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Wordsworth's Dramatic Antipicturesque: Burke, Gilpin, and "Lines left upon a Seat in a Yew-tree"

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Article Abstract: Since de Selincourt's 1940 edition of *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth*, "Lines left upon a Seat in a Yew-tree" is thought to express Wordsworth's "revulsion from the intellectual arrogance and self-sufficiency of Godwinism, from which he recovered during his years at Racedown" (I 329). Parrish believes this is particularly true of the third paragraph (66), which he and others have persuasively argued Coleridge heavily influenced. In this essay, I argue that Wordsworth added the third paragraph after Coleridge had read the first fair copy and that its addition transformed the poem as originally conceived and composed, creating an implied analogy between the traveler and recluse, whose pride, poor judgment, and egoism are meant to mirror picturesque activity as Wordsworth was then coming to define it. Showing who is talking to whom and how their exchange is structured enables the reader to see that Wordsworth is criticizing both Burke's theory of the sublime and Gilpin's ideas of the picturesque, as well as working out his own theories of mind that were to evolve into the "blessed mood." I also argue that before the addition of the third paragraph Wordsworth had made key revisions to the manuscript to differentiate its two key experiences of nature, infusing one with his emerging ideas of the sublime and associating the other with the picturesque. I read the poem in detail, passage by passage, in light of these and other revisions to demonstrate the antipicturesque discourse Wordsworth pre-supposed of his reader and, equally important, to reveal how the poem evolved through its production from an inscription profiling a poet figure to a dramatic monologue critical of Gilpin's and Burke's theories of nature.

In many a walk
At Evening or by moonlight, or reclined
At midday upon beds of forest moss,
Have we to Nature and her impulses
Of our whole being made free gift,—and when
Our trance had left us, oft have we by aid
Of the impressions which it left behind
Look'd inward on ourselves, and learn'd perhaps
Something of what we are. (8-16)

Wordsworth, "There is Creation in the Eye"¹

"—Nay, Traveller! rest." So begins the narrator of "Lines left upon a Seat in a Yew-tree which stands near the Lake of Esthwaite, on a desolate part of the shore, yet commanding a beautiful prospect," Wordsworth's first poem in the *Lyrical Ballads* of 1798. The narrator teaches the traveler that nature is, quite literally, more than meets the eye, while forcing the reader to examine why this traveler needs to be so taught. Knowing who is talking to whom and how their exchange is structured enables the reader to see that Wordsworth is criticizing both Burke's theory of the sublime and Gilpin's ideas of the picturesque, as well as working out his own theories of mind that were to evolve into the "blessed mood." Since de Selincourt's 1940 edition, however, the poem is thought to express Wordsworth's "revulsion from the intellectual arrogance and self-sufficiency of Godwinism, from which he recovered during his years at Racedown" (PW 1: 329). Parrish believes this is particularly true of the third paragraph (66), which he and others have persuasively argued Coleridge heavily influenced.

In this essay, I argue that Wordsworth added the third paragraph after Coleridge had read the first fair copy and that its addition transformed the poem as originally conceived and composed, creating an implied analogy between the traveler and recluse, whose pride, poor judgment, and egoism are meant to mirror picturesque activity. I also argue that before its addition Wordsworth had made key revisions to the manuscript to differentiate its two key experiences of nature, infusing one with his emerging ideas of the sublime and associating the other with the picturesque. I will read the poem in detail, passage by passage, in light of these and other revisions to demonstrate the antipicturesque discourse Wordsworth presupposed of his reader and, equally important, to reveal how the poem evolved through its production from an inscription profiling a poet figure to a dramatic monologue critical of Gilpin's and Burke's theories of nature.

I. "Lines left upon a Seat in a Yew-tree"

I know that Charles Lamb called "Lines" an "inscription" and that Geoffrey Hartman wrote a famous essay on the subject.² My problem is not imagining a poem inscribed into or on a stone seat—even a poem longer than any of Wordsworth's other inscriptions and epitaphs. Though improbable, one could argue that its length testifies to the recluse's long, prison-like stay, assuming, of course, that he authored the text and, like the six letters of JOANNA "chiseled out" in "rude characters" ("To Joanna" 82), carved the 3,134 letters of "Lines" in the rock. One could more easily imagine the text written with a lead or slate pencil, like the inscription "Written with a Pencil upon a Stone in the Wall of the House (An Outhouse), on the Island at Grasmere" (1800), or "Written with a Slate Pencil upon a Stone, The Largest of a Heap Lying near a Deserted Quarry, upon one of

the Islands at Rydal” (1800). A text written outdoors with either a lead or slate pencil, though, would be difficult to read within a few years.

Nor is my problem imagining someone reading a text inscribed on a stone seat facing a view. Indeed, the image is doubly ironic. First, it means viewing a “country seat” that is not a country seat, a particularly popular kind of site for picturesque travelers and print collectors, as evinced by such publications as *Picturesque Views of the Principal Seats of the Nobility and Gentry, in England and Wales. By the most Eminent British Artists. With a Description of each Seat* (1786-88). Second, it requires one to turn one’s back to the landscape, as though using a Claude glass. This small, brown-tinted convex mirror, which Gilpin praised for its ability to transform nature into “the brilliant landscapes of a dream” (*Remarks 2: 225*), reflects and frames scenes to resemble old landscape paintings. Its use requires turning one’s back on nature and viewing a reflection rather than the thing itself. And therein lies the idea of picturesque theorizing as mediation, as “pre-established codes of decision” (Advertisement to the *Lyrical Ballads*, 1798) distorting perception and limiting knowledge. Reading text on this seat forces one not only to turn one’s back on the view but also requires bending over so that the gesture resembles mooning the landscape more than one would care to admit. If the traveler bends over to read the text, then in fact he neither sits nor rests but is actively prevented from resting—or, at the very least, has his resting moment postponed—for the length of time it takes to read the sixty lines. For travelers to enjoy a seat by courtesy of a man who rejected his fellow man is also a nice touch of irony.

No, the problem is not in teasing out ironies or imagining how lines could have been left, but in figuring out how much was left and by whom. Was the entire poem left on the seat or just the first seven lines? If the entire poem, was it left by the recluse or a person who knew him? Reading “Lines” as a text inscribed by the

recluse produces tonal and thematic inconsistencies between the first and second paragraphs. The recluse, speaking of himself in the third person, would in effect be saying, “Do as I say, not as I do—or did.” He comes off in paragraph 3 Prufrock-like, knowing his problems and their solutions but remaining his ineffectual, “unfruitful” (29) self.³

For me, hearing the sixty lines in the recluse's voice is not possible. Imagining the first seven lines as his inscription followed by a poet's commentary and moral may appear to resolve the abrupt shift in tone between the lyrical first and the hectoring second and moralizing third paragraphs.⁴ But the recluse is unlikely to have authored lines 1-7 because, as argued below, they recognize nature's power to quiet the mind, the restoration through tranquility that induces the “blessed mood” that Wordsworth defines in “Tintern Abbey” and pictures in “Expostulation and Reply.” The person talking about being “saved from vacancy” by “one soft impulse” (6-7) could not be the person taking “morbid pleasure” (28) from brooding alone in nature.

This process of elimination appears to leave a poet responsible for all sixty lines, at the expense of a seemingly inconsistent tonal shift. Eason notes that “the poem's length precludes inscription proper” and, evoking another “eighteenth-century literary form,” that of “the discovered manuscript,” suggests “we are to imagine the lines composed on paper and left to lie” (33). Hartman, on the other hand, is not bothered by the idea of a poet carving his long text into rock. “The setting is understood to contain the writer in the act of writing: the poet in the grip of what he feels and sees, primitively inspired to carve it in the living rock” (222). Consequently, “we are made to see the vital, if perverse, relationship of the solitary to his favorite spot, and to hear the poet's *viva voce* meditation on this: he writes the epitaph before our eyes” (222). But whether one imagines finding a manuscript *on* or an inscription *in* the seat, one is imagining oneself in the role of a traveler

reading in place, within the context of seat, spot, and prospect. One does not imagine *sharing* the space with the poet—and this I believe the poem requires. Hartman, in noting that one hears what one reads, unintentionally raises the reader’s most crucial question: do I imagine reading or hearing “Nay, Traveller! rest”? These opening words set up a dramatic conflict that unfolds most effectively when the reader imagines encountering or overhearing a narrator lecturing a traveler sitting on the seat in the yew tree. Doing so helps to illuminate Wordsworth’s engagement with—and critique of—Gilpin’s and Burke’s theories of nature.

II. “—Nay, Traveller! rest.”

—Nay, Traveller! rest. This lonely yew-tree stands
Far from all human dwelling: what if here
No sparkling rivulet spread the verdant herb (1-3)

Wordsworth initially wrote, “Here traveller rest—this lonely yew-tree stands / Far from all human dwelling what if here / No sparkling rivulet spread the verdant herb” (DC MS 11, 37v). The first “here” clearly refers to the seat and fits the self-reflexive convention of inscriptions. Wordsworth appears certainly to have conceived of his text as an inscription and may have changed “Here” to “Nay” to retain “here” in line 2, which clearly refers to the bower and not the seat itself. Or, more likely, he made the change, which is not recorded in the only extant page of Mary Hutchinson’s fair copy, after—and in response to—the third paragraph, in which the narrator is recast from storyteller to teacher. Whereas “here” directs our eye to the referent, “nay” immediately creates a confrontation or conflict of wills,

one more easily imagined between a living narrator and traveler as teacher and student than between a seat and reader.

“Here traveller rest” connotes “traveler, stop, sit awhile and rest.” “Nay, Traveller! rest” connotes “stay, traveler, what is the hurry?” The former phrase invites the traveler to sit, and the latter admonishes him for wanting to leave. In the former scenario, the narrator—or text—is already there and a man walks by. Randomness infuses the scene; is this “stranger” (21) a tinker on his way to town, or an angler from a nearby village on his way to fish the lake? Perhaps, as in the “Inscription for a seat ascending Windy Brow” (1797), he is a “rustic artisan” who has “plodded on through rain and mire . . . laden with his implements of toil” (7, 8, 10; Landon and Curtis 754). If the “stranger” needs to be stopped, then he seems unlikely to be a picturesque traveler, since this spot, providing a view such travelers seek, functions as a “station.”⁵ In the latter scenario, the traveler is already there, seated and admiring the view, which explains his presence in a desolate spot and his reason for traveling. He is that well-known and fashionable creature of the day, the picturesque traveler, seeking aesthetically interesting views in nature. Given the details of the poem’s title and because the poem’s moral depends on an analogy between just such an educated man of taste and the recluse, the narrator almost certainly finds the traveler already seated and intercedes just as he is about to rise and walk on.

It matters who hears—or needs to hear—the narrator’s moral “that true knowledge leads to love” and that pride is “littleness” (56, 48). “Stay” identifies a specific kind of traveler, which in turn raises the question of how he expresses “pride.” “Stay” intimates the effects of pride by implying that the traveler sat for the prospect but missed the bigger picture, missed what “William,” in “Expostulation and Reply,” sitting “for the length of half a day” (2) on another stone near the same lake, did not. The prospect, not the spot and its “impulses” (7),

commands the traveler's attention, and the narrator identifies those so attracted and impervious, those who briefly occupy the seat, as symbolically entering or occupying the mental state of its original occupant and like him as sitting in judgment of nature, as proud, contemptuous, and selfish—and as needing his guidance. Unlike Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*, who recognizes but has no hand in choosing his audience, the narrator seeks a very particular kind of person—and he knows exactly where to find him. His hunt is not for the picturesque, but for the picturesque traveler. Theirs is not a “chance meeting,” as inscriptions in out-of-the-way places sometimes put it, any more than this seat's having a view is by chance.⁶ Indeed, like the *Mariner*, but for different reasons, the narrator is telling a story he has told before, to others occupying that seat with a similarly preoccupied and judgmental mind, and is in effect the *viva voce* and guardian of the place.

Most of Wordsworth's usages of “Nay” are dramatic (e.g., “Nay, we are seven”). According to the *Concordance*, he used the word 71 times, 23 of them in *The Borderers*, the drama he was working on from late October 1796 to late May 1797 (Reed 329), which overlaps the period during which he was writing and revising “Lines,” February through June 1797 (Reed 192n2). Wordsworth was no doubt well practiced by this time in creating characters and conflicts in blank verse, and while intrigued with inscriptions and epitaphs—with language made physical—he was equally interested in dramatic language and situations. By early March 1798, Jordan argues, Wordsworth found himself improving in his poetic facility and “got the idea of writing a number of short poems which did not simply see and describe, but created people seeing and describing, so as to bring in the history of feelings. Such poems were not to be formal and hortatory, as the earlier ‘Lines Left upon a Seat in a Yew Tree’ had been, but direct and natural in the language of observing personae.” He cites Coleridge's comment in *Biographia Literaria* that Wordsworth “added two or three poems written in ‘his own

character' [ii.6], implying that most of those designed for *Lyrical Ballads* were in some other character" (165). "Lines" is formal and hortatory, but the poem is so because Wordsworth creates a character who is so. The narrator as teacher earnestly presents a story by which the traveler is "instructed" (56) *indirectly* and then, in the third paragraph, admonished directly. The narrator's feelings toward the recluse are often conflicted, a mixture of admiration and criticism. But, of course, "Lines" is not about its speaker and does not function like one of Browning's dramatic monologues, in which narrators reveal more about their emotional and psychological selves than they think they do. Here, the narrator reveals much about the backlash against the fashion for picturesque touring and sketching.⁷

Whatever Wordsworth's original intentions, the tone and situation of "Lines" changed with "nay," a sound—easily imagined as being accompanied by a hand gesture—used to hold a man in place to hear a story. Five months or so before Coleridge began creating a narrator who, traveling from land to land with strange powers of speech, holds his listener in place with a hypnotic, glittering eye, Wordsworth had created a narrator effecting the same with his voice, an image, albeit, more domestic than gothic. But like the Mariner's, that voice convinces most when heard as the voice of experience. Though the "tales" of Mariner and narrator differ, they express the same primary lesson. The Mariner stresses love's role in revealing the kinship of all living things: "He prayeth well who loveth well / Both man and bird and beast," and "He prayeth best who loveth best, / All things both great and small" (644-47). The narrator, speaking as authoritatively as the Mariner on the need to love, warns the traveler against feeling "contempt / For any living thing" (48-49), which is to say, against feeling pride over "man and bird and beast."

Unlike Goldsmith's traveler, who among "Alpine solitudes" sits "down a pensive hour" to contemplate man and society ("The Traveller" 31-32), the picturesque traveler does not sit to reflect, nor does he actually "rest" or spend much time in any one spot. By definition this traveler holds well-defined ideas of what constitutes worthy views and prospects. He has, according to Gilpin, come to examine "the face of a country *by the rules of picturesque beauty*" (*Observations on the River Wye* 1). Or, according to John Aikin in "Picturesque, a Fragment," he has been "taught / To judge of prospects by an artist's rules" (2-3). He is analogous to Wordsworth's poor reader who suffers "the solitary word Poetry, a word of very disputed meaning, to stand in the way" of his "gratification" (Advertisement, *Lyrical Ballads*); instead of the word "poetry," however, words like "landscape," "view," and "prospect" mediate his perception as he sits judging scenes before him. Hence, the traveler's "own pre-established codes of decision" enable him to appreciate the "distant scene" but not the intimate space of tree and seat and lapping water marked by an invisible "impulse" ("Lines" 31, 7). Wordsworth, though, nowhere explicitly expresses the idea that the traveler's perception has been distorted and restrained by fashion or convention, which makes the traveler's desire to continue his tour understandable to the modern reader unfamiliar with the then critical discourse on the picturesque. To the modern reader, the narrator's admonition against pride and contempt in the third paragraph seems harsh to the point of harassment. Coleridge's "The Nightingale," on the other hand, which immediately follows "Lines" in the London edition of the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads*, expresses the theme of predetermined judgment explicitly and will serve as a helpful foil to "Lines."

Upon hearing the first notes of the nightingale, Coleridge immediately thinks of Milton, *Il Penseroso*, line 62, describing the bird as "Most musical, most melancholy" (12-13). As in his other conversation poems, Coleridge's mind

moves quickly from object to interpretation to an awareness of the act of interpreting. He immediately hears the bird's song in terms of poetry—something natural in terms of artifice—and as quickly recognizes that he has done so and questions the verity and origin of doing so. “A melancholy bird? Oh! idle thought! / In Nature there is nothing melancholy” (14-15). To think the bird melancholy is to let another think for you; it is indeed an “idle thought!” The grounds for judging the thought “idle,” in the sense of lazy and unmoving, are an inferred syllogism: the bird is in nature; nothing in nature is melancholy; thus the bird cannot be melancholy. Coleridge locates the misconception's origin in some early perceiver's emotional state:

But some night-wandering man whose heart was pierced
With the remembrance of a grievous wrong,
Or slow distemper, or neglected love,
(And so, poor wretch! filled all things with himself,
And made all gentle sounds tell back the tale
Of his own sorrow) he, and such as he,
First named these notes a melancholy strain. (16-22)

And so the legend of a melancholy bird is born and in verse perpetuated.

Sounding much like Wordsworth in “Tables Turned,” Coleridge advises the poet to put his notebook down and go outside to “let Nature be your teacher” (16), and, as in “Lines,” to allow nature's shapes and sounds to calm his spirit to receive nature's impulses:

And many a poet echoes the conceit;
Poet who hath been building up the rhyme
When he had better far have stretched his limbs

Beside a brook in mossy forest-dell,
By sun or moon-light, to the influxes
Of shapes and sounds and shifting elements
Surrendering his whole spirit, of his song
And of his fame forgetful! (23-30)⁸

The poet would have been better served had he ignored his craft, ambition, and the tradition of imitation, and instead had surrendered his whole spirit to the one life around him. Had he forgotten—or unlearned—all he knew of nightingales, he would have been able to share in nature’s joy unmediated, and his own song would have been as original and true as nature itself. Others also hear the nightingale’s song as sorrowful; the sensitive and fashionable “youths and maidens most poetical, / Who lose the deepening twilights of the spring / In ball-rooms and hot theatres” (35-37), know Ovid’s “Philomela” rather than the bird itself. Poets and poetical youths are all “too learned far to feel a vulgar joy,” as Aikin says of the picturesque traveler and man of taste in general (9). To paraphrase Blake: As the ear is formed, so it hears. They have much to *unlearn* if they are to hear the real nightingale’s song. Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Dorothy, who surrendered their spirits to the impulses or “influxes / Of shapes and sounds and shifting elements,” “have learnt / A different lore” (40-41). They now hear the nightingale not as observers from the outside but as initiates into nature’s beauty, who know at first hand that “Sweet is the lore which nature brings” (TT 25).

Just as Coleridge’s poet and poetical youth hear the nightingale in terms of poetic convention and thus not as it is or for themselves, Wordsworth’s traveler sees prospects in terms of art, the “rules” of which transform them into landscapes and encourage comparison and judgment. Coleridge makes the connection between education and perception explicit and shows another way to be educated and

another source of knowledge than books and art. Wordsworth does the same, implicitly, by dramatizing the difference between the narrator's receptiveness (2-7) and the recluse's "mournful joy" (39). The third paragraph distills the lessons explicitly. Wordsworth does not explain *why* the traveler must be instructed, relying instead on an implied analogy between picturesque traveler and recluse and the readers' familiarity with the antipicturesque discourse, like that expressed in Aikin's poem, that assumes and belittles the idea of judging scenes aesthetically and resents the idea of having to be "taught" to see and enjoy nature. Wordsworth's core analogy is grounded in this image: traveler and recluse sit in judgment, of nature and people respectively, with minds too restless and proud to receive nature's impulses—and, for both, travel, as metaphor for experience and maturation, has stopped.

III. "By one soft impulse saved from vacancy"

what if here

No sparkling rivulet spread the verdant herb;
 What if these barren boughs the bee not loves;
 Yet, if the wind breathe soft, the curling waves,
 That break against the shore, shall lull thy mind
 By one soft impulse saved from vacancy. (2-7)

Wordsworth made no changes to these crucial lines when he first published them, other than adding punctuation missing in the manuscript.⁹ But he deleted from the fair copy, with an "X" over their second words, the eighth and two-thirds of the ninth line: "Nor wants there here in summers hottest hour / The roar of distant torrents" (DC MS 11, 37v). As originally written, the passage evokes the

beautiful and sublime and dismisses the picturesque. Noon is the least picturesque time of day according to Gilpin, who favored morning mist or evening tints (*Lakes* 1.170). A peaceful stream juxtaposed against roaring torrents echoes Hugh Blair's comment that "a stream which glides along gently within its banks is a beautiful object, but when it precipitates itself with the impetuosity and noise of a torrent, it immediately becomes a sublime one" ("Sublimity in Objects" 27). Burke notes a similar shift regarding the "beautiful in sounds," that it "will not bear that loudness and strength of sounds, which may be used to raise other passions; nor notes, which are shrill or harsh, or deep; it agrees best with such as are clear, even, smooth, and weak." These soft, pulsing sounds evoke "that sinking, that melting, that languor, which is the characteristical effect of the beautiful as it regards every sense" (112). For Burke, "excessive loudness alone is sufficient to overpower the soul, to suspend its action, and to fill it with terror. The noise of vast cataracts, raging storms, thunder, or artillery, awakes a great and awful sensation in the mind" (75). To this list, Blair added "torrent," because it too is an "exertion of great power and force" (27). By deleting the references to noon and torrents, Wordsworth emphasizes the non-pictorial but hypnotic lapping of water in the light breeze, thereby sustaining a more coherent idea of the beautiful. Nevertheless, the scene, as shall become apparent below, is infused with Wordsworth's new sense of the sublime, with the torrent's power and force transferred to the "one soft impulse" filling the otherwise vacant mind, an image that brings to mind Burke's comment that "we are not so powerfully affected with any one impulse, unless it be one of a prodigious force indeed" (129).

Deleting the thirteen words restructures the first seven lines as a verse paragraph (a format made explicit *after*—but already implied in—the fair copy) and, most important, foregrounds "vacancy," the culminating word of the new unit. The remaining one-third of the original line 9—"Who he was"—forms the shortest

line in the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads*.¹⁰ Wordsworth uses it to start a new paragraph, which begins with a long rule that visually leads to these three words, each accented and together forming an auditory and typographic structure that stops the narrator's speech, sustains a long pause, and redirects his topic, as though the narrator suddenly realizes that the traveler is losing interest or does not understand what he has just said. Or, first things being first, he realizes that before he can speak of "vacancy" and receiving nature's "impulse," he needs to reveal that pride—in all its forms—prevents them. Although thematically disruptive, the shifts in tone and direction dramatically draw our attention to the very idea from which the narrator suddenly turns, keeping it in the background while he sets out to answer his own question.

Wordsworth's use of "vacancy" here does not refer, "as elsewhere in Wordsworth," to "mental vacancy" (Mason 112), or to "complete sensory deprivation" (Sheats 157). It refers to the tranquility induced by nature's sedating sounds, which vacates and prepares the mind to receive nature's impulse. Wordsworth uses it also, however, to criticize the picturesque experience as superficial. The traveler's inability to stay seated signals he is one of the "vacant minds" Gilpin specifically identifies as benefiting from "*searching after effects*." He hopes his theories would "engage [such] vacant minds" who "travel without any end at all, amusing themselves without being able to give a reason why they are amused" (*Essays* 2: 41). Wordsworth appears to have had this self-deprecating passage in mind. The narrator in effect tells the traveler that his "mind" is saved from vacancy not by theories on how to transform nature into pictures, but by nature's impulses and hence by its own receptiveness to the vitality of nature.¹¹

The narrator knows the traveler "had no . . . interest / Unborrowed from the eye" ("Tintern Abbey" 82-84). He holds the traveler in place initially by seeming to agree with him, noting that the spot has no stream, no play of light on water, no

blue serpentine line dividing flora, or colorful canopy at noon. Unlike ruins of an abbey seen from within or a giant oak branching directly overhead into a rich baroque tapestry of colors and lines, this intimate space appears barren, or at least it does to an eye in ready and constant “*pursuit* of his object.” According to Gilpin, “the expectation of new scenes continually opening, and arising to his view” is the “first source of amusement to the picturesque traveler” (*Essays* 2: 47). This seemingly barren spot has much to offer, however, if the traveler were to rest with a “heart,” as opposed to an eye, “that watches and receives.” This is “William” speaking to “Matthew” in “Tables Turned” (31-32), symbolically inviting him to sit quietly on another old stone, in an equally nondescript spot, to enter a state of mind that “Matthew,” in “Expostulation and Reply,” perceives as empty or vacant. And, ironically, “William” is “vacant,” in the adjectival sense of being “open or accessible *to* some influence” (OED), which is how Dr. Johnson used the word when describing youth’s inherent desire for experience: he is “vacant to every object, and sensible of every impulse,” and his “heart is vacant to every fresh form of delight.”¹² In a mystical sense, a vacant mind signals the self-emptying necessary to receive the grace of God.

That the traveler is saved from a vacant place or, as an empty-headed person, is saved by nature’s impulse is an ironic reading. More important is the literal reading: the mind is vacant *except for* the one impulse, implying that the mind contains only—and *is filled entirely by*—a single impulse. In this sense, a mind vacant of all but one impulse alludes to the state of mind that Burke defines as “astonishment” and Gilpin as “high delight.” Burke defines “astonishment” as “that state of the soul, in which all its motions are suspended, with some degree of horror,” and as “the effect of the sublime in its highest degree.” In this state, “the mind is so entirely filled with its [one] object that it cannot entertain any other, nor, by consequence, reason on that object which employs it.” The “great power of the

sublime” is not produced by our “reasonings” but “anticipates” them and “hurries us on by an irresistible force” (53). Blake put the idea of the sublime this way: “One thought fills immensity” (Erdman 36).¹³

This intense experience of nature—the “chief pleasure” of picturesque travel—Gilpin calls “high delight.” He states that

after the pursuit we are gratified with the *attainment* of the object. Our amusement, on this head, arises from the employment of the mind in examining the beautiful scenes we have found. Sometimes we examine [beautiful scenes] under the idea of a *whole*: we admire the composition, the colouring, and the light, in one *comprehensive view*. When we are fortunate enough to fall in with scenes of this kind, we are highly delighted.
(*Essays 2*: 48-49)

He clarifies further the distinction between examining compositional details of beautiful scenes, which he calls “*scientific* employment,” and the pleasure derived from examining scenes in their entirety at once, which is not really “examining” at all, but is rather an immediate apprehending of the whole. Using printing metaphors, such as “strike” and “impression,” Gilpin describes the perceiver as receiving the image quickly and forcefully, as though it were a cast struck into soft metal or an engraving pressed into paper.

But it is not from this *scientific* employment, that we derive our chief pleasure. We are most delighted, when some grand scene, tho perhaps of incorrect composition, rising before the eye, strikes us beyond the power of thought—when the *vox faucibus haeret* [voice sticks in the throat] and every mental operation is suspended. In this pause of intellect; this *deliquium* of the soul, an enthusiastic sensation of pleasure overspreads it, previous to any examination by the rules of art. The general idea of the scene makes an impression, before any appeal is made to the judgment. We rather *feel*, than *survey* it.
(*Essays 2*: 50)

Before judgment or reason—or rules of art—can respond, the image impresses the mind directly; this pre-analytical, unmediated moment is signified by an intensity of feeling, by the melting of soul or overspreading of “enthusiastic sensation.” Seemingly dematerialized, the moment is also wrought with a sense of physicality. The printing metaphors, reinforced by the words “feel” and “impression,” bring into play an idea of contact or connection, because when an engraved plate presses into paper, the paper is pulled into the incised lines forming the image, so that quite literally the support receiving the image simultaneously projects something of itself into the image. The pleasure of this contact, or marriage, is short-lived, as paper and plate separate, as intellectual cognition awakens. But while it lasts, one “feels” connected, as though occupying an intimate space rather than being in an open space looking out at an image, the critical and formal experience of nature suggested by “survey.” In “high delight,” nature is experienced bodily, within hand’s reach, as it were, whereas normally nature is out there, a “distant scene” (“Lines” 31). Wordsworth differentiates between intimate and critical experiences of nature in “Lines”—and more overtly in “Expostulation and Reply” and “Tintern Abbey”—using images associated with ear and eye, with the former sense suggesting the interplay of conversation and the latter sense suggesting an awareness of the surface of distant things.

“Vacancy” as meant in “Lines” is clearly expressed in the fragment from 1800 that serves as the epigraph to this essay, where it is described as a “trance” in which we give “our whole being” to “Nature and her impulses” and receive “impressions” (11-14), and in “Long had I stood and looked into the west,” another fragment from 1800, in which nature assists in suspending the “stirring mind” as a prerequisite for its receiving nature’s “impulses”:

I stretch[ed] myself beneath the shade
And soon the stirring and inquisitive mind
Was laid asleep: the godlike senses gave
Short impulses of life that seemed to tell
Of our existence (8-12; Butler and Green 325)

Of course, Wordsworth expresses the idea of the quiet, receptive mind more effectively in other works in *Lyrical Ballads* itself, recognizing in Gilpin's "deliquium of the soul" the dissolution of boundaries between mind and nature, and recognizing also that the sense of One Life has nothing to do with "terror." The clearest expressions of the vacant mind in *Lyrical Ballads* are the meditative state "William" experiences in "Expostulation and Reply" and what Wordsworth, using the rhetoric of "astonishment" and "high delight," describes in "Tintern Abbey" as the "blessed mood" (38). In both poems, the quiet mind is manifest in a physically still character, in contrast to an overtly active, restless character. The image of the "thoughtless youth," for example, "more like a man / Flying from something that he dreads, than one / Who sought the thing he loved" (TA 71-73), captures Wordsworth's idea of the sublime as evolving from an intense terror- and self-centered, conventionally Burkean experience, to an awareness of the other deepened by a sense of union and community that Burke associated with the beautiful.¹⁴ Wordsworth does more than shift the emphasis from self-preservation to self-perpetuation, the instincts Burke associates with the sublime and beautiful. He contrasts his youthful self's frantic energy and intensity of feeling with the "tranquil restoration" of mind experienced by his mature self, a state in which "we are laid asleep / In body" and "with an eye made quiet by the power / Of harmony and the deep power of joy, / We see into the life of things" (TA 31, 46-50).

In his noiseless, quiet mind, “William” also senses the veil lift and the vital presence of all things. He hears “the mighty sum / Of things for ever speaking” (ER 25-26) and refuses to believe “That nothing of itself will come, / But we must still be seeking” (ER 27-28). The comment alludes to Gilpin, who states that picturesque travelers “seek [picturesque beauty] among all the ingredients of nature” and that “the general intention of picturesque travel” is “*searching after effects*” (*Essays* 2: 42, 41). Indeed, read in light of the fashion for picturesque touring, the very gesture of sitting on an “old grey stone” (probably smooth rather than rough) before a non-pictorial scene “for the length of half a day” parodies Gilpin and the picturesque tourist. Instead of pursuing new views from station to station, “William” sits listening and “conversing” (30). He *hears* nature, experiencing it as an *intimate* interplay between self and world, rather than *viewing* and mentally transforming scenes through aesthetic schemata into landscapes. Wordsworth also deliberately shifts the emphasis from eye to ear, from the sense associated with landscape to the sense associated with conversation, in a key passage in “Tintern Abbey”:

For I have learned
 To look on nature, not as in the hour
 Of thoughtless youth, but hearing oftentimes
 The still, sad music of humanity.
 Not harsh nor grating, though of ample power
 To chasten and subdue (89-94)

Almost a year earlier than these works, Wordsworth was already challenging the Burkean idea of the sublime as an experience associated with terror and self-preservation. He inverts Burke’s hierarchy to value feelings of connection—that “one soft impulse” signaling what it anticipates, the “presence” that “rolls through

all things” (TA 95, 103)—over the intense feelings evoked by resisting a “great power and force,” an act that now appears immature, ensuring a disconnected, isolated self analogous to the recluse. Wordsworth retains the idea of a mind filled by its one object and suspended of its other operations, but implies that the experience, rather than being dependent on chance encounters among overwhelming or “grand scenes,” can be self-induced and brought forth slowly. Moreover, as will be shown in section VI, Wordsworth revised his manuscript so the state of meditative “vacancy” clearly belongs to the narrator and differs from the recluse’s viewing of the “distant scene.” The former experience of nature resembles Gilpin’s “feeling,” or “high delight,” though intimating an experience of self and nature more immanent and profound than Gilpin implies, and the latter resembles Gilpin’s “surveying.” In “Lines,” Wordsworth had not only begun challenging Burke’s idea of the sublime, but he also had begun to contrast characters to dramatize different ways to experience nature, a technique perfected in the dual consciousness of “Tintern Abbey.”

By using the word “vacancy,” then, the narrator is not insulting the picturesque traveler, but simultaneously inviting and testing him. He invites him to stay, rest, be patient, and allow the music of the place to induce that tranquil and receptive state in which the vitality of all nature, of all life, reveals itself. And he is testing to see whether the traveler understands this concept or if, like the recluse, whose presence here was due to pride and impatience with his fellow man, he is mentally too restless to quietly feel nature’s impulse. The abrupt and long pause after “vacancy” suggests that the narrator has found his student.

IV. “He was one who own’d / No common soul”

Who he was
That piled these stones, and with the mossy sod
First covered o’er, and taught this aged tree,
Now wild, to bend its arms in circling shade,
I well remember.—He was one who own’d
No common soul. In youth, by genius nurs’d,
And big with lofty views, he to the world
Went forth pure in his heart, against the taint
Of dissolute tongues, ’gainst jealousy, and hate,
And scorn, against all enemies prepared,
All but neglect: and so, his spirit damped
At once, with rash disdain he turned away,
And with the food of pride sustained his soul
In solitude. (8-21)

Wordsworth initially writes himself into a corner, stating in the fair copy that the villagers do not know who made the seat and that the narrator only infers what he knows: “The village knows not yet I guess he owned / No common soul—In youth by Genius fired” (DC MS 11, 37v, 11-12).¹⁵ He deleted the reference to villagers and guessing to create an authoritative narrator, who states, “I well remember.” The exceptionally sensitive, gifted young man the narrator remembers appears loosely based on Wordsworth’s younger self, the one he refers to in “Tintern Abbey” as a “thoughtless youth.”¹⁶ The recluse, however, does not outgrow his self-centeredness, make something of himself, or learn through his passion for nature how to love his fellow man. Wordsworth treats his younger and present selves honestly in “Tintern Abbey,” discovering when, how, and why he

changed from one into the other and, most significantly, the meaning of that change. Wordsworth has a different objective in “Lines,” but the contrast between recluse and narrator also demonstrates the evolution from immaturity to maturity. Wordsworth seems at cross-purposes, though, of the kind more easily seen in “Alastor; or the Spirit of Solitude,” where Shelley’s sympathetic depiction of the poet figure undercuts his overt intention to criticize the youth’s rejection of society and social responsibility. Or perhaps, as I will examine, the revisions and moralizing third paragraph made a sympathetic profile ambiguous—or, more likely, exacerbated its original ambiguities.

In “Lines,” the narrator describes the pre-reclusive youth as though he were a poet, using such words as “genius,” “pure,” and “lofty.” Yet, clearly, these admirable attributes were not enough to ensure success or joy.¹⁷ But, then, how “pure” is the heart that seeks attention and broods alone for a lifetime when not immediately recognized by others? Noting that Wordsworth himself was described as demonstrating “proud humility” does not make the youth’s profile less conflicted.¹⁸ His heart is “pure” in the sense of unmixed, without doubt, exhibiting the self-confidence of the inexperienced. Like Blake’s Thel, the youth is an innocent woefully in need of tempering his “purity” with the very experience he flees. Like Thel, he expected the world to be a harsh place; unlike her, he believed he had prepared himself “’gainst the taint / Of dissolute tongues, ’gainst jealousy, and hate, / And scorn.” Silence, however, surprised him. He expected to be treated “at once” as a “favoured being” (16, 1800) and interpreted indifference as a deliberate snub: “and so, his spirit damped / At once, with rash disdain he turned away, / And with the food of pride sustained his soul / In solitude.”

But proud of what? He is “impetuous, reckless, [and] acting without due consideration or regard for consequences”; in short, “rash” as defined by the OED. Moreover, in a perversion of “spontaneous wisdom” (TT 19), he is immediately

discouraged: his inner fire, or “spirit,” is “at once” put out or depressed, and he turns away offended, treating the world with “scorn, contempt,” and as “unworthy of notice or beneath [his] dignity”; in short, with “disdain” (OED).¹⁹ “Rash disdain” anticipates the last paragraph’s admonition of the recluse for expressing “contempt” (48) and failing to recognize what constitutes “true dignity” (57). This admonishment, however, seems overly harsh to those who think the recluse “was rebuffed by the world’s neglect” (Sheats 157), or that “the entire middle verse paragraph is a sympathetic one of a man of talent and deep feeling rejected by an uncaring society” (Curtis 487), or who see the youth as “a man of exceptional gifts who had met neglect in the world,” and “had withdrawn, turned inward, and sustained himself on pride and sentimental self-pity” (Parrish 66). Consequently, to such readers, the last paragraph seems unjust and a pronounced shift in tone and theme, probably the result of Coleridge’s influence (see sec. IX of this essay). No manuscript for lines 14-29 is extant, so it is impossible to say if “rash disdain” was what Wordsworth wrote originally or if it was a revision of something less harsh and made after Coleridge’s suggestions. In either event, the last paragraph’s admonition refers, at least in part, to the *manner* in which the youth turned away from society and into a recluse, and not for living the life of a solitary.²⁰

The neglect the youth met was no doubt the indifference most people encounter by others busy getting on with their lives. Offended by such indifference, he judged the world as though it were a failed servant. The 1800 version makes the idea of master-servant relationship explicit: “The world, for so it thought, / Owed him no service” (20-21). Sustaining his solitude out of pride results from and sustains that judgment, which, ironically, makes him a poor judge and his seat from which he “would gaze / On the more distant scene” (30-31) a symbol of pride and judgment. Wordsworth profiles the immature mind, burning intensely hot or cold but unmixed. The world that failed to embrace him *at first*

sight is the world of experience, of the grownup, where merit needs to be earned and manifested, not assumed or granted by birth. What hubris, pride, and ego this youth “pure in his heart” displays! And how ironic that he “neglects” permanently a world whose supposed neglect he could likely have reversed had he “learn[ed] to view / All forms of [being?] / With hope,” or “patient hope,” as the narrator initially counseled in the manuscript (Butler and Green 481).

The youth's impetuous response, poor judgment, and purity that is really inexperience bring to mind the “poor judge” in Burke's “Essay on Taste,” which introduced the second edition of *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*:

a good judgment does not necessarily arise from a quick sensibility of pleasure; it frequently happens that a very poor judge, merely by force of a greater complexional sensibility, is more affected by a very poor piece, than the best judge by the most perfect, for every thing new, extraordinary, grand, or passionate, is well calculated to affect such a person, and that the faults do not affect him, his pleasure is more pure and unmixed, and as it is merely a pleasure of the imagination, it is much higher than any which is derived from a rectitude of the judgment. (24)

By “higher” Burke presumably means more intense, but not in the positive way Gilpin implies with “high delight,” since he contrasts this emotional pleasure derived “merely” from imagination with the pleasure of being intellectually correct. For Burke's man of taste, the dialectic between “feeling” and “surveying” nature (or works of art) favors the latter. In a rhetorical question, Burke explicitly compares the “poor judge” to youth: “In the morning of our days, when the senses are unworn and tender, when the whole man is awake in every part, and the gloss of novelty fresh upon all the objects that surround us, how lively at that time are our sensations, but how false and inaccurate the judgments we form of things?”

(24).²¹ Wordsworth uses the same paradigm of maturation, but, as with the concepts of astonishment and sublime, he redefines the process. For Burke, imagination without judgment defines the immature mind, and imagination subordinated to reason defines the mature. The man of taste is judgmental, and his experience of nature or works of art is continually interrupted by an awareness of faults; part of the pleasure, in a sexually perverse sort of way, is the constant interruption of pleasure. Wordsworth's mature, thoughtful poet is not judgmental or analytical; he is receptive, the requisite for the most elevated state of mind, which is an emptying of thought to receive thought, a quieting that awakens, a seclusion that is socially infused, a state in which the imagination is intellectually grounded and the intellect emotionally informed.

Wordsworth knows well the world of experience, "the heavy and the weary weight / Of all this unintelligible world," knows "the dreary intercourse of daily life," with its "evil tongues," "rash judgments," "sneers of selfish men," and "greetings where no kindness is" (TA 40-41, 128-31). And he knows that using nature only as hermitage (or picture gallery) is nature misused. Indeed, he tells Dorothy that nature "can so inform / The mind that is within us, so impress / With quietness and beauty, and so feed / With lofty thoughts" (TA 126-29) that she will be protected from all that the youth feared. Throughout the *Prelude* he demonstrates that true love of nature (and our memories of its beauty) enable us to live good lives in society:

If, in my youth, I have been pure in heart,
If, mingling with the world, I am content
With my own modest pleasures, and have liv'd,
With God and Nature communing, remov'd
From little enmities and low desires,
The gift is Yours. (2. 443-48)

Had the youth viewed life in “patient hope,” the “dizzy raptures,” “aching joys,” and “wild ecstasies” of youth would have “matured / Into a sober pleasure” (TA 139-40), and his memories would have become a deep source of joy and comfort as he mingled with the world.

In 1798, the youth is “by genius nurs’d” and goes forth “big with lofty views” and “pure in his heart”; in 1800, he is by “science nursed,” and, “led by nature into a wild scene / Of lofty hopes,” he “went forth a favoured being, knowing no desire / Which genius did not hallow.” Mason defines “science” as knowledge (113), and certainly it is that, and perhaps connotes what Wordsworth wrote in the 1800 Preface: “The Man of science seeks truth as a remote and unknown benefactor; he cherishes and loves it in his solitude: the Poet, singing a song in which all human beings join with him, rejoices in the presence of truth as our visible friend and hourly companion” (738).²² The reference to science, though, changes the profile more than it might first appear, because it also connotes the picturesque. As a mode of entertainment, the picturesque requires learning to see, recall, recognize, and compose pictures in nature. As an amusement predicated on education and memory, it requires acting on nature rather than being acted upon, and emphasizes mental activities rather than mental receptiveness— “seeking” rather than “conversing” or “wise passiveness.” The mind’s recreation lies literally in “re-creation,” in acting on the views found by judging and correcting their compositions according to principles of landscape derived (mostly) from print reproductions of seventeenth-century Italianate landscape painting, e.g., Claude Lorraine, Salvator Rosa, and Gaspar Duget. As noted, Gilpin refers to these mental operations as “scientific employment” in the second of his *Three Essays on Picturesque Beauty*, published in 1792, after his numerous *Observations* had been published. The reviewer for the *Annual Register* praises Gilpin and states that others would too had they read the *Essays* before the *Observations*, had “these

essays, which chiefly contain a summary of scientific principles . . . preceded the publication of his tours, which present a practical illustration of these principles by example.” Before discussing the essays, though, the reviewer acknowledges the negative opinion “the public” has of Gilpin and validates Aikin’s quip in “Picturesque, a Fragment,” that “New follies spring; and now we must be taught / To judge of prospects by an artist’s rules, / And PICTURESQUE’s the word” (1-3), by neatly summarizing the arguments for and against picturesque theory, revealing how current and heated the discussion about the picturesque had become.²³

though the scientific painter, and all whose taste has been cultivated on the true principles of the art, have long known how to appreciate the value of Mr. Gilpin’s works, and have long acknowledged their consummate merit; it must be confessed that the author appeals with great disadvantage to the ordinary opinion of the public, who are contented to admire without discrimination general objects of beauty, as affording equal sources of amusement—while the eye well practised in the art, is pleased only with things as they are properly disposed for the pencil, and examines the face of nature only by the rules of painting, the ordinary reader, accustomed to derive exquisite relish from a general survey of things, was offended to be told, that his views were misdirected and his sensations of nature’s beauty false and ill founded, that he must not judge of beauty till he is grown scientific, and has formed his acquired taste, by artificial rules dictated by his instructor. (170-71).²⁴

The “ordinary reader” constituting the “public” is Burke’s “poor judge” and perhaps Gilpin’s “vacant mind.” For the narrator to describe the youth as “by science nursed,” then, suggests that he was not an ordinary reader of nature, that he indeed “owned no common soul,” and that having “grown scientific” he required a particular kind of survey rather than a “*general* survey of things.” The youth’s education strengthens the grounds for comparing recluse and picturesque traveler.

Further evidence to suggest that Wordsworth had Gilpin in mind by the word “science” is to be found in other poems in the *Lyrical Ballads*. The fashion to grow “scientific,” to engage in “*scientific* employment,” also lies behind “Enough of Science and of Art” in “Tables Turned.” Such mental employment is the “meddling intellect” that “Mis-shapes the beauteous forms of things,” is how “We murder to dissect” (29, 26-28). Despite the disclaimer in the Advertisement to the *Lyrical Ballads* that “Tables Turned” and “Expostulation and Reply” “arose out of conversation with a friend who was somewhat unreasonably attached to modern books of moral philosophy,” by which Wordsworth means Godwin’s *Political Justice*, both poems, as I have shown, target Gilpin. Indeed, the very idea that “one impulse” from nature—indicating an experience of nature critically different in kind from picturesque viewing—“may teach you more of man; / Of moral evil and of good, / Than all the sages can” (TT 21-24), is simultaneously a critique of Gilpin and Godwin. Even the lines, “One morning thus, by Esthwaite lake, / When life was sweet, I knew not why” (ER 13-14), are antipicturesque. As noted, Gilpin believes his theories provide a rationale for being outdoors (*Essays* 2:41). Not to know or need to know how or “why [he is] amused” is to reject this fashionable rationale. In Book XI of the 1805 *Prelude*, Wordsworth admits explicitly that during the mid-1790s both Gilpin and Godwin had adversely affected his perception:

Yea, even the visible universe was scann'd
 With something of a kindred spirit, fell
 Beneath the domination of a taste
 Less elevated, which did in my mind
 With its more noble influence interfere,
 Its animation, and its deeper sway.

(11.115-20)²⁵

The ultimate act signaling that Wordsworth had lost his way was his preferring “to sit in judgment than to feel” (11.137), that is, preferring to “scan” or “survey” nature in a specifically rational spirit akin to the one that caused “an emptiness” to fall “on the historian’s page, and even on that / Of poets” (11.90-93).²⁶

In “Lines,” Wordsworth has already begun to explore the idea of the “picturesque eye” (Gilpin, *Essays* 1: 24) as an act of imposition and contrary of receptiveness. Through the narrator’s story and by contrasting narrator and traveler, Wordsworth dramatizes the “ordinary reader’s” criticism of picturesque tourists as proud and disdainful. Moreover, he begins to imply that the seemingly passive image of sitting before nature can mask a mind busily judging scenes according to rational principles.

V. “tracing here / An emblem of his own unfruitful life”

—Stranger! these gloomy boughs
Had charms for him; and here he loved to sit,
His only visitants a straggling sheep,
The stone-chat, or the glancing sand-piper;
And on these barren rocks, with juniper,
And heath, and thistle, thinly sprinkled o’er,
Fixing his downward eye, he many an hour
A morbid pleasure nourished, tracing here
An emblem of his own unfruitful life (21-29)

The recluse piled stones and sod to form a seat around the tree’s trunk and “taught . . . its dark arms to form a circling bower” (11, 1800). And “here,” in this sad, initially unwilling embrace of “gloomy boughs . . . he loved to sit.” The narrator identifies the seat as the recluse’s “only monument” (43); Parrish

identifies it as the “emblem of his own unfruitful life” (66); Sheats identifies the “desolate spot” itself as the emblem (157). The spot, however, is neither vacant nor unfruitful; its appearing so, as the narrator implies, says more about the perceiver than the thing perceived. It may seem like an objective correlative of his life, but only ironically, as containing great unrealized potential—and only if “tracing” means “noticing” or “observing.” Wordsworth, however, does not clearly define “tracing,” “emblem,” or “here.” At first, “tracing” may seem to refer to writing left “here,” on the stone seat, as it does in “Lines written with a Slate-Pencil upon a Stone,” from *Lyrical Ballads* of 1800: “The block on which these lines are traced, perhaps, / Was once selected as the corner-stone / Of that intended Pile” (8-10). But the gesture the narrator describes is tracing with the eye and not the hand, and the eye, focused “downward,” appears to be drawing or “tracing here . . . on these barren rocks, with juniper, / And heath, and thistle, thinly sprinkled o’er.”²⁷ If the recluse were sitting on *these* rocks, then one would expect the preposition to be “from” rather than “on,” or for the second “here” to be “there,” referring to the ground in front of him—to which the narrator presumably points. In either event, the second “here” refers not to the stones forming the seat upon which he sits, but to the foreground upon which he casts his eye. He is not shown inscribing either this poem or its first seven lines—neither of which, as noted, the recluse could have written—nor is he shown passively observing the spot or seat upon which he sits. He is busily making out images in the blots and blurs of the rocks and vegetation beneath and in front of his feet. Rather than finding seat or bower an emblem, the recluse, while seated, traces within the bower an emblem to while away—or “nourish”—“many an hour.” In doing so, he becomes an emblem of the self-centered man, “the man, whose eye / Is ever on himself” (51-52).²⁸

In “To Joanna,” Wordsworth uses the word “tracing” to mean “scanning” or “surveying” the details of a scene. The speaker stopped in front of a tall rock and

stood “Tracing the lofty barrier with my eye / From base to summit,” noting “in shrub and tree, in stone and flower / That intermixture of delicious hues, / Along so vast a surface” (44-48). Unlike the recluse, however, who stays in scanning mode, the speaker “found . . . such delight” in these details that “all at once, / In one impression, by connecting force / Of their own beauty,” were “imaged in the heart” (48-50). The speaker pictures a moment culminating in—rather than beginning as—“high delight.” He moves from “surveying” details to “feeling” their “connecting force” as they come to form the image in its entirety, “all at once, / In one impression.” He moves, in other words, from dissecting to viewing the whole receptively. The scene, like an engraving—or like “the powers / Which of themselves our minds impress” (ER 21-22)—imprints itself directly on the perceiver’s heart, at once, but not at first. Unlike Gilpin, for whom “high delight” comes suddenly and by chance, followed by a return to thought, Wordsworth depicts an experience in which mental activity gradually yields an epiphany.

The recluse’s “tracing” is closer in spirit and effect to that implied in a fragment written in the *Michael* manuscript, where in a “lonely place” a man traces virtual forms among rocks:

There is a shapeless crowd of unhewn stones
That lie together, some in heaps and some
In lines that seem to keep themselves alive
In the last dotage of a dying form—
At least so seems to a man that stands
In such a lonely place. (1-6; Butler and Green 329)

The eye’s power to make out forms in visual confusion is expressed clearer still in Book VIII of *The Prelude*, where a “traveller” with a torch enters a cave and “sees, or thinks / He sees” (711, 716-17) one set of forms only to see another set a moment later:

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
But let him pause a while, and look again
And 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, recognis'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,
A mitred Bishop and the thronèd King—
A Spectacle to which there is no end. (8.719-23, 728-41)

In 1850, this “senseless mass” quickly meets “eyes that perceive through minds that can inspire” (589), pointing to the creativity of the perceiver. In 1805, it is the act of seeing that is itself inherently playful and creative, an expression of the mind's innate giving and receiving, as it is explicitly defined in the *Two-Part Prelude*, 2.295-310, and “The Pedlar,” 39-57.²⁹ In these passages, Wordsworth pictures the act of discerning images in nature's blots and blurs as though he were tracing the outlines of a landscape suggested by ink blots, a method invented and published in 1759 and 1785 by the drawing master and landscape painter,

Alexander Cozens, or, like Thomas Gainsborough, finding the landscape among twigs and moss assembled to stimulate the imagination in composing views.³⁰ With “downward eye” fixed on the uneven ground, the recluse traces an image—perhaps a gloomy, vacant landscape—representing a barren life. These images or emblems appear to be the “visionary views” (41) to which he returns after viewing the “distant scene.” In a sense, the recluse’s tracing symbolizes a creative play of mind, or perception as simultaneous projection and reception—of inscribing and being inscribed—while remaining busily stuck at the level of “surveying,” despite the intimacy of the setting. Indeed, his activities contrast explicitly with the narrator’s receptiveness within the same bower and anticipates those of Coleridge’s “poor wretch” in “Nightingale,” who “filled all things with himself, / And made all gentle sounds tell back the tale / Of his own sorrow” (19-21). In both these cases, projection dominates reception.

VI. “When nature had subdued him to herself”

And lifting up his head, he then would gaze
On the more distant scene; how lovely ‘tis
Thou seest, and he would gaze till it became
Far lovelier, and his heart could not sustain
The beauty still more beauteous. Nor, that time,
Would he forget those beings, to whose minds,
Warm from the labours of benevolence,
The world, and man himself, appeared a scene
Of kindred loveliness: then he would sigh
With mournful joy, to think that others felt
What he must never feel (30-40)

The narrator, behaving like an “ordinary reader” of nature, points to the “distant scene” as self-evidently lovely, giving no instructions for viewing or details of the composition, no “what ifs” to redirect the mind. The recluse moves from tracing pictures on the ground to gazing upon this real landscape “till it became / Far lovelier, and his heart could not sustain / The beauty still more beautiful.”³¹ He moves from the abstract and ideal to the real, at which “time” he recalls “those beings” who see beauty in both “the world, *and man himself*,” painfully reminding himself of his own inability to do the latter and triggering a “sigh” of “mournful joy.” “That time” incorporates these interwoven actions of gazing, swelling heart, recalling, and sighing. In the manuscript, however, Wordsworth qualifies “that time” with the phrase “At the return of thought” (DC MS 11, 28v 34). As noted, the phrase implies a mind “in which all its motions are suspended” and “so entirely filled with its [one] object that it cannot entertain any other, nor, by consequence, reason on that object which employs it,” for the “great power of the sublime . . . anticipates our reasonings, and hurries us on by an irresistible force.” In this context, the recluse’s return to thought after his heart was swept away signals that he had experienced the sublime or “high delight,” an idea supported by his sad memories coming *afterwards*, with the return of reason and voice, whose coming unstuck in the throat is expressed here as a “sigh” over the loss of ever feeling connected to his fellow man. In the manuscript, then, the receptive state of mind described in lines 5-7 and the recluse’s gazing on the distant prospect are similar kinds of sublime experiences, implying that both initially belonged to the recluse. In both experiences, the mind is filled with one object—impulse or view—before reason returns. By deleting “the return of thought,” Wordsworth differentiates them and makes the recluse’s experience of the distant scene appear emotionally intense but psychologically superficial compared to the experience of the nondescript spot itself, which now appears to

belong to the narrator. By conflating the recluse's recollections and self-pity with gazing, Wordsworth gives him a mind that is busily surveying rather than quietly receiving.

The person speaking of "vacancy," then, is certainly the narrator and not the recluse recording his experience of the spot. By assigning the poem's two key experiences of nature, both initially associated with the sublime, to different characters, Wordsworth implies that they differ in kind. In "Lines," these two types of experience, one resembling Gilpin's "feeling" and the other his "surveying," are kept separate and distinct. In "Tintern Abbey," recollection of the latter activity induces the former as evidence of Wordsworth's growth. His memories of the view (and of himself taking in the view) a few miles above the abbey, therapeutically recalled in "lonely rooms," brought forth "sensations sweet" and helped to lift the "fretful stir" (53). More importantly, they induced "that serene and blessed mood / In which the affections gently lead us on" (41-42)—feelings as the "irresistible force" unfolding *gently*, not hurriedly—until his "breath" and "motion" are "almost suspended" (45-47). From "forms of beauty" (24) to seeing "into the life of things," Wordsworth moves from virtual surveying to epiphany. This reverses the progression of "Lines," which begins with the idea of a meditative state and then presents a busy, unquiet mind whose painful recollections elicit a sound of resignation. Why "others felt / What he *must* never feel" is not explained, but the lines create an image of a vanquished spirit. Indeed, in 1800, Wordsworth qualifies "that time" as "when nature had subdued him to herself" (37), perhaps to imply that contemplating the view becalmed the recluse's own "fretful stir," but by keeping his melancholy memories as part of that experience, Wordsworth continues to deny the recluse the "blessed mood." Overwhelmed like the "thoughtless youth," the recluse experiences nature intensely but not lovingly or as a means to knowing himself or to loving his fellow man. His nature—the

“distant scene” and the “lonely yew-tree . . . far from all human dwelling”—distracts rather than illuminates. It subdues in the sense of subjugates.

Wordsworth's first recorded use of the word “subdue” is in “Tintern Abbey” in the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads*, when, as noted, he traces his growth to having “learned” to hear the “still, sad music of humanity” and to feel its power to “chasten and subdue” (89, 94). This deeper, humbling understanding of himself, man, and nature compensates for his loss of “aching joys” and “dizzy raptures,” of the intensity of his earlier experiences of nature. He has *learned* to listen, to move from busy eye to receptive, quiet mind—has, in effect, learned the narrator's lesson that “true knowledge leads to love” (56). The recluse, on the other hand, is subdued by nature, perhaps also by ego, but not by humanity, a difference first intimated by a revision to the manuscript. “Those beings, to whose minds, / Warm from the labours of benevolence, / The world, and man himself, appeared a scene / Of kindred loveliness” were initially described as “Those kindred beings to whose favoured minds / . . .” (DC MS 11, 28v). Wordsworth's revision differentiates the recluse from the people he recalls, reemphasizing that he is “no common soul,” as well as emphasizing that “benevolence,” rather than being “favoured,” was the reason they but not he can see the world's loveliness. The kinship is not between people; rather, the landscape is as beautiful to the recluse as the world and “man himself” are to those who work benevolently on behalf of their fellow man. No manuscript is extant for lines 14-29, and so readers do not know whether Wordsworth originally referred to the youth as a “favoured being” as well, but it seems unlikely, since he does not do so in 1798. Perhaps, then, if not appropriate for benevolent beings, this phrase, which returns in 1800 to describe the recluse (he “went forth a favoured being, knowing no desire / Which genius did not hallow”) suggests “privilege,” making it, like “science” and “purity,” ambiguous, more the recluse's idea of himself or from his point of view than the narrator's (or

Wordsworth's) objective evaluation. "Visionary" can probably be added to this list.

VII. "On visionary views would fancy feed"

and so, lost man!
On visionary views would fancy feed,
Till his eye streamed with tears. In this deep vale
He died, this seat his only monument. (40-43)

The recluse's "pleasure" is "morbid," and his "joy" is "mournful." His "fancy" feeds on "visionary views." The addition of paragraph 3, which critiques the recluse as proud and contemptuous, altered what appear to have been tropes from graveyard poetry meant to reinforce the image of the recluse as "a man of exceptional gifts who had met neglect in the world" (Parrish 66), a man different from the traveler. Now, instead of appearing contemplative, he appears emotionally restless and depressed, as a man whose talents and play of mind do not bring real joy, and whose passion for landscape is not the same as loving nature, nor as important as learning to love. "Visionary views" suggests that he turned away from the real scene, that he probably returned to the comfort of his downward eye tracing emblems in the bower's mossy and rocky ground. Indeed, the feeding metaphor sets up this disturbing analogy, linking emblems, the tracing of which "nourished . . . morbid pleasure," and "visionary views," on which he feeds his fancy. As discussed below, the third paragraph will add "holy forms of young imagination," which keep the heart pure, to this pair.

"Visionary views," in contrast to the real, are here associated with self-centeredness, isolation, and morbid pleasure. They belong *only* to the visionary and

are not shared. This contrast between privately held ideal images and publicly shared real landscapes echoes the debate over the drawing styles of Gilpin and Cozens, in which compositions, whether of real or imaginary places, are executed in such a sketchy manner that details are obscured and “few can understand” the end product. Craig, as noted, referred to this execution style as a “disease of the pencil.” He wrote *An Essay on the Study of Nature in Drawing Landscape* “to open the mind of the dilettante artist to a perception of the true principles of the art, which the prevailing tide of fashion has nearly overwhelmed” (5-6). Wordsworth faults Gilpin’s theories for distorting nature, Craig faults the practice. For Craig, because the technique focuses on “general, and not individual nature” (7), it fails to realize art’s very purpose. Consequently,

we find nothing but difficulty and error arise from attempting, at first, what is called a *bold and free manner*. In the first stages of this practice Nature is in some degree attended to; but this is soon laid aside, and the manner rapidly degenerates into that, which I have before described, of representing things by signs to which they have intrinsically no resemblance. For, as the artist aims not at particular imitation, he sketches merely the forms of things, and fills up the interior with a twirl, a flourish, or a zig-zag of his pencil, to which he associates the ideas of the particulars they are supposed to represent. This association becomes, by habit, so strong, that the artist, forgetting others are not informed of the compact he has made with himself to adopt this short-hand kind of representation, frequently produces drawings that few can understand. . . . Such are “those irregular dashes of the pencil, which,” as Mr. Gilpin happily expresses it, in his eulogium on this manner of drawing, “if they are not one thing, may be easily conceived to be another!” [“Gilpin’s Lakes, Vol. I. page 104”] (19-21)

Works executed in an arbitrary sign system require an initiated audience and thus appear self-indulgent. Wordsworth’s criticism in the Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads* of poetic diction follows a similar logic. His implied criticism in “Lines” of the

traveler as knowing less of nature than he thinks also echoes Craig's of the dilettante, who requires little "knowledge of the subject" (19).

The picturesque traveler also traffics in "visionary views," in that he re-visions real scenes, recasting them according to "rules of art." These are virtual or ideal landscapes, arranged in the mind or on paper, where if something delineated is not one thing, it can be made into something else. If Wordsworth intends "visionary" to be positive, signifying the creative eye, then he is again writing at cross-purposes, since its context implies something unreal and, most telling, unshared. Indeed, the latter fact reinforces the core analogy between the traveler, who is presumably alone, and the recluse: neither intends to share the view. Sitting alone gazing on the distant scene portrays both traveler and recluse as self-centered and socially disconnected.³² While the popular image of Gilpin as Dr. Syntax, on his nag of a horse, Grizzle, suggests a sorry, solitary traveler in search of the picturesque, Gilpin himself nearly always depicted pairs of hearty travelers in his drawings (illus. 1, 2), which presumably reflect picturesque travel as practiced. Wordsworth shares his touring experiences with one or more companions, as does Coleridge. The narrator, as teacher-poet, shares his wisdom—and goes out of his way to do so.

VIII. "whose heart the holy forms / Of young imagination have kept pure"

If thou be one whose heart the holy forms
Of young imagination have kept pure,
Stranger! henceforth be warned; and know, that pride,
Howe'er disguised in its own majesty,
Is littleness; that he, who feels contempt
For any living thing, hath faculties

Which he has never used; that thought with him
Is in its infancy. The man, whose eye
Is ever on himself, doth look on one,
The least of nature's works, one who might move
The wise man to that scorn which wisdom holds
Unlawful, ever. (44-55)

The reader can establish the traveler's identity, but his age is not apparent, though the third paragraph offers clues. The narrator refers to him as "Stranger" (21, 46), possibly as "lost man" (40), and, in the MS, as "friend" (DC MS 11, 29r). The narrator also refers to his "young imagination," which raises the question of its being in the past or present. The idea that "holy forms / Of young imagination" may "have kept" the heart pure appears to anticipate the idea in "Tintern Abbey" of "unremembered acts / Of kindness and love" having influenced the "best portions of a good man's life" (35-36, 34). But whether or not one is meant to infer childhood is unclear, and it is possible that "young imagination" is presently at work in the sense that the traveler, like the recluse when he "to the world / Went forth," is a young man. Indeed, the phrase connotes youth, which in turn helps to explain the narrator's authoritative tone and purpose. He means to admonish the traveler while there is still time to do so, as though he were the pre-reclusive poetic youth. Words such as "young," "littleness," "infancy," and "least" reinforce the contrast between the narrator as the wise voice of experience and the traveler as his immature student.

The narrator turns to his student and raises a disturbing hypothetical: have "the holy forms / Of young imagination" kept your heart "pure"? How is the traveler supposed to answer? No, I am a sinner? The narrator probably means "if pure and you want to stay so, then shun pride and never emulate the recluse." If pure of heart but filled with false aesthetic ideas, then the traveler has not yet fallen

into the recluse's state and can still be saved from—and for—vacancy. He remains the picturesque traveler the narrator took him to be, and the recluse sitting in his seat of judgment busily brooding remains an emblem of picturesque imagination as distorted vision. In short, “if pure, then you can learn from my admonishment.” But if not? Adding to the ambiguity are tone, situation, and echoes from the youth's profile, all suggesting another reading of the unstated but assumed causality between “pure” and “be warned”: if you are pure of heart, *then* you need to “be warned.” Recall that the youth “to the world / Went forth, pure in his heart.” Recall also Burke's comments on the poor judge: his “pleasure is more pure and unmixed, and as it is merely a pleasure of the imagination, it is much higher than any which is derived from a rectitude of the judgment.” Burke uses the word “pure” ironically, to mean unalloyed or unmingled with experience; the word also suggests “clean,” from the Latin “*purus*.” In the context of “Lines,” the pure heart—of traveler and youth—is analogous to the clean hands of the inexperienced or immature, as distinct from “those beings” engaged in the “labours of benevolence.”³³ The immature heart is marked by intense, undiluted feelings, as evinced by the actions of the “thoughtless youth,” the youth's abrupt and total rejection of society, and the recluse's swelling heart. Such intensity effects a false “majesty,” which in turn masks and sustains pride and “rash disdain.” Rather than appearing as the contrary or “corrective” to the recluse's “intellectual pride” (Roe 232), the “holy forms” of the young traveler's “imagination” appear analogous to the “lofty views” of the youth, the “visionary views” of the recluse's “fancy,” and the “dizzy raptures” and “aching joys” of the “thoughtless youth.” These are all to the “blessed mood” what unmitigated infatuation is to profound love, a pure intensity masking its own immaturity.

As noted, the recluse tracing an emblem of his life in the rocky infertile ground before him represents the perfect emblem of the “unfruitful,” self-centered

man, the “man whose eye is ever on himself.” The picturesque eye, even with a Claude glass, is not literally on itself, but it is equally self-centered, the narrator implies, when using nature only as a refuge or raw material for pictures. Neither use expresses the social qualities associated with beauty—or the sublime as Wordsworth is coming to redefine it. Reading the recluse’s gesture as an emblem of self-centeredness sounds less like Wordsworth than Coleridge, who was quick to read objects or actions as emblems (“Meet emblems they of Innocence and Love!” [“Eolian Harp” 5]). These lines, along with 44-45, were probably influenced or possibly written by Coleridge (Parrish 67-68); they are not in Wordsworth’s drafts for the third paragraph and may have been added to the final version as late as summer of 1798 (J. Wordsworth 206n1). Recognizing Coleridge’s hand in the final paragraph will enable the reader to see how Wordsworth transformed the poem from inscription to dramatic monologue and possibly why he allowed so many ironies and ambiguities to remain in the text.

IX. “learn thou to view”

O, be wiser thou!
 Instructed that true knowledge leads to love,
 True dignity abides with him alone
 Who, in the silent hour of inward thought,
 Can still suspect, and still revere himself,
 In lowliness of heart. (55-60)

The “silent hour of inward thought” returns the traveler to the idea of the meditative mind intimated in the first paragraph and perversely mirrored by the recluse’s stretching into “many an hour” his “morbid pleasure” in tracing emblems

and visionary views. Despite the peaceful spot, the recluse was restless, brought there by an unhealthy alliance of love of nature and “rash disdain” for his fellow man, and kept there by pride and continued contempt. Having judged the view beautiful but the world unworthy, the recluse represents false knowledge and false dignity, and, according to the narrator, teaches us through his mistakes that “true knowledge leads to love” and “true dignity” lies in suspecting while revering oneself. The moral may appear “excessively direct” (Keith 18), or inappropriately harsh for the recluse’s offenses (Jacobus 37), yet its lessons are neither clear nor clearly tied to the story. De Selincourt, for example, thinks the “warning that man should ‘still suspect and still revere himself’ implies renunciation of the Godwinian view that man’s vices are due to society rather than to the innate imperfection of human nature” (PW 1: 329). But “suspect” doesn’t just mean “to imagine something evil, wrong, or undesirable” (OED); it also means “to imagine or fancy (something) to be possible or likely” (OED). It can be compounded with, rather than contrasted to, “revere,” with both grounded in humility. Reverence, along with admiration and respect, is an “effect” that Burke associates with the sublime, ranking it just below that of “astonishment,” which “is the effect of the sublime in its highest degree” (53). To revere the self, then, implies recognizing its sublimity, which is reason enough to suspect great things from one’s self. The narrator seems more likely to be grounding true dignity in deeply respecting the power of the self, as the “youth, by genius nurs’d,” certainly did, without being proud or judgmental. In short, the narrator advocates forging a kind of “proud humility.”

What the narrator means by “true knowledge” is also unclear. Knowledge of what? Challenged throughout the poem is the traveler’s *knowledge of nature*, which Wordsworth implies is and will remain superficial when proudly grounded in the pre-established codes of picturesque viewing and not humbly “in the hour of inward thought.” It is his knowledge of nature, not of man, society, or life that is

gauged through contrast and comparison with the narrator and recluse. He does not know, has not experienced, nature's impulse or restorative power to quiet the mind; he has removed himself from his fellow man to sit in judgment of distant scenes, an act mirroring those eliciting the recluse's morbid pleasure and mournful joy. Before Wordsworth noted that "where [man] has no pleasure he has no knowledge" (Preface 737), he dramatized the idea in the story of the recluse. And before he articulated the premise that love of nature leads to the love of mankind, he was exploring the idea that nature experienced exclusively as an aesthetic pleasure or an intense emotional escape expresses a false knowledge of what nature is and does. Wordsworth forces us to ask whether the recluse's love of nature, passionate as it is, is really love, and if not, why not. Replacing the initial question of "Who he was" and motivating Wordsworth's revisions and addition of the third paragraph is a new question: "Can an unloving man truly love or know nature?" The narrator clearly thinks not and tells the story of a man who thinks his lonely, vacant life resulted from his being misunderstood, when in fact the reader sees that it resulted from his misunderstanding his fellow man. The reader also comes to realize, like the narrator, that a man blind to the truth of his own life, to the effects of pride and contempt, must also misunderstand the very thing he professes to love.

Coleridge's influence on the third paragraph has been well established. Parrish goes so far as to imply that Coleridge is coauthor and that Wordsworth left it unaltered because of that, despite "revising freely through the first forty-odd lines . . . for every edition from 1800 to 1836" (68). Jonathan Wordsworth, Parrish, and Jacobus demonstrate that Coleridge was anti-Godwinian at this time and that the words "Imagination" and "Contempt" seem distinctly his.³⁴ Coleridge would have read and discussed the poem, along with "Ruined Cottage," *Osorio*, and *The Borderers*, with Wordsworth in Racedown during his visit in June 1797

(Reed 198). He would have read the poem almost certainly in Mary Hutchinson's fair copy, transcribed by June 4, 1797 (Reed 192n2), when she departed Racedown and shortly before he arrived. Coleridge's metaphorical hand in paragraph 3 and Mary's literal hand in transcribing the version of the poem apparently thought complete at that time strongly imply that Coleridge had read a shorter poem, one Wordsworth had drafted and had transcribed in fair copy between late February and the beginning of June.

The physical evidence supports the hypothesis that revisions to the first two paragraphs along with the addition of the third paragraph transformed "Lines" from a one-part inscription of approximately forty-two lines that answered its own question of "Who he was" to a three-paragraph dramatic monologue of sixty lines. (See the appendix for the stages of production.) Wordsworth composed "Lines" in a bound notebook, known as the Racedown Notebook (DC MS 11), which was "in use over an extended period; the pages were not used in order" (Butler and Green xxii). The notebook "consists of a single gathering containing 35 leaves, three of which have a large corner torn off, and 15 stubs" (Landon and Curtis 275). The leaves of laid paper measure 17.8 x 11 cm. Only four leaves are extant that contain work on "Lines." Wordsworth also used MS 2, an older, larger notebook while at Racedown, which is 22.9 x 20.3 cm. and consists of 71 leaves, 31 stubs, and four missing leaves (Landon and Curtis 19). Drafts for "Lines" not in the Racedown Notebook or on missing stubs but inferred as probably having once existed (see appendix) could conceivably have been written on leaves cut from MS 2, most of which are not identified.³⁵

The four extant leaves, 28v, 29r, 17v, and 37v, can be sequenced to suggest the poem's probable evolution.³⁶ The first three are in Wordsworth's hand and the last, which contains fourteen lines in fair copy that correspond to lines 1-13, is in Mary Hutchinson's. Following 37v are stubs "of four leaves [8 pages: 38r-v, 39r-v,

40r-v, 41r-v] which could well have contained more of the work” (Reed 192n2). Wordsworth’s hand is clearly in two styles; on 28v, he has written out in neat parallel lines and a legible hand fourteen lines corresponding to lines 30-42, followed by a drawn line across the page; under the line, written in a rushed hand, are three lines, 30, 47, and 48. Leaves 29r and 17v are quick drafts, written in the same rushed hand as the three lines at the bottom of 28r, the last two of which are apparently overflow from 29r. Leaf 29r starts with five lines that include drafts of lines 56, 57, 59, and 60, followed by another eight lines in which he sketches out ideas for his moral, including three variant lines using the word “contempt.” Leaf 17v has ten lines with many cross-outs and some repetitions from 29r; it contains drafts for lines 46-51 and 55-57.³⁷

The line drawn across 28r under line 42 “suggests the possibility that Wordsworth thought of the poem as complete with the end of the description of the man” (Butler and Green 479n). From 28r, one can also infer a draft of a poem that consisted of lines 1-42 transcribed over three pages, approximately fourteen lines per page; from 37v, one can infer a fair copy of this draft, in one paragraph over three pages, approximately fourteen lines per page. At the bottom of stub 38r is “An” (Butler and Green 481n), which corresponds to line 26 of “Lines” (“And heath, and thistle . . .”), or line 29 (“An emblem . . .”). The former would probably have been the 13th line on the page and the latter the 16th; either configuration would provide enough room for the 42-line poem, and the latter configuration suggests that 38v would have contained lines 30 to 42, which matches Wordsworth’s draft on 28r. Stub 39r contains fragments of letters belonging to “The Three Graves” (Parrish 94n; Butler and Green 481n), which supports the hypothesis that Mary’s fair copy consisted of lines 1-42 over three pages and did not continue onto a fourth page (39r)—or at least not a sequential fourth page or a fourth page in this particular Notebook.³⁸

Leaf 37v has an X through the second words of its lines 8 and 9, retains “Here” in place of “Nay” in the first line, retains “grassy” instead of “mossy” in line 9, and retains the variant line 12, “The village knows not yet I guess he owned.” These latter revisions suggest the likelihood of a subsequent fair copy, presumably the one with the third stanza (or most of it) and copied by Dorothy for the printer.³⁹ The one revision made to Mary’s fair copy focused attention on “vacancy,” suggesting that the line “At the return of thought” from page 3 of the draft (28v, line 35) was also deleted at this time from the fair copy and that Wordsworth had begun to differentiate the two experiences of nature, assigning one to the narrator and keeping the other for the recluse, to reflect his evolving ideas of the sublime. These revisions would have transformed the narrator into a foil for the recluse, but not into a teacher, or by themselves create the analogy between recluse and traveler. Coleridge appears to have seen Mary’s untitled fair copy with these two key revisions and suggested the third paragraph for the purpose of teaching an explicit moral, the addition of which created the implied analogy.

The lines sketched out on leaves 29r and 17v, presumably in response to Coleridge’s comments, represent a third and distinct stage in the production. The sequence of the drafts appears to be 17v, 29r/28v-bottom, and 17v. Wordsworth starts on 17v with a line one-third from the top, in the middle of the page, and then wraps to the left margin:

learn thou to view

All forms of [?bein[g]]⁴⁰

With hope

He wrote and deleted these lines before writing in the same space line 50 (“which he had never used, that thought in him”), which suggests that he started drafting paragraph 3 on 17v with a note-to-self for the moral’s key idea, went to 29r to flesh out those ideas, and returned to 17v. That key idea, addressed to a professional viewer, is to learn to see differently, to perceive life in a positive, hopeful light. As messages go, it is not as visionary as Blake’s “As a man is So he Sees. As the Eye is formed such are its Powers,” or “Arise and drink your bliss, for every thing that lives is holy!” (Erdman 702, 51). But it is getting there. Returning to 17v, Wordsworth continues with educational commands, transforming the narrator from storyteller into a teacher who insists the traveler “be wiser,” though, interestingly, he crossed this phrase out and replaced it with other imperatives, first with “learn” and then “Taugh[t]” and then “Instruc[t].” He catalogues the things the traveler needs to learn, sometimes finishing the thought, sometimes not: “that Pride,” “that thought,” and “that true knowledge,” continuing on 29r with “that virtue trust or thought,” “that true knowledge,” “that happiness,” “that he who feels contempt.” Some words/concepts on 29r that do not make the cut: “evil” (2x), “depth of thought,” “trust,” “virtue,” “happiness,” “views,” “patient” (2x), “hope”; words that do: “contempt” (3x), “pride,” “knowledge,” “true,” “love”; words in paragraph 3 not in the drafts: “imagination,” “young,” “pure,” “warned,” “holy forms,” “silent hour,” “inward.”

On 29r, the narrator addresses the traveler with “Believe me friend,” a phrase indicating that the dramatic voice was taking over inscription. Indeed, the drama inherent in an older man admonishing a younger man is fully realized in the third paragraph and may have prompted changing the opening from “Here” to “Nay” to emphasize the initial exchange as a conflict of wills and to picture the narrator as holding the traveler in thrall. Together, these changes transformed “Lines” from an inscription profiling sympathetically the person who built a seat in

a yew tree, addressed to the likeliest (and most conventional) audience, a traveler, to a dramatic monologue critiquing picturesque theory and Burkean ideas of the sublime, as well as challenging the picturesque traveler's knowledge and the recluse's love of nature.

X. Conclusion

Ignoring the purpose of the seat, the significance of the view, and the meaning of the traveler and narrator, critics have ignored the poem's antipicturesque images and analogies, focusing instead on Wordsworth's rejection of Godwin, even though its supposed anti-Godwinian notes are primarily in the third paragraph that Coleridge seriously influenced. Wordsworth composed "Lines" shortly after and possibly while revising his drama *The Borderers* and shortly before his dramatic ballads. Reading "Lines" within the modern genre it anticipates, the dramatic monologue, helps to reveal Wordsworth's changing dialogue with Gilpin and Burke and to track his emerging introspective mind. Had "Lines" ended at line 42, with the recluse moved to "tears" by the scene's beauty and returning to the comfort of "visionary views," then it could indeed be read as an inscription concerned primarily with answering its own question of "Who he was / That piled these stones." Wordsworth's revisions and moralizing third paragraph altered the tone, themes, and structure of "Lines," making the poem work against the act of reading and for hearing and seeing gestures acted out. By differentiating a receptive state from the viewing of a landscape and transferring the former experience to the narrator, Wordsworth denied the recluse the sublime as he was coming to understand it, the mind vacant save "one soft impulse" signaling the vitality of nature and inducing a sense of One Life. The third

paragraph, with its overt lessons for the traveler, made it possible to read traveler and recluse as analogous figures and helped to transform the narrator from the recluse's foil to the traveler's teacher and the poem from inscription to dramatic monologue.

Recognizing that the first paragraph initially expressed the recluse's experience of the place before being given to the narrator enables the reader to deduce the question that motivated the first revisions: "Can an unloving man truly love or understand nature?" The answer-lesson is a Coleridgean-sounding syllogism: true knowledge of nature leads to love; the recluse does not love; hence, the recluse's knowledge of nature is flawed. It may appear that by making the recluse a misanthropic lover of nature Wordsworth intended to challenge the myth of artistic temperament. Indeed, the absence of either/or logic ensures a psychological complexity seemingly more honest to modern readers, for whom artists need not be humanized by art or saved by nature. And yet, while Wordsworth appears genuinely to have had mixed feelings about the recluse (understandably so if he modeled him on his own talented, sensitive, "thoughtless youth"), this more complex profile seems unintentional, inadvertently born of revisions and additions while retaining key words from the youth's initial profile, words such as "pure," "favoured," and "visionary." These result in unintentional ambiguities and tensions between the story and moral and an overall confusion of purpose that have puzzled critics, many of whom think the poem is not "wholly successful" because the speaker "has not earned the right to his hectoring rhetorical gestures" (Keath 16, 19). Recognizing the narrator as teacher exposing problems with the picturesque may not eliminate the ambiguities but it does reveal a work more coherent than it first seems and suggests the possibility that Wordsworth retained the ambiguities to tease out thought, to challenge preconceived notions about pride, love, nature, and touring. In short, to perform the role of teacher.

To Wordsworth, the eye too busy seeking pictorial effects is the antithesis of the “eye made quiet by the power / Of harmony and the deep power of joy” (TA 47-48), and of the “mind by one soft impulse saved from vacancy.” The antipicturesque lessons in “Lines” echo throughout *Lyrical Ballads*, from the “light of things” and “wise passiveness” of “Expostulation and Reply,” to “we murder to dissect” and “let Nature be your teacher” of “Tables Turned,” to the “thoughtless youth” and “blessed mood” of “Tintern Abbey.” Wordsworth is already warning us in “Lines” against the “tyranny” of the eye, how easily it dominates other senses, how it shapes and reshapes our world with or without our will (*Prelude* 11.180). What “king” and “priest” are to Blake, “the bodily eye” is to Wordsworth, always in play, “in every stage of life / The most despotic of our senses” (*Prelude* 11.173-74). Wordsworth’s favored theme, the growth of his own mind and powers, so brilliantly explored in “Tintern Abbey,” “Intimations Ode,” and *The Prelude*, is here less assuredly expressed. But the ideal journey from immature intensity to mature receptiveness and generosity of soul—to a perception balanced in its receiving and giving—is intimated, albeit in reverse, in the contrast between hearing/feeling nature’s impulse and self-centeredly viewing real and imaginary prospects.

“Be wiser thou,” now that you have been “instructed.” The narrator’s holding the traveler in a desolate spot with a view and describing two different ways of experiencing nature dramatizes Wordsworth’s critique of the picturesque. The difference between Wordsworth and Gilpin, however, is more than the poet’s being passively receptive to nature and the traveler’s actively imposing aesthetic schemata, for both require special training. The traveler learned from the narrator, just as Coleridge, Dorothy, and Wordsworth in the “Nightingale” “learnt / A different lore,” and just as the mature, philosophic poet “*learned* to look on nature, not as in the hour of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes the still, sad

music”—not of ego, but—“of humanity.” One learns to listen, to meditate, to unlearn, to move from Nature to Man, from self- to socially-centered views. The narrator’s story and exhortation figure into the reeducation of traveler and reader. They form the first step to letting “Nature be your teacher,” a statement that only a student having learned his lesson well could articulate. It is in this sense of learning to see nature by unlearning preconceived notions about nature and self that the traveler anticipates and is analogous to Wordsworth’s imagined reader of *Lyrical Ballads* and the narrator anticipates and is analogous to Wordsworth in the Advertisement. This brief introductory text expresses concisely and forcefully Wordsworth’s anxiety about his readers approaching his poems through inappropriate aesthetic categories. The poems are to the reader what nature is to the traveler, and that may be Wordsworth’s most revealing analogy.

XI. Appendix

Speculation on the production sequence for “Lines left upon a seat in a Yew-tree”

Lines manuscript possible manuscript page

I. Draft 1: in Wordsworth’s hand, lines 1-42, over three pages, between late February and late May 1797.

- i. 1-13 missing possibly in MS 2
- ii. 14-29 missing possibly in MS 2
- iii. 30-42 28v

II. Fair Copy 1: in Mary Hutchinson’s hand, lines 1-42, over three pages, by 4 June 1797.

- i. 1-13 37v
- ii. 14-29 missing on 38r (as evinced by letters on stub corresponding to text)
- iii. 30-42 missing probably on 38v

Fair Copy 1, containing first set of revisions to pages 1 (emphasis on “vacancy”) and 3 (deletion of “return to thought”), read by Coleridge at Racedown after 4 June 1797.

IIIa. Draft 2. Wordsworth composes lines 42 and 43 to end paragraph 2 (“In this deep vale / He died, this seat his only monument”).

- i. 42-43 missing possibly added to 3rd page of MH’s fair copy, but certainly part of subsequent Fair Copy 2, along with paragraph 3

IIIb. Wordsworth returns to Racedown Notebook and drafts moral for paragraph 3 about pride, contempt, and humility that reflect discussions with Coleridge.

- i. unused lines 17v
- ii. 56, 57, 58, 60 29r
- iii. 46-50, 51, 55-57 17v

IIIc. Coleridge and/or Wordsworth add lines 44-45 (holy forms of imagination), and 51-55, 58 (eye on self versus inward thought), possibly as late as summer of 1798 (J. Wordsworth 206n).

- i. 44-45 missing probably not in Racedown Notebook
- ii. 51-55, 58 missing probably not in Racedown Notebook

IV. Fair Copy 2. Wordsworth cleanly transcribes paragraph 3, as it then exists (possibly excluding lines 44-45, and/or 51-55) and the revised first two paragraphs, including changing “Here” to “Nay,” to produce a new version of the poem. Not in Racedown Notebook. Number of pages unknown.

V. Printer's Copy. Dorothy transcribes second fair copy of 60 lines for printer, summer 1798.

After stage III, Wordsworth has a poem of approximately 54 to 60 lines, in three paragraphs, probably over four pages. He may have added lines 42-43 to the bottom of the third page of MH's fair copy and attached his transcription of the third paragraph as its fourth page. Or, because the second set of revisions are missing from MH's fair copy, a transcription between it and DW's printer's copy (V) seems more likely to have been made. This is stage IV and is likely “the intervening copy, the one read to Charles Lamb and Coleridge during Lamb's visit to Nether Stowey in the second week of July, 1797,” which “has not survived” (Curtis 483). Reed is surely correct that the version read to Lamb had the lines on contempt, but whether it had arrived at its final form is not known (192 n2). Indeed, what I am calling stage IIIc may have occurred as late as early summer 1798 (V), when Dorothy appears to have prepared the poem for press (but see n. 39).

XII. List of Illustrations

1. William Gilpin, "Landscape with Distant Mountain," brush and ink and watercolor, from an *Album of 46 Landscape Drawings*, 1770s. Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection.



2. William Gilpin, "an illustration of that kind of wild country, of which we saw several instances, as we entered Cumberland," aquatint, from *Observations, Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty, Made in the Year 1772, on several Parts of England; Particularly the Mountains, and Lakes of Cumberland, and Westmoreland* (1:163), 1786.



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Joseph Viscomi, the James G. Kenan Distinguished Professor of English and Comparative Literature at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, is a co-editor with Morris Eaves and Robert Essick of the William Blake Archive, with whom he also co-edited volumes 3 and 5 (1993) of The William Blake Trust's *William Blake's Illuminated Books*. He is the author of *Prints by Blake and his Followers* (1983), *Blake and the Idea of the Book* (1993), and numerous essays on Blake's illuminated printing, color printing, and mid-nineteenth century market and reputation.

Notes

¹ The main ideas expressed in this essay were first developed in “Wordsworth, Gilpin, and the Vacant Mind,” a lecture I delivered at the Conference on Revolutionary Romanticism: 1790-1990, Bucknell University, 6 April, 1990, and further developed in my graduate seminars on Revolutions in Romantic Art and Literature, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Material drawn from its first three sections was published under the same title as the lecture in a Festschrift issue of *The Wordsworth Circle* (Summer 2007) in honor of Karl Kroeber. All passages quoted from the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads* are cited from *Wordsworth and Coleridge Lyrical Ballads 1798*, ed. W. J. B. Owen, 2nd ed. Passages quoted from the manuscript of “Lines” are cited from *Lyrical Ballads and Other Poems*, ed. James Butler and Karen Green. Variants of “Lines” are from *Wordsworth's Poetical Works*, vol. 1, ed. Ernest de Selincourt; poems other than these and *The Prelude* are taken from *Wordsworth Poetical Works*, ed. Thomas Hutchinson, rev. Ernest de Selincourt, as are the passages from the Preface, unless otherwise indicated. Passages from the 1805 *Prelude* are cited from *The Thirteen Book Prelude*, ed. Mark L. Reed. The epigraph, from Wordsworth's fragment, is from Butler and Green 324.

² In “Wordsworth, Inscriptions, and Romantic Nature Poetry,” Hartman acknowledges that knowing this poem's form and origin is not critically important, but he is, of course, interested in discerning just that and proceeds to identify its “special genre” as “inscription” (207). He takes his cue from Charles Lamb, who read or heard Wordsworth read the poem at Coleridge's home at Nether Stowey, 7-14 July 1797, the visit when Sara accidentally poured boiling milk on Coleridge's foot and inadvertently gave him the time to respond to Wordsworth's “Lines” in the form of “This Lime-Tree Bower my Prison.” In a letter to Coleridge, Lamb referred to “Lines”

twice as an “inscription,” which Hartman defines as “anything conscious of the place on which it was written, and this could be tree, rock, statue, gravestone, sand, window, album, sundial, dog’s collar, back of fan, back of painting” (207). This general form of inscription—text literally inscribed on or in a support other than a sheet of paper—Hartman believes was “accompanied by a special form which we shall call the *nature-inscription*, whose popularity seems to have been proportional to that of eighteenth-century gardens” (208). Hartman’s analysis of the epigram—which is what inscription means—from Greek through Renaissance literature is deeply informed and ingenious. Like Abrams in “The Structure of the Greater Romantic Lyric,” he seeks to find the origins for the distinct romantic lyrical voice. He seeks to illuminate the specific context of “Lines” to show that “Wordsworth was able to liberate the genre from its dependent status of tourist guide and antiquarian signpost: he made the nature-inscription into a free-standing poem, able to commemorate any feeling for nature or the spot that had aroused this feeling” (208). I suspect that Hartman was more successful at defining “nature-inscription” than Wordsworth was in transforming “Lines” into one. In this light, it is interesting to note that “Lines” was classified in 1815 as a poem of “Sentiment and Reflection” and in 1845 transferred to “Poems Written in Youth.” It was never included in “Inscriptions.” Hartman is right to suspect, though, that “Lines” was experimental and anticipates many great things to come.

³ Without identifying the recluse as author, Nicholas Roe infers the recluse to be an “inarticulate visionary” caught between his awareness of his failings and his inability to change, “who has withdrawn from ‘the world’ to exist in a limbo between the potential politics [he] had once seemed to hold and an alternative communion he cannot attain” (231).

⁴ The inscription-commentary format is exemplified in Epitaph 1 that Wordsworth translated from Chiabrera many years later. Its first six lines are spoken in the voice of the deceased and the

second six in the voice of a narrator identifying the speaker: "Francesco Ceni willed that, after death, / His tombstone thus should speak for him" (7-8).

⁵ The spot, identified as "Station 1" in Thomas West's *Guide to the Lakes, in Cumberland, Westmorland, and Lancashire* (1st ed., 1780), "now goes by the name of 'The Station,' according to Wordsworth in 1843 (Notes to Isabella Fenwick, qtd. Owen 127). Information about the "Rev. W. Brathwaite," who built the seat and "purchased the ground including this station, and erected an elegant and commodious building thereon, for the entertainment of his friends, called Belle-Vieu," is in the 8th edition of West, 1802 (qtd. Owen 127). The recluse's model was not much of a recluse in reality, nor was the seat "far from all human dwelling" (2). Nor was this "desolate part of the shore" a landscape, as Sheats supposes: "Even as the poet concedes what this landscape lacks, he names what the reader desires: a conventionally picturesque landscape that is humanized by man or by the diminutive society of Virgilian bees" (155). The seat and its immediate environs are not *experienced* as a landscape, any more than Coleridge's lime tree bower is, desolate or otherwise. The seat or spot, which Wordsworth refers to as a "bower" in 1800, positions one to view landscapes, scenes, prospects, and views, which, properly speaking, are *out there* and whose details, because of the distance between eye and object, are subordinate to the whole, to forms, colors, and lines. Bowers constitute an intimate space that yield details pleasing to the senses of touch, smell, and hearing, senses for which stimuli, though often overlooked, need to be close at hand. The eye too can find pleasure in the "minute particulars" of the bower, such as "the shadow of the leaf and stem above / Dappling its sunshine!" ("Lime Tree Bower" 50-51). Gilpin rarely uses "prospect" but uses "landscape," "scene," and "view" interchangeably. According to Trusler, "landscape" "is expressive of home scenes" and

“prospect” is expressive “of more distant ones” (13), and “view” is of a scene more distant and extensive still (169).

⁶ See Wordsworth’s second inscription “supposed to be found in and near a Hermit’s Cell” (1818): “PAUSE, Traveller! whosoe'er thou be / Whom chance may lead to this retreat” (1-2).

⁷ Robert Langbaum’s *The Poetry of Experience*, which examines many of Wordsworth’s poems in light of the dramatic monologue, makes no mention of “Lines”; nor does Don Bialostosky, who examines Wordsworth’s “poetics of speech” in his *Making Tales*. Parrish, whose *Art of the Lyrical Ballads* looks at “The Ballad as Drama,” discusses “Lines” mostly in light of Coleridge’s influence on paragraph 3. W. J. Keith, though, in *The Poetry of Nature*, recognizes the poem as an “experiment” containing the “seeds of a later poetic form, the dramatic monologue” (16, 17).

⁸ Wordsworth’s “There is Creation in the Eye” echoes this passage, but “Nightingale,” composed in May 1798, follows more closely themes in “Lines” and “Tables Turned.”

⁹ Sheats calls “verdant herb” a “pompous and euphemistic Latinism” (155), deliberately parodying the loco-descriptive poetry of the day. He may seem to be excusing bad poetry as brilliant parody, but spoken, these lines do carry a sarcastic tone, followed by three good lines, where “diction becomes plain and literal” and “syntax and rhythm develop the ampler cadences of spontaneous feeling” (156). Wordsworth may have had Richard Payne Knight’s *The Landscape, A Didactic Poem* (1794) in mind, which begins: “How best to bid the verdant Landscape rise, / To please the fancy, and delight the eyes” (1-2).

¹⁰ “Old Man Travelling,” also in blank verse, has a six-syllable line, but it begins the poem, making its presence as a variant line far less dramatic. Lines 23, 50, and 112 in “Tintern Abbey” are broken, creating short lines to end and start paragraphs, but as effective as these are in

differentiating the parts of the poem, they are not heard as dramatic breaks in thought and tone as are the seven missing syllables in line 8 of "Lines."

¹¹ Sheats reads the paragraph differently: "In the opening description human experience is stripped to its fundamental Lockean elements: a meeting between an otherwise vacant mind and a single simple idea of sensation. Other and higher faculties, memory and the private and social affections, appear in part two where they are once again reconciled to a central confrontation between mind and nature. In the third part, finally, we hear a voice that . . . relies on the nominal but universal abstractions generated by the reason. After erasing Locke's tablet of the mind, Wordsworth subjects it to a controlled and therapeutic reconstruction, ensuring that the language of reason is solidly grounded in sensation and feeling. Although the poem has been viewed as an attack on Godwinian rationalism, it is therefore antirational in neither spirit nor effect. Wordsworth seeks to validate, and not to supplant, the reason, and he does so by locating its authority not in the power of demonstration, which sanctions departure from sensation and feeling, but in intuition. . . . we see that this poem in fact tends to reconstruct the 'right reason' of pre-Enlightenment culture, the reason that in *Paradise Lost* guided the fallen Adam to humility and love" (160).

¹² These examples of usage for "vacant" are in the OED and are drawn from Johnson's letter to Boswell of 8 December 1763 in Boswell's *Life of Samuel Johnson* and *Rambler* No. 111 (1751). In both instances, Johnson recognizes such openness as natural while also cautioning diligence.

¹³ Wordsworth may also have had Burke's comments on "Privation" in mind: "All *general* privations are great, because they are all terrible; *Vacuity, Darkness, Solitude* and *Silence*" (65). In this regard, it is interesting to note that Wordsworth first used "vacancy" in line 2 of "Septimi, Gades" (1794) to describe Septimi's look of wonder or "fear" (4), emotions Burke associates with

“astonishment” (54), and that his first use of “vacancy” after “Lines,” in line 37 of the Preface to the *Excursion* (1798), is also associated with “fear and awe” (38).

¹⁴ See Burke’s *Enquiry*, section on “Power”: “some great power must be always precedent to our dread of it. But this dread must necessarily follow the idea of such a power, when it is once excited in the mind” (64). In his draft for an essay on the sublime and beautiful (1811-12), Wordsworth struggles to clarify his ideas of resisting and participating in power before arriving at this concise definition: “When power is thought of under a mode which we can and do participate, the sublime sensation consists in a manifest approximation towards absolute unity” (Wordsworth, *Selected Prose* 270).

¹⁵ Wordsworth speaks of inferring the personality from the place and the seat’s shape in an unpublished draft for his *Guide to the Lakes* (Grasmere MS Prose 23), in which he also notes that “the boughs had been trained to bend round the seat and almost embrace the Person sitting within allowing only an opening for the beautiful landscape” (qtd. in Owen 128).

¹⁶ I believe Jacobus was the first to suggest that “Lines” might be read autobiographically (37).

¹⁷ Wordsworth dramatized the question of intellectual talent going wrong in *The Borderers*, in Rivers (Oswald), of whom he writes in a preface drafted for the earliest version, late spring or early summer of 1797 (Reed 330), when also working on “Lines”: “Let us suppose a young Man of great intellectual powers, yet without any solid principles of genuine benevolence. His master passions are pride and the love of distinction. He has deeply imbibed a spirit of enterprise in a tumultuous age. . . . His talents are robbed of their weight; his exertions are unavailing, and he quits the world in disgust, with strong misanthropic feelings” (*Prose Works*, 1: 78-79).

¹⁸ Abrams notes the central paradox of Wordsworth’s major period as “the oxymoron of the humble-grand,” a paradox on which Hazlitt first commented when he “said that Wordsworth’s

Muse 'is distinguished by a proud humility,' and that he 'elevates the mean' and (not in vain) 'to aggrandize the trivial' ” (“English Romanticism” 70).

¹⁹ Wordsworth chose his words wisely; in 1800 he revised “rash disdain” to “indignation,” which is “the action of counting or treating (a person or thing) as unworthy of regard or notice; disdain, contempt; contemptuous behavior or treatment” (OED).

²⁰ As Wordsworth tells us in an inscription, the Hermit of St. Herbert's Island had become “a self-secluded Man,” but only “After long exercise in social cares / And offices humane, intent to adore / The Deity, with undistracted mind” (9-12).

²¹ Curtis argues that Coleridge recognized the youth as a poor model and that he and Wordsworth probably discussed this topic through the writings of Johannes Stobaeus, whose name Coleridge wrote in the Racedown Notebook most likely during his visit to Racedown in June 1797 (485-86), which places it and his reading/discussion after Mary's fair copy (see sec. IX and appendix).

²² For an examination of Wordsworth's brief interest in science in 1798 and Coleridge's influence, see Averill's “Wordsworth and ‘Natural Science’; The Poetry of 1798.”

²³ See, for example, the review of Gilpin's *Three Essays* in *Monthly Review*, May 1793: “At the present time, when we hear and read so much concerning picturesque beauty, many readers may wish to be informed in what it consists: the public are, therefore, under obligation to Mr. Gilpin for his essays on this subject” (17-18).

²⁴ This review was published in 1792, the year of the *Essays*, in the volume dated “1789.”

²⁵ The connection between picturesque viewing and science is even more apparent in the 1850 version, where a microscope is used as a symbol of analytical perception and perhaps dissection.

²⁶ This crucial line, positioning judgment and feeling as contraries of head and heart, is missing in the 1850 version. There he speaks of “the love / Of sitting thus in judgment” as “interrupt[ing]

/ My deeper feelings” (12.121-23). Though similar sounding, these versions express different ideas; the first alludes to Gilpin’s “high delight” and the other to Burke’s “man of taste.”

²⁷ “Fixing his downward eye” is an odd phrase, not much helped by revising the adjective to “downcast” in 1800. The sense, of course, is focusing downward, but having a “downward eye,” rather than eyes looking down, seems like a debilitating medical condition, like a wandering eye, suggesting limited—and depressed—vision of an eye “ever on himself” (52). Note too that “eye” (also in line 42) and “emblem” are singular, though logic suggests plural for eye. Singular for emblem, then, does not necessarily mean “tracing” refers to making out the same image each day. Emblem goes undefined; his preoccupation with projecting or outlining his emotional emptiness onto or in the desolate grounds is emphasized instead.

²⁸ In *Evenings at Home*, Aikin defines an emblem as “a visible image of an invisible thing” (136) and gives numerous examples of gestures and actions that serve as emblems. For example, a blindfolded man crossing a “torrent upon stepping stones” is “fool hardiness,” “a man leaning upon a breaking crutch” is instability or false confidence (145), and the sower scattering seed on the ground is instruction or hope (146).

²⁹ The lines from “The Pedlar” correspond to *The Excursion* 1.144-62; see *William Wordsworth: ‘The Pedlar,’ ‘Tintern Abbey,’ The Two-Part Prelude*, ed. J. Wordsworth.

³⁰ Cozens first expressed his system of using ink blots to stimulate the imagination in creating “ideal landscapes” in his brief 1759 *Essay to Facilitate the Inventing of Landskips*, and then developed it much further in *A New Method of Assisting the Invention in Drawing Original Compositions of Landscape*, 1785 (Sloan 30, 82). In the *New Method*, a sheet of transparent paper is placed over a rude sketch or blots and the outline of a composition they suggest is traced. The artist Sawrey Gilpin, William’s brother, was a friend of Cozens’s and he, Gilpin, and

Joseph Wright of Derby were well aware of the method as early as 1759 and made some blots themselves, as did Romney and Farrington, who used blots as sketches to capture quickly an idea or form (Sloan 83). To stimulate his imagination, Gainsborough assembled “roots, stones and mosses, from which he formed, and then studied, foregrounds in miniature” (Uvedale Price, qtd. in Wilcox, et al., 64).

Cozens's blot drawings are similar in style to Gilpin's rough sketches (illus. 1, 2), a few of which Gilpin even inscribed as “blots” (Barbier 39). Both artists saw the style's indeterminacy as creative for artist and viewer alike, because, as in the “rough style of etching landscape with a needle, after the manner of Rembrandt, . . . much is left to the imagination to make out” (Gilpin, *Wye* ix). According to Aikin, though, the style “Metes out the vast horizon; culls, rejects, / Lights up, obscures, and blots the blessed sun” (“Picturesque” 26-27). William Marshall Craig, a drawing master, is even more dismissive, faulting it for using “a certain set of signs . . . as by agreement, to represent, or signify, certain objects in nature, to which they have intrinsically little or no resemblance. . . . Such is the melancholy truth; and this disease of the pencil has spread, unresisted, its noxious influence, and the dilettante artist yields at length to the contagion, as one who, being cast on a country of savages, submits, from necessity, to adopt their language; and long habit, blunting the nice edge of judgment and taste, reconciles him finally to the barbarisms with which it abounds” (9-10).

³¹ The image of “gazing” on a scene till emotionally overwhelmed appears derived from Southey's “Inscription for a Cavern that overlooks the River AVON,” published in early 1797: “Gaze Stranger here! / And let thy soften'd heart intensely feel / How good, how lovely, Nature!” (14-16).

³² While the actual seat was too small to be shared (see n. 15), the view could be, and Wordsworth took pleasure in sharing the view with a childhood friend (Owen 127-28).

³³ Jonathan Wordsworth reads “holy forms” as “those of landscape recorded, but unmodified, by the memory” (206n1). This seems another way of saying that they and the corresponding heart are pure in the sense of being unmodified by worldly experience.

³⁴ Coleridge’s influence on the third paragraph is convincingly demonstrated by Jacobus (35-37), Jonathan Wordsworth (195-200), Parrish (66-70), and Curtis (483-88). They all detect Coleridge’s philosophical and political influence, but none examines how radically the addition of the moral transforms the poem, presumably because they were already convinced that the poem was as de Selincourt described it, a reaction, like *The Borderers*, against Godwinianism.

³⁵ “Imitation of Juvenal” was drafted in MS 11 and then MS 2 (Landon and Curtis 787), which provides precedent for using both manuscripts for one work.

³⁶ I am using the reproductions in Butler and Green, 478-81.

³⁷ Leaf 28v and leaves 17v and 29r appear certainly to have been written at different times, but how much time elapsed between 28v and the rough drafts cannot be ascertained from the physical evidence. Landon and Curtis, however, group leaves 28v, 17v, and 29r together, stating that they “could have been entered before or very soon after Mary’s departure” (280). According to Curtis in a separate article, “Wordsworth drafted” these pages “probably after Mary’s fair copy was entered” (483). Butler and Green think they “almost certainly date from early 1797” (xxii). Coleridge saw Wordsworth at Nether Stowey very briefly in late March (Reed 195), raising the possibility that they discussed the poem and that MH’s fair copy could have included a version of the third paragraph. This seems unlikely, though, as the Stobaeus connection recently discovered by Curtis further supports a June date for Coleridge’s reading (see n. 21).

³⁸ Landon and Curtis also note the possible correspondence between “An” on stub 38r and “Lines” (305n), a connection first pointed out to me by my colleague and friend, Mark Reed. They also state that “stub 38v . . . probably contained the first two stanzas of ‘The Three Graves.’ (Work for ‘Lines left upon a Seat in a Yew Tree’ may have occupied the upper part of the page)” (859n). They infer the possible presence of the “Graves” stanzas on 38v from traces on stubs 39r, 40v, and 41r, which appear to have contained the “the missing portion of [its] first reading text” corresponding “to ll. 1-97 of the second reading text” on leaves 42r-47r, 48r-v (280).

³⁹ Dorothy Wordsworth transcribed the sixty-line poem on four pages in fair copy, thought to be the printer’s copy because it has no revision marks, is so close to the version published in 1798, and has an instruction to the printer added to the bottom of the page: “The Female Vagrant to follow.” But it is possible that the instruction was written a year later and Dorothy’s fair copy was the version of the poem read 7-14 July at Nether Stowey to Lamb and company.

⁴⁰ Butler and Green suggest “livin”; Mark Reed and I suspect that the word may be “being” (private conversation). If so, it may have been meant to connect to “kindred beings” on 28v, or to the way they view life.

"Describes a man who rests by a yew tree, he was "pure in his heart" when he was younger, but society corrupted his innocence. He therefore decided to retreat into nature "sustained his soul in solitude" and became overwhelmed with the beauty of nature "the beauty still more beautiful". However he was sad that he would not be able to experience relationships with other humans "he would sigh with mournful joy, to think that others felt what he must never feel" (and that others had not had the same experience with nature as him). He grows sadder "his eye streamed with tears" and then eventu