge concerning nature and human nature that was now available to him. It seems to me that Wordsworth's notations in Paradise Lost provide some support for such a supposition.

In Book VIII of Paradise Lost, Adam's account of his nuptial experience precipitates a discussion with Raphael of the kinds and qualities of love. Adam's understanding of the true nature of love is not only central to the happy and virtuous life whose continuance it is Raphael's mission to preserve; it is crucial to his ability to withstand the temptation that is to come. Moreover, it is precisely Adam's failure to remember this lesson of love that is the occasion of his fall. The proper way of thinking and loving[32]--"right Reason" and "true Love" in Milton's terms--is therefore the crux of Milton's "great argument" as it is of Wordsworth's. Wordsworth marks three lines in this sequence in Paradise Lost, but he does not favor us with any comment. In trying to determine the nature of Wordsworth's interest in these lines, as it is revealed in his letters, prose, and poetry, it might be well to start with the more obvious evidence of Wordsworth's use of this passage in Paradise Lost and then attempt to "build up greatest things From least suggestions"[33] by means of the subtler indications of the relation of these ideas to the themes of Wordsworth's philosophic song.

The first of Wordsworth's marks occurs in Adam's description of his wedding night:

> the amorous Bird of Night
> Sung Spousal, and bid haste the Ev'ning Star
> On his Hill top, to light the bridal Lamp. x
> (P. L., VIII. 518-520)

The figure of the evening star as a signal for the commencement of nuptial rites was a traditional one,' employed in epithalamia from Catullus' to Spenser's.[34] Wordsworth uses it in a new and most effective sense to express the theme of his philosophic song:

> Paradise, and groves
> Elysian, Fortunate Fields . . .
> . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
> why should they be
> A history only of departed things,
> Or a mere fiction of what never was?
> For the discerning intellect of Man,
> When wedded to this goodly universe
> In love and holy passion, shall find these
> A simple produce of the common day.
> --I, long before the blissful hour arrives,
> Would chant, in lonely peace, the spousal verse

> Of this great consummation . . . .
> . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
> Descend, prophetic Spirit!
> . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
>                     upon me bestow
> A gift of genuine insight; that my Song
> With star-like virtue in its place may shine . . . .
>                     (Prospectus, 47-58; 83-89)

The poet is Milton's "amorous Bird of Night," the nightingale who sings in peaceful seclusion; his "spousal verse" is Milton's "Spousal" song but it has the "star-like virtue" of Milton's "Ev'ning Star"--in an earlier version, Wordsworth calls his verse "a light hung up in heaven,"[35] both star and "bridal Lamp." The wedding of Nature with the "discerning intellect of Man" is to be consummated in the "love and holy passion" that characterize prelapsarian love in Eden.[36]

Adam's experience of marital love results in a voluntary abdication of his powers and responsibilities as a man. Instead of seeking the fault in himself, he assigns the error to Nature, in effect to God the Creator. Adam feels himself superior to all other enjoyments, "only weak Against the charm of Beauty's powerful glance"; either nature failed in him or erred in making Eve too beautiful (VIII. 530-539). Adam knows that Eve was created inferior, a less perfect image of God (VIII. 540-556);[37] nevertheless he makes the mistake of seeing her as self-sufficient despite the fact that, in requesting that God provide him with a suitable companion, Adam had earlier understood that only God is perfect and complete in himself (VIII. 415-420). Adam not only feels that Eve is superior to him, "As one intended first, not after made Occasionally" but equal to God, "so absolute she seems And in herself complete"; all of the qualities by reason of which Adam was made the "substitute" or surrogate of God and given dominion over all the creatures on earth--"higher knowledge," "Wisdom," "Authority and Reason"--are "degraded" and "discount'nanc't" by Eve's "loveliness, so absolute" and the "Commotion strange" of sexual love (VIII. 381-382; 531-533; 547-556). Warning Adam not to accuse Nature of error and not to be "diffident Of Wisdom" since she will not desert him if he does not "Dismiss . . . her" (561-564), Raphael begins his explanation of the scale of love by demonstrating that the faculty of reason that separates man from the beast also distinguishes the quality of his love:

> if the sense of touch whereby mankind
> Is propagated seem such dear delight
> Beyond all other, think the same voutsaf't
> To Cattle and each Beast; which would not be
> To them made common and divulg'd, if aught
> Therein enjoy'd were worthy to subdue
> The Soul of Man, or passion in him move.
> What higher in her society thou find'st
> Attractive, human, rational, love still;
> In loving thou dost well, in passion not,
> Wherein true Love consists not; Love refines
> The thoughts, and heart enlarges, hath his seat
> In Reason, and is judicious, is the scale
> By which to heav'nly Love thou may'st ascend,
> Not sunk in carnal pleasure, for which cause
> Among the Beasts no Mate for thee was found. x
> (P. L., VIII. 579-594)

Although Wordsworth makes no comment on the line that he marked--"Among the Beasts no Mate for thee was found"--he did record his reaction, in a very interesting connection, in a letter to William Godwin (March 9, 1811). Godwin had sent Wordsworth a copy of the "Story of the Beauty and the Beast" and suggested that Wordsworth reproduce the fable in verse. Among other reasons for turning the project down, Wordsworth states:

> I confess there is to me something disgusting in the notion of a human Being consenting to mate with a Beast, however amiable his qualities of heart. There is a line and a half in the Paradise Lost upon this subject which always shocked me, --"for which cause Among the Beasts no Mate for thee was found." These are objects to which the attention of the mind ought not to be turned even as things in possibility. --I have never seen the Tale in french, but as every body knows, the word Bete in french conversation perpetually occurs as applied to a stupid, senseless, half-idiotic Person--Bêtise in like manner stands for stupidity. With us Beast and bestial excite loathsome and disgusting ideas, I mean when applied in a metaphorical manner; and consequently something of the same hangs about the literal sense of the words. *Brute* is the word employed when we contrast the *intellectual* qualities of the inferior animals with our own, the brute creation, &c. "Ye of *brute human*, we of *human Gods*" [*P. L.*, IX. 712]. Brute metaphorically used, with us designates ill-manners of a coarse kind, or insolent and ferocious cruelty--I make these remarks with a view to the difficulty attending the treatment of this story in our tongue, I mean in verse, where the utmost delicacy, that is, true philosophic permanent delicacy is required. [38]
>
> (Italics W.'s)

In one of the most basic, philosophical passages[39] in *Paradise Lost*, Wordsworth evidently finds Milton lacking in "true philosophic permanent delicacy"; the word "brute" he feels would have been more appropriate to Milton's meaning, but he would have preferred that the possibility of brutishness in human love were not mentioned at all. This attitude takes an interesting form when Wordsworth comes to compose his own scale of love (*Prel.*, 1805: XIII. 149-170; 1850: XIV. 168-192), to be discussed later in this chapter.[40]

Raphael's reminder that Adam's intellectual qualities were the cause for which "Among the Beasts no Mate for . . . [him] was found" adverts to Adam's own reasoning with God when he requested a companion "fit to participate All rational delight, wherein the brute

Cannot be human consort" (VIII. 389-392): "Among unequals," Adam asked, "what society Can sort, what harmony or true delight?" (383-384). Here Milton uses the word "brute" instead of "beast," the word that, as Wordsworth explained to Godwin, is more applicable in comparisons of this kind. Within this context, Wordsworth evidently has no objection to discussing the differences between man and the lower orders in nature. He uses the concept to make a graceful compliment to Sir George Beaumont:

> There can be no valuable friendship where the parties are not mutually capable of instructing and delighting each other; I am sure that you and I have both lived long enough to be convinced of this truth, these qualities I have found in you and Lady Beaumont, and if I had not confidence that I am in part capable of repaying what I received I should not venture to seek your society as I have done, being sure that between persons entirely unequal in mental endowments, "no society (as Milton expresses it) can consist nor harmony or true delight." 41

Raphael's counsel on the distinctions between human love and animal and on the qualities that make for true love does seem, with the exception of the one line, to have won Wordsworth's approval. It provides the text for Protesilaus' sermon to Laodamia--advice which she, like Adam, fails to adhere to, for which failure Wordsworth invokes a punishment more harsh[42] perhaps than that levied on Adam and Eve:

> Be taught, O faithful Consort, to control
> Rebellious passion: for the Gods approve
> The depth, and not the tumult, of the soul;
> A fervent, not ungovernable, love.
> Thy transports moderate . . . .
> . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
> Thou, though strong in love, art all too weak

> In reason, in self-government too slow;
> . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
> Be thy affections raised and solemnised.
> Learn, by a mortal yearning, to ascend--
> Seeking a higher object. Love was given,
> Encouraged, sanctioned, chiefly for that end;
> For this the passion to excess was driven--
> That self might be annulled: her bondage prove
> The fetters of a dream opposed to love.
> (Laodamia, 73-77; 139-150)[43]

Protesilaus advises that "the Gods approve The depth, and not the tumult, of the soul"; Raphael says that passion is not "worthy to subdue The Soul of Man" (VIII. 583-585). Protesilaus urges "A fervent, not ungovernable, love"; Raphael tells Adam, "In loving thou dost well, in passion not" (VIII. 588). Laodamia is "strong in love, . . . all too weak In reason"; Adam confesses himself strong in reason to moderate all other enjoyments but "only weak" against his passion for Eve's beauty (VIII. 531-533). Protesilaus explains that "Love was given, Encouraged, sanctioned, chiefly for that end" that humankind should "ascend" to a "higher," more sacred love; Raphael teaches that Love based in Reason "is the scale By which to heav'nly Love thou may'st ascend" (VIII. 589-592); and Adam agrees that "Love . . . Leads up to Heav'n, is both the way and guide" (VIII. 612-613). In a final warning to Laodamia, Protesilaus maintains that passion can only result in "bondage . . . The fetters of a dream opposed to love"; Raphael cautions Adam that "in passion . . . true Love consists not."

After Adam assures Raphael that he does love Eve for what is "human and rational" in her character:

> as those graceful acts,
> Those thousand decencies that daily flow
> From all her words and actions, mixt with Love
> And sweet compliance, which declare unfeign'd
> Union of Mind, or in us both one Soul . . . .
> (VIII. 600-604)

he poses the question that gives Raphael the opportunity to complete the scale of love; do Angels love, he asks:

> how thir Love
> Express they, by looks only, or do they mix
> Irradiance, virtual or immediate touch?
> (615-617)

> To whom the Angel with a smile that glow'd
> Celestial rosy red, Love's proper hue,
> Answer'd. Let it suffice thee that thou know'st
> Us happy, and without Love no happiness.
> Whatever pure thou in the body enjoy'st
> (And pure thou wert created) we enjoy
> In eminence, and obstacle find none
> Of membrane, joint, or limb, exclusive bars; x
> Easier than Air with Air, if Spirits embrace,
> Total they mix, Union of Pure with Pure
> Desiring; nor restrain'd conveyance need
> As Flesh to mix with Flesh, or Soul with Soul.
> (618-629)

Although Wordsworth marks the line, "Of membrane, joint, or limb, exclusive bars," it is Raphael's smile that has the earliest appeal for him. In Descriptive Sketches (1793 text), Wordsworth imagines the visions of the primaeval man in the golden age of the Alps:

> Great joy by horror tam'd dilates his heart,
> And the near heav'ns their own delights impart.
> --When the Sun bids the gorgeous scene farewell,
> Alps overlooking Alps their state upswell;
> Huge Pikes of Darkness named, of Fear and Storms,
> Lift, all serene, their still, illumin'd forms,
> In sea-like reach of prospect round him spread,
> Ting'd like an angel's smile all rosy red. 44
> (560-567)

In the H MS[45] this passage is followed by lines that anticipate the Robespierre passage of The Prelude (Book X)[46] where Milton's angels are reflected in still another aspect:

> So when the living God with face benign
> Smiles through the heavens excess of joy divine
> Angels of wrath encompassing the throne
> Relent and silent lay their terrors down
> In burning order all disclosed upraise
> Their mighty forms of light and trembling gaze . . . .[47]

Although Wordsworth contracts this sequence in the 1847 version, he retains the angel's smile unchanged.

Raphael's smile turns up once again in one of the Ecclesiastical Sonnets, written in 1821:[48]

> The lovely Nun . . .
> . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
> Goes forth--unveiling timidly a cheek
> Suffused with blushes of celestial hue . . . .[49]
> (1-6)

As in the Descriptive Sketches, the angel's smile recalls another scene in heaven. The Nun, "issuing from her cloudy shrine" is "An apparition more divinely bright" than "Iris" (9-10). And this echoes the description of God the Father in Paradise Lost, III:

> and through a cloud
> Drawn round about thee like a radiant Shrine,
> Dark with excessive bright thy skirts appear . . . .
> (378-380)

Interestingly enough, these lines in Paradise Lost are preceded by another description, highly evocative of Raphael's smile "Celestial rosy red": "the bright Pavement" around the throne of God "like a Sea of Jasper shone Impurpl'd with Celestial Roses smil'd" (III. 362-364). In lines that are deceptively simple, the "best knower of Milton" demonstrates with what complexity he can interweave the various strands of Paradise Lost.

In 1804, Wordsworth pens a tribute to his wife that claims both human and angelic love for her: she combines the "human and rational" qualities, that Raphael recommends to Adam's love, with "something of" angelic Spirit:

> And now I see with eye serene
> The very pulse of the machine;
> A Being breathing thoughtful breath,
> A Traveller between life and death;
> The reason firm, the temperate will,
> Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill;
> A perfect Woman, nobly planned,
> To warn, to comfort, and command;[52]
> And yet a Spirit still, and bright
> With something of angelic light.
> ("She was a Phantom of Delight," 21-30)

The love of Milton's angels exerts its influence on Laodamia as well. In the course of his sermon on rational love, Protesilaus speaks of the tranquility of spiritual love:

> He spake of love, such love as Spirits feel
> In worlds whose course is equable and pure;
> No fears to beat away--no strife to heal--
> The past unsighed for, and the future sure . . . .
> (97-100)

From 1815 to 1820, these lines continue:

> Spake, as a witness, of a second birth
> For all that is most perfect upon earth . . . .[53]

The "pure" world of Spirits, in which "all that is most perfect upon earth" finds a "second birth," owes something to Raphael's comparison of human and angel love: "Whatever pure thou in the body enjoy'st . . . we enjoy In eminence" (VIII. 622-624).

Before examining what I consider the most significant influence of Milton's scale of love on Wordsworth's philosophy of love--the three kinds of love expounded by Wordsworth at the conclusion of The Prelude--it will be necessary to revert to an earlier discussion between Raphael and Adam on the Scale of Nature or the Great Chain of Being (P. L., V. 469-502). As Raphael explains to Adam, the kind of Love that has its "seat In Reason . . . is the scale By which to heav'nly Love thou may'st ascend" (VIII. 589-592). This scale, as Merritt Hughes informs us, is the scale of nature.[54] We cannot fully appreciate the importance of love in Milton's moral philosophy, nor entirely understand the meaning of Raphael's statement, "without love no happiness" unless we recognize that what distinguishes the three stages on the scale of love corresponds to the distinctions on the scale of nature--Reason and the quality of Reason that the three stages of being possess. It is on the basis of an order of being where matter aspires to spirit, animal to intellectual, sense to reason, discursive reason to intuitive that human love based in reason may ascend to divine love:

> one Almighty is, from whom
> All things proceed, and up to him return,
> If not deprav'd from good, created all
> Such to perfection, one first matter all,
> Indu'd with various forms, various degrees
> Of substance, and in things that live, of life;
> But more refin'd, more spiritous, and pure,
> As nearer to him plac't or nearer tending
> Each in thir several active Spheres assign'd,
> Till body up to spirit work, in bounds
> Proportion'd to each kind.
> . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
> flow'rs and thir fruit
> Man's nourishment, by gradual scale sublim'd
> To vital spirits aspire, to animal,
> To intellectual, give both life and sense,
> Fancy and understanding, whence the Soul
> Reason receives, and reason is her being.
> Discursive, or Intuitive; discourse

> Is oftest yours, the latter most is ours,  
> Differing but in degree, of kind the same.  
> . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .  
> time may come when men  
> With Angels may participate . . . .  
> . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .  
> Your bodies may at last turn all to spirit,  
> Improv'd by tract of time, and wing'd ascend  
> Ethereal, as wee . . . .  
> (P. L., V. 469-499)

The difference between human, discursive reason, and angelic, intuitive reason, is one of degree, not of kind; so with love, whatever pure joy man experiences in the body, the angel enjoys "In eminence." Whatever the human mind acquires through the channels of accumulated knowledge, the angelic mind apprehends immediately without recourse to such instruments. Likewise the angel requires no conveyance of flesh or soul to express or experience love. By the refinement of his reason, however, man may rise from animal love, to rational love, to intellectual love. There are no bars to his sharing in the course of time the same qualities of intellect and love that Angels enjoy, so long as he keeps to the path of "right Reason" and "true Love." The discussion of being is the necessary precursor to the lesson of love, but we should remember that it is the lesson of love that concludes Raphael's mission to impart whatever knowledge it "may avail Adam to know"[55] to bolster his resistance to Satanic temptation.

This interrelationship of intellect and love on a rising scale of refinement and joy receives its earliest expression in a passage written for The Recluse and later adapted for The Excursion. It provides the text for that dedicated Miltonist, the Wanderer, in his attempt to overcome an important element in the Solitary's despondency, his loss of confidence in social man:[56]

> Happy is he who lives to understand,
> Not human nature only, but explores
> All natures, --to the end that he may find
> The law that governs each; and where begins
> The union, the partition where, that makes
> Kind and degree, among all visible Beings;
> The constitutions, powers, and faculties,
> Which they inherit, --cannot step beyond, --
> And cannot fall beneath; that do assign
> To every class its station and its office,
> Through all the mighty commonwealth of things;
> Up from the creeping plant to sovereign Man.
> Such converse, 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!
> (Exc., IV. 332-350)

The "climbing intellect" that "teaches . . . the highest love" is in embryo what is later in The Prelude to become "intellectual love," the climax of Wordsworth's scale of love. The origins of the Wanderer's discourse in Milton's scale of nature and scale of love seem too patent to require belaboring. The most notable change from the Recluse manuscript to the 1814 text of The Excursion is the transformation of "converse, if but fervent" to "converse, if directed by a meek, Sincere and humble spirit"; and this is in the direction of a closer analogy with Raphael's advice. Adam may hope to "turn all to spirit" and "wing'd ascend Ethereal" as angels, if he is "found obedient" and retains "unalterably" the "firm . . . love" of God (V. 497-502). The "converse" with "all the mighty commonwealth of things; Up from the creeping plant to sovereign Man," that the

Wanderer contends will lead to the "highest love," corresponds to Adam's acknowledgement that it is "In contemplation of created things" that he may "By steps . . . ascend to God" (V. 508-512). Wordsworth has, of course, eliminated all references to the deity or divine approval, but in every other respect his concepts of intellect and love seem to be a development from Milton's. The Pastor does, however, give more orthodox expression to the same idea in the opening lines of his prayer (Exc., IX. 614-617):[57]

> Eternal Spirit! universal God!
> Power inaccessible to human thought,
> Save by degrees and steps which thou hast deigned
> To furnish . . . .

In 1805, Wordsworth again makes use of Milton's scale of being and love. Once again Wordsworth employs "thoughts and images too great for the subject,"[58] for here he is justifying human love and grief for a dead dog:

> For love, that comes wherever life and sense
> Are given by God, in thee was most intense;
> A chain of heart, a feeling of the mind,
> A tender sympathy, which did thee bind
> Not only to us Men, but to thy Kind:
> Yea, for thy fellow-brutes in thee we saw
> A soul of love, love's intellectual law:--
> Hence, if we wept, it was not done in shame;
> Our tears from passion and from reason came . . . .
> (Tribute, 27-35)

Wordsworth's "life and sense . . . given by God" corresponds to the "life and sense" that the lower orders of nature "give" by God's design to the higher orders in Milton's scale of nature (V. 483-488); they are the base of reason and love in Milton, of "love's intellectual law" in Wordsworth. Wordsworth's "chain of heart" and "feeling . . . mind" parallels Milton's chain of reason and love; for, as Raphael explains, "Love refines The thoughts, and heart enlarges."

The same theme recurs in The Convention of Cintra (1808-1809) where Wordsworth explains the inner resources of benevolence in its struggle against evil; as in Milton's scheme of the universe, love of mankind rests on a rising scale of being from "vital," to "animal," to "sentient," to "intellectual." Raphael explains that "by gradual scale sublim'd":

> vital spirits aspire, to animal,
> To intellectual, give both life and sense,
> Fancy and understanding, whence the Soul
> Reason receives . . . .
> (P. L., V. 483-487)

In microcosm, this same chain of faculties provides the resources from which benevolence draws its strength:

> 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 . . . . The order of life does not require that the sublime and disinterested feelings should have to trust long to their own unassisted power. Nor would the attempt consist either with their dignity or their humility.
>
> . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
>
> The higher mode of being does not exclude, but necessarily includes, the lower; the intellectual does not exclude, but necessarily includes, the sentient; the sentient, the animal; and the animal, the vital--to its lowest degrees.
> (The Convention of Cintra)[59]

To whatever degree Wordsworth's conceptions may conform to eighteenth-century theories of psychology, it is hardly likely from the evidence adduced thus far that such agreement would seem to him to preclude an accord with Milton's scheme as well.

In The Prelude, Wordsworth develops his own scale of love; as in Paradise Lost, it is predicated on a quality of mind that proceeds from the Deity and reascends to the divine on a rising scale from sense to discursive reason to intuitive. The language is Wordsworth's and the conceptions are his, with only an occasional suggestion along the way to indicate their point of departure in Milton's universal scheme of reason and love. If Wordsworth found Milton's comparison of beast and human distasteful, he also could not quite accept Milton's final conviction that since Adam's fall only men of singular endowments--the "one greater man" that recurs again and again in the history that Michael sets before Adam--can rise to angelic qualities of mind and love. Wordsworth insists that nothing in our nature sets insurmountable obstacles in the way of such an ascent. Having himself learned the worth and dignity of man (1805: XII. 81-87), Wordsworth asks:

> Why is this glorious Creature to be found
> One only in ten thousand? What one is,
> Why may not many be? What bars are thrown
> By Nature in the way of such a hope?
> Our animal wants and the necessities
> Which they impose, are these the obstacles?
> If not, then others vanish into air.
> (1805: XII. 90-96)[60]

The "bars" that our "animal wants and . . . necessities" may oppose to a universal achievement of the higher mind are surely reminiscent of the "exclusive bars" whether "Of membrane, joint, or limb" and the "restrain'd conveyance" of human "Flesh" or "Soul" that distinguish human from angelic love in Paradise Lost. Wordsworth applies to intellect the same limitations that Milton places on love. In Milton's philosophy, one presupposes the other.

In his final statement of the theme of his great poem, Wordsworth defines the qualities of the higher mind and demonstrates how it converts the animal and sensible to intellectual, providing "endless occupation for the soul Whether discursive or intuitive." The line of thought bears an unmistakable resemblance to Milton's "gradual scale sublim'd" by which

> vital spirits aspire, to animal,
> To intellectual, give both life and sense,
> Fancy and understanding, whence the Soul
> Reason receives, and reason is her being,
> Discursive, or Intuitive . . . .
> (P. L., V. 483-488)

What was promised to Adam if he preserved his obedience to God, Wordsworth still claims without hindrance as a possibility for all men--body may yet "turn all to spirit" (P. L., V. 497-501). In Wordsworth's design, higher minds are:

> By sensible impressions not inthrall'd,
> But quicken'd, rouz'd, and made thereby more fit
> To hold communion with the invisible world.
> Such minds are truly from the Deity,
> For they are Powers; and hence the highest bliss
> That can be known is theirs, the consciousness
> Of whom they are habitually infused
> Through every image, and through every thought,
> And all impressions; hence religion, faith
> And endless occupation for the soul
> Whether discursive or intuitive . . . . [61]
> (1805: XIII. 103-113)

In 1805, Wordsworth claims for man the bliss that in Paradise Lost is available only to Angels; within the same year he modifies "the highest bliss That can be known" to "the highest bliss That Man can know"; by 1832 he accepts the full Miltonic limitation, "That flesh can know."[62] In the same year, he makes other changes in the last three lines of this passage that sharpen the analogy with Milton's scale of being:

> And all affections by communion raised
> From earth to heaven, from human to divine;
> Hence endless occupation for the Soul,
> Whether discursive or intuitive . . . .
> (1850: 117-120)

And in 1839,[63] "communion with the invisible world" becomes "converse with the spiritual world" (1850: XIV. 108). To the end he maintains man's ability to rise to angelic or intuitive reason.

How may a man achieve and preserve the higher mind? -- through a rising scale of love, "different in kind and degree," from mild, to passionate, to intellectual:[64]

> From love, for here
> Do we begin and end, all grandeur comes,
> All truth and beauty, from pervading love,
> That gone, we are as dust.
> . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
> see that Pair, the Lamb
> And the Lamb's Mother, and their tender ways
> Shall touch thee to the heart; in some green bower
> Rest, and be not alone, but have thou there
> The One who is thy choice of all the world,
> There linger, lull'd and lost, and rapt away,
> Be happy to thy fill; thou call'st this love
> And so it is, but there is a higher love
> Than this, a love that comes into the heart
> With awe and a diffusive sentiment;
> Thy love is human merely; this proceeds
> More from the brooding Soul, and is divine.
> This love more intellectual cannot be
> Without Imagination . . . .
> (1805: XIII. 149-167)

As in Paradise Lost, the love of man and woman stands between lower and higher forms of love, with the human capable of partaking of all three stages. The lowest degree in Wordsworth's scheme is illustrated by the animal, as it is in Milton's; but Wordsworth avoids Milton's equation of human and animal love in the form that propagates the species, a suggestion that Wordsworth found lacking in "true philosophic permanent delicacy." The only similitude between human and animal love that Wordsworth will consider is maternal love. It is interesting, nevertheless, that some point of correspondence between human and animal is as necessary to his philosophy of "pervading love" as it is to Milton's. For Wordsworth as for Milton, the quality of love is determined by the quality of intellect on which it is based. Where intellect surmounts the "bars" and "conveyances" of flesh, love can rise to the heights of the divine.

The final text of this sequence (1850: XIV. 176-187) becomes more Miltonic, perhaps more orthodox than Miltonic. The "delight" of human passion becomes "pitiable." The higher love is one that "adores[65] . . . on the knees of prayer"; it "frees . . . the soul . . . from chains"--Milton's "exclusive bars" and "restrain'd conveyance." "In union with the purest, best, Of earth-born passions," Wordsworth claims, the soul may rise "on the wings of praise" to the "Almighty's Throne." Milton makes a similar ascent available to prelapsarian Adam: Reason may in time refine his body to spirit and he may "wing'd ascend Ethereal" where "Whatever pure" he enjoys "in the body" he may experience "In eminence" as do the Angels; and since Reason is "the being" of the "Soul," Adam's soul may indeed take its place with divine spirits before the "Almighty's Throne."

Intellectual love, Wordsworth maintains, cannot exist without imagination because imagination is "reason in her most exalted mood":

> This love more intellectual cannot be
> Without Imagination, which, in truth,
> Is but another name for absolute strength
> And clearest insight, amplitude of mind,
> And reason in her most exalted mood.
> (1805: XIII. 166-170)

Imagination and intellectual love make one theme, one way, one guide to the better life because they are "each in each, and cannot stand Dividually"[66] (1805: XIII. 185-188; 1850: XIV. 206-209). So also are reason and love "each in each" and indivisible in Milton's scheme of "right Reason" and "true Love."

If Wordsworth can claim--in exploring "The Mind of Man," the "haunt" and "main region" of his "song"--that he will "pass unalarmed":

> All strength--all terror, single or in bands,
> That ever was put forth in personal form--
> Jehovah--with his thunder, and the choir
> Of shouting Angels, and the empyreal thrones--
> (Prospectus, 31-35)

perhaps it was because as a young man he recognized that Milton had passed that way before him:

> the trump of God, with dreadful blast
> Rock'd all the mountain; on their flashing clouds
> The silent cherubs trembled; undismayed
> Stood the blind prophet . . . .
> ("Fragment of an intended[67]
> poem on Milton, written in
> the copy of Paradise Lost
> which belonged to Wordsworth
> at Cambridge")

# Footnotes

[1] Preface to Lyrical Ballads, PW, II, 392.

[2] This concession to the supernatural is reminiscent of a similar admission (later excised) in Book II of The Excursion that the "gorgeous spectacle" of a vision in the empyrean might give "Collateral interest" to the "homely Tale" of the old man lost in the mountains; see pp. 30-36 above.

[3] Journals of Dorothy Wordsworth, ed. Helen Darbishire (World's Classics ed., London, 1958), p. 110, entry of Feb. 2, 1802. Dorothy apparently felt that Wordsworth was more deeply affected than she by their reading of this portion of Paradise Lost, for she notes that it was "a good thing for . . . [her] William" that the "papers came in soon after . . . [she] laid aside the Book."

[4] I. F. note, PW, II, 518.

[5] Diary entry of May 1, 1815; see note, PW, II, 519.

[6] Taken from Alfred Alaric Watts, Life of Alaric Watts (1884), I, 240; cited by David Perkins, Wordsworth and the Poetry of Sincerity (Cambridge, Mass., 1964), p. 172. The possible reasons for Wordsworth's change of attitude will be discussed later in this chapter in connection with other notations made by Wordsworth in Paradise Lost.

[7] Ecclesiastical Sonnets, Part II, XXXII.

[8] See pp. 129-133 above.

[9] Troilus and Criseyde, V. 1821-1825, The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, ed. F. N. Robinson, 2nd ed. (Boston, 1957).

[10] See notes, pp. 20, 236, John Milton Complete Poems and Major Prose, ed. Merritt Y. Hughes (New York, 1957).

[11] Translation from Hughes's edition.

[12] See Joseph H. Summers' interesting comment on this point, The Muse's Method: An Introduction to Paradise Lost (Cambridge, Mass., 1962), pp. 57-58.

[13] For dating see *PW*, II, 527.

[14] See notes, *PW*, V, 418: the first draft is dated 1806. I am using the revised text of 1827, but there are no important changes of meaning from the earlier MSS; see app. crit., p. 106.

[15] ll. 958-967 were originally part of the Wanderer's discourse at the close of *The Ruined Cottage* (1798) which did not contain any reference to heavenly laughter; see *PW*, V, 402, 428.

[16] The probable date of this MS is 1806; see *PW*, V, 423.

[17] cf. "Optic Glass," *P.L.*, I. 288 and "Optic Tube," *P.L.*, III. 590. Since these are references to Galileo (see Hughes's notes, pp. 218, 272-273), the Wanderer is more likely referring to the heavenly laughter of Raphael's discussion of astronomy, *P.L.*, VIII. 66-84 (see below), rather than the heavenly laughter of the Nimrod passage, XII. 48-62.

[18] See app. crit., *PW*, V, 138-139.

[19] See note, *PW*, V, 428.

[20] See f.n. 17 above.

[21] See Hughes's notes, p. 364.

[22] See app. crit., *PW*, II, 271-272.

[23] *Ibid.*

[24] *LY*, II, 582.

[25] *PW*, II, 519-520; for variant texts and dating, see p. 272.

[26] *Ibid.*, pp. 518-519.

[27] 1850 text: XII. 277-284; the lines are substantially the same; the changes in diction are few and minor.

[28] Milton and Wordsworth, Poets and Prophets: A Study of Their Reactions to Political Events (London, 1950; orig. pub. 1937), pp. 180-182.

[29] The Works of Charles and Mary Lamb, ed. E. V. Lucas, VI: Letters 1796-1820 (London, 1905), 213; Letter to Thomas Manning, Feb. 15, 1801.

[30] Preface to the Edition of 1815, PW, II, 439. I believe that Wordsworth uses "enthusiastic" here in the sense in which the O. E. D. defines enthusiasm as "poetical fervour, impassioned mood or tone," using as illustration a quotation from Dryden's preface to Juvenal: "Poetry, by a kind of enthusiasm, or extraordinary emotion of soul, makes it seem to us that we behold," etc. Milton's own definition of poetry, in Of Education, as "more simple, sensuous, and passionate" than prose, gives further support to such a conclusion; see John Milton Complete Poems and Major Prose, p. 637 and Hughes's note, same page.

[31] The text remains unchanged in the 1850 version: XIV. 206-209.

[32] See Summers' excellent chapter, "The Two Great Sexes," The Muse's Method, pp. 87-111.

[33] Prel., 1805: XIII. 98-99; 1850: XIV. 101-102; these lines are part of Wordsworth's discussion of the interrelation of imagination and intellectual love.

[34] See Hughes's note, p. 374.

[35] B text (1800), PW, V, 339, 475; I have used as the basis for my discussion the text of 1814, pp. 3-6.

[36] Abbie Findlay Potts, Wordsworth's Prelude: A Study of Its Literary Form (Ithaca, 1953), p. 290, is of the opinion that Spenser is the source of Wordsworth's "spousal verse" of the "great consummation" whereby "the discerning intellect of Man" is "wedded to this

goodly universe In love and holy passion"; she is referring to the title of Spenser's Prothalamion Or A Spousal Verse. However, Milton's metaphor of the "ev'ning Star" as a "bridal Lamp," as Hughes points out in his note, p. 374, is reminiscent of Spenser's Epithalamion:

> Long though it be, at last I see it gloome,
> And the bright euening star with golden creast
> Appeare out of the East.
> Fayre childe of beauty, glorious lampe of loue . . . .
> (285-288)

The Poetical Works of Edmund Spenser, eds. J. C. Smith and E. de Selincourt (London, 1961; orig. pub. 1912). Wordsworth, in his practice of combining "favourite passages," is very likely making a triple reference by way of Milton's own allusion to both of Spenser's epithalamia in P. L., VIII. 518-520; Wordsworth's mark at l. 520 seems to support such a conclusion. Miss Potts also refers to Habington's Perfection of Love as the source of Wordsworth's "star-like virtue," n. 10, p. 209; but this seems rather strained to me. If Wordsworth thinks of his poetry having "star-like virtue," he more than likely has in mind his own metaphor for Milton as poet; cf. "Milton! . . . Thy soul was like a Star" (Poems Dedicated To National Independence and Liberty, Part I, XIV); and "that mighty orb of song, The divine Milton" (Exc., I. 249-250).

[37] Wordsworth evidently objected to what he considered Milton's "low . . . estimate of woman's condition"; Christopher Wordsworth, Memoirs of William Wordsworth (London, 1851), II, 465, reports Wordsworth's conversation on the subject (Jan. 11, 1847):

> Speaking of Milton's not allowing his daughters to learn the meaning of the Greek they read to him, or at least not exerting himself to teach it to them, he admitted that this seemed to betoken a low estimate of the condition and purposes of the female mind. 'And yet, where he could have picked up such notions,' said Mr. W., 'in a country which had seen so many women of learning and talent? But his opinion of what women ought to be, it may be presumed, is given in the unfallen Eve, as contrasted with the right condition of man before his Maker: "He for God only, she for God in Him" [P. L., IV. 299]. Now that, 'said Mr. Wordsworth, earnestly, 'is a low, a very low and a very false estimate of woman's condition.'

Hughes, p. 375, indicates that Milton is following Christian tradition on this question; he cites Catholic and Protestant exegesis on Genesis to the effect that "Eve's resemblance to God is said to be less perfect than Adam's, though both are made in his image." Summers, The Muse's Method, pp. 88, 95-96, makes some interesting remarks on

Milton's alleged anti-feminism, especially with regard to the passage of Paradise Lost cited by Wordsworth in this conversation. De Quincey gives a different impression of Wordsworth's attitude toward the qualities of feminine intellect; discussing Wordsworth as lover and husband, The Writings of Thomas De Quincey, III: Literary Reminiscences (Cambridge, 1876), 345, he remarks: "There never lived the woman whom he would not have lectured and admonished under circumstances that should have seemed to require it; nor would he have conversed with her in any mood whatever without wearing an air of mild condescension to her understanding."

[38] MY, I, 427-428.

[39] For the Platonic origins of Milton's "Doctrine of Love," see Irene Samuel, Plato and Milton (Cornell Paperbacks, Ithaca, 1965; orig. pub. 1947), pp. 149-171.

[40] See pp. 184-185 below.

[41] Letter dated Aug. 31, 1804, EY, p. 409.

[42] See pp. 162-164 above.

[43] Text virtually unchanged, all versions 1814-1820. cf. Exc. IV. 172-196 for a similar, but gentler discussion of the Solitary's excessive passion for his departed wife and children; this passage written around 1806 (see PW, V, 423) is closer in feeling to the 1814 conclusion of Laodamia.

[44] See PW I, 328; Raymond Dexter Havens, The Influence of Milton on English Poetry (New York, 1961; orig. pub. 1922), p. 607.

[45] PW, I, 324.

[46] See Chapter II, pp. 25-27 above.

[47] See app. crit., PW, I, 77.

[48] Part II, XXII.

[49] See The Influence of Milton, p. 607.

[50] Ibid., p. 616 cites P. L., VII. 360 as the source of "cloudy shrine"; PW, III, 566 cites VII. 360 and III. 378-379 as well.

[51] See notes, PW, II, 506.

[52] Note Wordsworth's stress on her motherly responsibilities. In relation to Adam, Milton stresses Eve's qualities as companion and wife. She is "mother" only in a historical sense: "The Mother of Mankind" (P. L., I. 36; V. 388; XI. 159); "Mother of human Race" (IV. 475); "our general Mother" (IV. 492); "our credulous Mother" (IX. 644); "our Mother Eve" (XII. 624); "Mother of all things living" (XI. 160).

[53] PW, II, 270; app. crit.

[54] John Milton Complete Poems and Major Prose, p. 376.

[55] See prose argument to P. L., V.

[56] The first draft of this passage was written in 1800 for The Recluse; see PW, V, 370, 425, 475; for the text of the R MS, see p. 478; there are minor changes in diction but the meaning is essentially the same.

[57] See pp. 40-41 above.

[58] Samuel T. Coleridge, Biographia Literaria, ed. J. Shawcross (London, 1949; orig. pub. 1907), II, 109.

[59] Knight, I, 273-274.

[60] 1850: XIII. 87-93; essentially the same with only minor changes in diction.

[61] Prel., p. 628 and The Influence of Milton, p. 611 cite P. L., V. 486-488 as Wordsworth's source for "endless occupation for the soul Whether discursive or intuitive."

[62] Prel., app. crit., p. 486; for dating, see pp. xx-xxi, xxiii.

[63] Ibid.

[64] See $A^3$ text, Prel., p. 490, app. crit.

[65] cf. Exc., IV. 347-350; see pp. 178-179 above.

[66] cf. Francis Christensen, "Intellectual Love: The Second Theme of The Prelude," PMLA, LXXX (March 1965), 69-75, who argues that imagination and intellectual love constitute two themes in The Prelude.

[67] PW, V, 362.

## Appendix A

## Matters Technical and Scholarly

There are five additional lines marked off by Wordsworth, three of which are accompanied by manuscript notes, that do not lend themselves to significant exploration with regard to Wordsworth's poetic theory, poetic practice, or philosophy.

The first of these shows good editorial acumen. Wordsworth notes the first command of God on the Sixth Day of Creation:

> Let th' Earth bring forth Foul[1] living in her kinde x
> (P. L., VII. 451)

and comments:

> Let the earth bring forth fowl living in her kind. This seems an oversight; fowl had been created before, nor is there any mention in the creation of this day of any other animals than insects reptiles & quadrupeds.

Wordsworth is right of course. Merritt Hughes considers "Bentley's emendation of Fowle in the early editions to Soul . . . inevitable";[2] he cites the authority of Genesis 1:20, where soul is used "as equivalent to life," and Milton's Christian Doctrine, I, vii, where Milton "emphasizes its application to 'every beast of the field wherein there is life.'"[3]

In Book XI, Wordsworth comes a cropper of his literal-mindedness once more--this time with some amusing side-effects from one of his own poems. The object of his criticism is Milton's description of Michael as he appears before Adam to prepare him for his departure from Eden:

> th' Arch-Angel soon drew nigh,
> Not in his shape Celestial, but as Man
> Clad to meet Man . . . .
> . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
> by his side
> As in a glistering *Zodiac* hung the Sword, x
> Satan's dire dread, and in his hand the Spear.
> (*P. L.*, XI. 238-248)

Wordsworth wonders:

> Will it be hypercritical to remark that as the Angel came in a human shape this could not be the identical sword of Michael given him from the armoury of God which *with huge two handed sway, felled squadrons at once* [*P. L.*, VI. 250-251]. If so we must imagine the angel gifted with a power over his sword similar to what he has over his own essence viz. of making it take what size he pleases. But this seems doing to [sic] great violence <to the > even to the imagination. In fact Milton is perpetually entangled in difficulties respecting the armour he has chosen to give his Angels. Satan when from a toad he starts up in his own shape is thus described nor wanted in his grasp what <?> *seemed* both spear & shield [IV. 989-990].
> (Italics W.'s)

Although Milton recognized that the limitations of human understanding and imagination required that he represent the supernatural by "lik'ning spiritual to corporal forms" (*P. L.*, V. 573), he did not expect his readers to apply standard units of measurement to those corporal forms. But Wordsworth, as we know, could not shake himself free from these realistic criteria in the construction of his own images. The highly imaginative boat-stealing scene of *The Prelude* went through several revisions before he eliminated the detail that he "dipp'd" his "oars into the silent Lake . . . twenty times."[4]

Michael's sword of "huge two-handed sway" features in a sonnet where Wordsworth describes the disastrous results of giving literal, physical representation to the matter of romance and legend:

Was it to disenchant, and to undo,
That we approached the Seat of Charlemaine?
To sweep from many an old romantic strain
That faith which no devotion may renew!
Why does this puny Church present to view
Her feeble columns? and that scanty chair!
This sword that one of our weak times might wear!
Objects of false pretence, or meanly true!
If from a traveller's fortune I might claim
A palpable memorial of that day,
Then would I seek the Pyrenean Breach
That ROLAND clove with huge two-handed sway,
And to the enormous labour left his name,
Where unremitting frosts the rocky crescent bleach.
(*Aix-La-Chapelle*)[5]

Where was Wordsworth's "faith" when he approached Milton's "romantic strain"? He apparently did not recognize that, in trying to determine the mechanics by which Michael's sword of "huge two-handed sway" could be adapted to the limited capacities of the human form assumed by Michael, he was doing as much damage to the romantic exploits of Michael as the French had done to those of Charlemaine and Roland by attributing to a man-sized weapon the legendary feats of the redoubtable Roland.

Following his introduction in Book XI, Michael announces the purpose of his mission:

to remove thee I am come,
And send thee from the Garden forth to till
The ground whence thou wast tak'n, fitter Soil. x
(260-262)

Wordsworth marks the circumstance of Adam's creation and poses a thought-provoking question:

> Why is it to be supposed that Adam was taken rather from the ground without paradise than than [sic] that within it?

This is not the first occasion in *Paradise Lost* where mention is made that Adam was created from the soil outside Eden. Raphael speaks of it in his story of the Creation (VII. 535-538); Adam repeats the detail in his own account of his creation (VIII. 295-306). Since Wordsworth was no doubt aware that Milton was following the account in Genesis 2:8, 15; 3:23,[6] I assume that he is not putting his question to Milton but to the original framers of the myth. It is an interesting problem on which many months, perhaps years, could be well spent in what would no doubt be a fascinating search for an answer in Biblical exegesis, both Hebrew and Christian. It does not, however, fall within the province of this study.

Wordsworth's two remaining marks concern an interest in geography and books of travel that both he and Coleridge shared with Milton. They occur in Milton's most famous catalogue of names of far-off places associated with history, legend, and romance. The occasion is the prelude to the vision of future history that Michael sets before Adam--a panoramic sweep of the entire world that tells its own story of the rise, corruption, and fall of human magnificence and glory.[7] Michael takes Adam to the summit of the highest hill in Paradise:

> His Eye might there command wherever stood x
> City of old or modern Fame, the Seat
> Of mightiest Empire, from the destin'd Walls
> Of Cambalu, seat of Cathaian Can,
> And Samarchand by Oxus, Temir's Throne,
> To Paquin of Sinaean Kings, and thence
> To Agra and Lahor of great Mogul
> Down to the golden Chersonese, or where
> The Persian in Ecbatan sat, or since
> In Hispahan, or where the Russian Ksar
> In Mosco, or the Sultan in Bizance,
> Turchestan-born; nor could his eye not ken
> Th' Empire of Negus to his utmost Port

> *Ercoco* and the less Maritime Kings
> *Mombaza*, and *Quiloa*, and *Melind*,
> And *Sofala* thought *Ophir*, to the Realm
> Of *Congo*, and *Angola* fardest South;
> Or thence from *Niger* Flood to *Atlas* Mount
> The Kingdoms of *Almansor*, *Fez* and *Sus* . . . .    x
> (*P. L.*, XI. 385-403)

The catalogue continues for another eight lines with up to three additional names per line. Wordsworth makes no comment, but we can perhaps assume that he noted Milton's skillful poetic exploitation of the euphonious qualities of these exotic names and more especially of their symbolic appropriateness to Michael's purpose. Wordsworth would, moreover, be familiar with these names from his own reading of Purchas and would know in many instances the specific associations that Milton was evoking by the mere mention of a name.[8]

Wordsworth himself makes use of three of these exotic names --"*Agra* and *Lahor* of great *Mogul*" (*P. L.*, XI. 391)[9]--to enforce, with an allusion to the storied past, his own belief that the counter-revolutionary invaders of France were doomed to inevitable defeat. This passage is a late addition to Book X of *The Prelude*:[10]

> From his throne
> The King had fallen, and that invading host--
> Presumptuous cloud, on whose black front was written
> The tender mercies of the dismal wind
> That bore it--on the plains of Liberty
> Had burst innocuous. Say in bolder words,
> They--who had come elate as eastern hunters
> Banded beneath the Great Mogul, when he
> Erewhile went forth from Agra or Lahore,
> Rajahs and Omrahs in his train, intent
> To drive their prey enclosed within a ring
> Wide as a province, but, the signal given,
> Before the point of the life-threatening spear
> Narrowing itself by moments--they, rash men,
> Had seen the anticipated quarry turned

Into avengers, from whose wrath they fled
In terror.
(1850: X. 11-27)

It is very likely no accident that the other allusion to Paradise Lost in this passage--"'the signal giv'n' (of the narrowing of the giants into pigmies)"[11]--also has its associations with India and tyranny. The "signal" is for Satan's followers to reduce their size so that they may find room at the first council in Pandemonium:

till the Signal giv'n,
Behold a wonder! they but now who seem'd
In bigness to surpass Earth's Giant Sons
Now less than smallest Dwarfs, in narrow room
Throng numberless, like that Pigmean Race
Beyond the Indian Mount . . . .
(P. L., I. 776-781)[12]

It is perhaps by the discussion of just such technical and scholarly details as are represented in the five marked lines discussed here that Wordsworth acquired, among scholarly collectors of rare editions like Charles Lamb and Samuel Rogers, his reputation as "the best knower of Milton."[13]

# Footnotes

[1] This is the spelling of the 2nd ed. of Paradise Lost; verified by the copy in the rare book collection of the New York Public Library.

[2] John Milton Complete Poems and Major Prose, ed. Merritt Y. Hughes (New York, 1957), p. 357. The Catalogue of the sale of the Rydal Mount Library lists a Bentley edition of Milton; see "Appendix III," The Correspondence of Henry Crabb Robinson with the Wordsworth Circle (1808-1866), ed. Edith J. Morley (Oxford, 1927), II, 871. Whether this edition contained the emendation cited by Hughes, I do not know; at any rate, it had not come to Wordsworth's attention up to the time that he wrote this note in Paradise Lost.

[3] Ibid., p. 356.

[4] See letter to Coleridge, Dec. or Jan. 1798-9, EL, pp. 209-210; also V MS, app. crit., Prel., p. 25.

[5] Memorials Of A Tour On The Continent, 1820, VII; see note, PW, III, 470, which cites P.L., VI. 251 as source of "huge two-handed sway."

[6] Hughes's note, p. 359 cites Genesis 2:15 only; also calls attention to the Apocryphal book of II Edras iii, 6, which says that "Adam was led into paradise, which God had planted."

[7] See Robert R. Cawley, Milton and the Literature of Travel (Princeton, 1951), pp. 9-10, 22, 24.

[8] For some of the names in this passage that are to be found in Purchas, see Hughes, p. 442; Cawley, pp. 91, 135. For Wordsworth's reading of Purchas, see n. 19, p. 96 above. For Milton's exploitation of the history, legend, and romance associated with these names, see Cawley, pp. 117, 132, 140-141.

[9] See note, Prel., p. 594.

[10] D2 text (1832); see Prel., app. crit., p. 367; "Introduction," p. xxiii.

[11] See note, Prel., p. 594.

[12] Here again, Wordsworth's own reading would have made him aware that in this instance Milton's source was Pliny. See Hughes's notes, pp. 226, 231 for the source of Milton's "Pigmean Race."

[13] See pp. 2-3 above.

# Appendix B

## Table of Wordsworth's Marks and Comments in a Copy of

Paradise Lost. / A / POEM / IN / TWELVE BOOKS. / The Author / JOHN MILTON. / The Second Edition / Revised and Augmented by the / same Author. / LONDON, / Printed by S. Simmons next door to the / Golden Lion in Aldersgate-street, 1674.

| Line in P. L. | Text | Type of Mark. | W. 's MS. Note | Inter-leaf Opp. * |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| I. 194 | That sparkling blaz'd | x | None | |
| I. 592 | All her Original brightness | * | None | |
| I. 610-613 | . . . and from Eternal Splendors flung<br>For his revolt, yet faithful how they stood,<br>Thir Glory wither'd. As when Heaven's Fire<br>Hath scath'd the Forest Oaks, or Mountain Pines | Underline | None | |
| II. 488 | As when from mountain tops the dusky clouds | x | None | |

* Indicates page of Paradise Lost volume at which interleaf is inserted: manuscript note on side of interleaf facing that page.

| Line in P. L. | Text | Type of Mark | W.'s MS. Note | Interleaf Opp. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| III. 524 | The Fiend by easy ascent, or aggravate | x | This is injudicious; a Spirit who was able to make such a voyage as Satan has just performed who "at one slight bound could high overleap all bound" could not have his access to heaven either facilitated or obstructed by the letting down or drawing up of a pair of stairs. -- | p. 76 |
| III. 548 | The goodly prospect of some foreign land | x | This part of the picture might have been improved by <the delineation> a simple introduction of some of the most interesting rural images of an extensive prospect viewed at daybreak such as Hamlets, cottages & woods, with reaches of a river &c. <peering> displaying themselves here & there thru the morning vapour. The three last verses are inimitably picturesque. It has been said of poets as their highest praise that they exhausted worlds and than imagined new, that existence saw them spurn her bounded reign &c. But how much of the most valuable part of the poet's | pp. 77-78 |

| Line in P. L. | Text | Type of Mark | W.'s MS. Note | Interleaf Opp. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | province <consists in> how much of the real excellence of Imagination consists in the capacity of exploring <existing> the world really existing & thence selecting objects beautiful or grand as the occasion may require. Who is there that does not peruse this description of so familiar an appearance with far more pleasure than the preceding account of the sea of Jasper <and> or liquid pearl, the palace gate imbellished with diamond and with gold, or the golden stairs which were occasionally let down from heaven. | |
| IV. 1014 | His mounted scale aloft: nor more; but fled | x | None | |
| V. 4 | Was Aery light, from pure digestion bred | x | None | |
| VI. 327 | All his right side; then Satan first knew pain | / | I am not sure that it has ever been observed that Milton here is guilty of an oversight. He forgets the expressions which he puts into the mouth of Sin descriptive of her own birth. "All on a sudden miserable | p. 155 |

| Line in P. L. | Text | Type of Mark | W.'s MS. Note | Interleaf Opp. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | pain surprized thee &c. (Italics W.'s) | |
| VII. 405 | Of Coral stray, or sporting with quick glance | x | None | |
| VII. 409 | In jointed Armor watch: | x | None | |
| VII. 426 | In common, rang'd in figure wedge thir way | Underline | very beautiful | Margin |
| VII. 438 | . . . the Swan with Arched neck | x | That as the male swan is infinite [sic] more majestic Milton ought rather to have said between his white wings mantling &c -- (Italics W.'s) | p. 188 |
| VII. 451 | Let th' Earth bring forth Foul living in her kinde | x | Let the earth bring forth fowl living in her kind. This seems an oversight; fowl had been created before, nor is there any mention in the creation of this day of any other animals than insects reptiles & quadrupeds. | p. 188 |

| Line in P. L. | Text | Type of Mark | W.'s MS. Note | Interleaf Opp. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| VIII. 520 | On his Hill top, to light the bridal Lamp | x | None | |
| VIII. 594 | Among the Beasts no Mate for thee was found | x | None | |
| VIII. 625 | Of membrane, joint, or limb, exclusive bars | x | None | |
| IX. 483-484 | Whose higher intellectual more I shun,<br>And strength, of courage haughty, and of limb | x<br>x | This language seems inconsistent with the character & powers ascribed by Milton to his two great personages Satan & Adam. Though Adam might be exempt from wound, a being whose hand's dispatch was outgrown even in the precincts of his bower, which were unsightly & unsmooth, could not as far as related to corporal strength be supposed a formidable antagonist to one who is gifted with power to subvert systems, the poet tells us that of whom God & his son except created thing nought valued nor *shunned.* (Italics W.'s) | p. 228 |

| Line in P. L. | Text | Type of Mark | W.'s MS. Note | Interleaf Opp. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| X. 306 | So, if great things to small may be compar'd | x | None | |
| X. 533 | Him follow'd issuing forth to th' open Field | x | Here we bid farewell to the first character, perhaps ever exhibited in Poetry. And it is not a little to be lamented that, he leaves us in a situation so <little in> degraded in comparison with the grandeur of his introduction. Milton's fondness for the Metamorphoses probably induced him to draw this picture which <I cannot exc> excellently as it [is] executed I cannot but think unworthy of his genius. The "spattering noise" &c. are images which can <not but> only excite disgust. The representation of the Fallen Angels wreathing their jaws filled with soot and cinders with hatefullest disrelish contains in it nothing that can afford pleasure. Had the poet < chosen to> determined to inflict upon them a so bestial punishment certainly one more noble more consonant to the dignity of the beings might easily | p. 267 |

| Line in P. L. | Text | Type of Mark | W.'s MS. Note | Interleaf Opp. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| X. 923 | While yet we live, scarce one short hour perhaps | x | None | |
| XI. 207 | And slow descends, with something heav'nly fraught | x | It may however be observed that Gray in making his bards vanish in a bright path instead of a murky cloud has <?> given his picture too much sameness and lost that contrast which is so striking in Milton's. Besides as his figures are described as a griesly band with bloody hands it would have been more consonant to their nature to have represented them as disappearing in <gloom > a troubled and gloomy sky. | p. 292 |
| XI. 247 | As in a glistering Zodiac hung the Sword | x | Will it be hypercritical to remark that as the Angel came in a human shape this could not be the identical sword of Michael given him from the armoury of God which with huge two handed sway, felled squadrons at once. If so we must imagine the angel gifted with a power over his sword similar to what he has over his own essence viz. of making it take what size he pleases. But this seems doing to [sic] great violence < to the > | p. 293 |

| Line in P. L. | Text | Type of Mark | W.'s MS. Note | Interleaf Opp. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | even to the imagination. In fact Milton is perpetually entangled in difficulties respecting the armour he has chosen to give his Angels. Satan when from a toad he starts up in his own snape is thus described nor wanted in his grasp what <?> *seemed* both spear & shield. -. (Italics W.'s) | |
| XI. 262 | The ground whence thou wast tak'n, fitter Soil | x | Why is it to be supposed that Adam was taken rather from the ground without paradise than than [sic] that within it? | p. 293 |
| XI. 385 | His Eye might there command wherever stood | x | None | |
| XI. 403 | The Kingdoms of *Almansor*, *Fez* and *Sus* | x | None | |
| XI. 439 | The Inwards and thir Fat, with Incense strew'd | x | This is inelegant and reminds one too strongly of a Butchers stall, it is the more to be lamented as the rest of the description is a pattern of | p. 298 |

| Line in P. L. | Text | Type of Mark | W.'s MS. Note | Interleaf Opp. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | simplicity; it is a language which seems lost, to modern tongues | |
| XI. 453 | T' whom *Michael* thus, hee also mov'd, repli'd | x | He also moved <?> in reading this the manner in which Michael is introduced ought to be remembered "he kingly from his state inclined not." The sympathy of such a being in the spectacle gives it additional interest. | p. 299 |
| XII. 59 | As mockt they storm; great laughter was in Heav'n | x | This picture is not consonant to what might be expected from superior beings spectators of such a scene; < to them? > Shakspear is far more rational & impressive "Oh! but man proud man -. -. -. - [sic] plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven as make the angels *weep*". (Italics W.'s) | p. 315 |
| XII. 66 | Authority usurpt, from God not giv'n | x | None | |

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