THE USE AND JUSTIFICATION OF THE PATHETIC FALLACY IN THE POETRY OF WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND THE GRADUATE COUNCIL OF THE KANSAS STATE TEACHERS COLLEGE OF EMPORIA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE

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MAY 1935

Approved for the Major Department

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Approved for the Graduate Council

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

It is with gratitude that I acknowledge the generous co-operation given by Dr. James V. Logan in making this study possible. He suggested the Pathetic Fallacy in the Poetry of William Wordsworth as a field for investigation, and his friendly criticism has been valuable in the preparation of this report.

Thanks are also due Miss Evelyn Elliott for helpful suggestions and aid in reading the manuscript.

Kathleen Elliott

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INTRODUCTION

Nature and Purpose

And Nature, the old nurse, took
The child upon her knee,
Saying, "Here is a story-book
Thy Father has written for thee.

"Come, wander with me" she said,
Into regions yet untrod;
And read what is still unread
In the manuscripts of God."

And he wandered away and away
With Nature, the dear old nurse,
Who sang to him night and day
The rhymes of the universe.

And whenever the way seemed long,
Or his heart began to fail,
She would sing a more wonderful song,
Or tell a more marvellous tale.[1]

In all ages and in all lands man has felt the influence of nature. There has been a kind of relationship between the two which in most cases he has been at a loss to explain. In ancient times, primitive peoples worshipped the sun and the moon. They were convinced that the woods were full of spirits, some good, others evil. As civilization advanced, these old theories were outgrown and new ones took their places. Man became more materialistically inclined. Then, in the eighteenth century and the early part of the nineteenth there was a "back to nature" movement whose chief exponent was Rousseau. In England William Wordsworth brought forth a new natural philosophy. The fundamental basis of this new thought was as old as man, but Word-

1 Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Complete Poetical Works, Student's Cambridge ed., Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., c1922, p. 199. (The Fiftieth Birthday of Agassiz).

sworth clothed it in the language of the poet and explained its possibilities where they concerned the people of his own day.

Once again poets began writing of the influence of nature on man. They wrote of the strength which could be obtained through a contemplation of towering mountains and mighty rivers. They sang of the thrill of seeing a particularly beautiful sunset or of watching the opening petals of a flower. Nature had come into her own another time. She had never ceased to influence man, but her influence had been only slightly noticed and had not been put in writing.

It is the purpose of this study to determine whether or not William Wordsworth used the pathetic fallacy as defined by John Ruskin, and if so to justify its use. The pathetic fallacy will be fully defined and illustrated in Chapter I of this thesis. Suffice to say here that it is the false impression of natural objects caused by intense emotion.

Scope of Problem

This study has included the entire collection of the poetical works of William Wordsworth.

Method of Procedure

The thesis has been carried through five distinct steps. In the first place, a minute analysis was made of John Ruskin's chapter on the pathetic fallacy. The differences were noticed which existed between the pathetic fallacy and the fallacy of

willful fancy, and between the pathetic fallacy and the fallacy resulting from the writer's being in a condition of prophetic inspiration. The second step included a careful reading of all of the poetry of William Wordsworth and a recording of all of the fallacies found therein. This done, the writer read one authoritative biography and several essays concerning Wordsworth in order to become familiar with the background of the poet and his works. The biography used was that by George McLean Harper. Essays on Wordsworth which were read were those written by Matthew Arnold, Edward Caird, Edward Dowden, Thomas DeQuincey, Salvador de Madariaga and Walter Pater. The fourth step involved an application of John Ruskin's criterion of the pathetic fallacy to the fallacies found in Wordsworth's poems. A fifth step, which may be called the interpretation of results has completed the study.

CHAPTER I

THE PATHETIC FALLACY AS JOHN RUSKIN HAS DEFINED IT

To the vast majority of people things ordinarily appear in their true and proper forms. They are what they seem to be. But there are times when intense feeling so alters the appearance of some particular object that it seems to be different from that which it really is, and in this way false qualities are ascribed to the object. Writers who are concerned with nature and its influence upon man are sometimes guilty of assigning human attributes to natural objects. John Ruskin observed this tendency, studied it, and set down his results in a short chapter on what he called the "pathetic fallacy."

In his chapter Ruskin raises the problem of determining why it is that anything which is untrue may at the same time be enjoyable. Let us examine some of the poetry of well-known writers in search of pleasant fallacies.

For instance:

> When the breeze of a joyful dawn blew free
> In the silken sail of infancy,
> The tide of time flowed back with me,
> The forward flowing tide of time;[1]

This is a pleasant passage and yet untrue, for the dawn is not joyful in itself. Neither is the breeze accustomed to blowing free in a "silken sail of infancy." It is often said that "time and tide wait for no man"; and yet here the tide of time

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1 Alfred Lord Tennyson, Poems, 1830-1865, London, Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, 1925, p. 14, l. 1-4, (Recollections Of The Arabian Nights).

flowed back with Tennyson.

Listen to William Cullen Bryant:

> The hills
> Rock-ribbed and ancient as the sun,---the vales
> Stretching in pensive quietness between;
> The venerable woods----rivers that move
> In majesty, and the complaining brooks
> That make the meadows green; and, poured round all,
> Old Ocean's gray and melancholy waste,--
> Are but the solemn decorations all
> Of the great tomb of man.[2]

In this passage Bryant speaks of the vales as "stretching in pensive quietness." He says that the brooks are complaining ones. These are fallacious statements and yet they strike no note of discord in the poem.

Another illustration:

> Ye woods! that listen to the night-birds singing,
> Midway the smooth and perilous slope reclined,
> Save when your own imperious branches swinging,
> Have made a solemn music of the wind![3]

This stanza is pleasing to the ear, and yet in reality the woods do not listen to the songs of the birds. Moreover, it is very doubtful whether or not the imperious branches of the trees are capable of making real music of the wind. The presence of these fallacies does not detract from the enjoyment of the poem, and a close examination of much of the poetry written will show that it is full of this kind of fallacy. Why is it that people enjoy being told that a daisy is not a daisy at all but a "little Cyclops with one eye," or a "queen in crown of rubies dressed?" Despite the fact man has believed that anything useful,

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2 William Cullen Bryant, Poetical Works, Roslyn ed., New York, D. Appleton and Co., c1903, p. 22, (Thanatopsis).
3 James Dykes Campbell, ed., The Poetical Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, London, Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1898, p. 124, (France: Ode).

really enjoyable and good must be true, there are some poetic expressions which are extremely pleasurable and at the same time untrue. Perhaps John Keats has given the answer in his Ode On A Grecian Urn when he said "beauty is truth, truth beauty." A fallacy which is in harmony with the rest of the poem and which makes the reader, for the time being, see with the eyes of the poet is a pleasant device; and to the extent that it enables the reader to catch the spirit of the poet, it is justified and, for that moment, true.

For purposes of clarity and convenience Ruskin has arranged fallacies in two separate and distinct classes. There is "the fallacy of willful fancy, which involves no real expectation that it will be believed."[4] Then there is the fallacy "caused by an excited state of the feelings, making us, for the time, more or less irrational."[5]

The fallacy of willful fancy is elaborately illustrated in Wordsworth's poem called To The Same Flower.

> With little here to do or see
> Of things that in the great world be,
> Daisy! again I talk to thee,
> For thou art worthy,
> Thou unassuming commonplace
> Of nature, with that homely face,
> And yet with something of a grace
> Which Love makes for thee!
>
> Oft on the dappled turf at ease
> I sit and play with similes,
> Loose types of things through all degrees,
> Thoughts of the raising;
> And many a fond and idle name
> I give to thee, for praise or blame,
> As in the humor of the game,
> While I am gazing.

4 E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, ed., The Works Of John Ruskin, Library ed., London, Allen, 1904, Vol. 5, p. 205.
5 Ibid.

A nun demure of lowly port;
Or sprightly maiden, of Love's court,
In thy simplicity the sport
   Of all temptations;
A queen in crown of rubies dressed;
A starveling in a scanty vest;
Are all, as seems to suit thee best,
   Thy appellations.

A little Cyclops with one eye
Staring to threaten and defy,
That thought comes next----and instantly
   The freak is over,
The shape will vanish---and behold
A silver shield with boss of gold,
That spreads itself, some fairy bold
   In fight to cover!

I see thee glittering from afar---
And then thou art a pretty star;
Not quite so fair as many are
   In heaven above thee!
Yet like a star, with glittering crest,
Self-poised in air thou seemest to rest--
May peace come never to his nest,
   Who shall reprove thee!

Bright flower! for by that name at last,
When all my reveries are past,
I call thee, and to that cleave fast,
   Sweet silent creature!
That breath'st with me in sun and air,
Do thou, as thou art wont, repair
My heart with gladness, and a share
   Of thy meek nature![6]

The entire poem is written in a whimsical vein which belies any thought that the fallacies might be believed. Wordsworth has explained at the beginning of the poem that it is a pastime for him to "play with similes" and to imagine new names for the daisy. At the end of the poem he says in no uncertain terms that he knows it is only a flower. Most people enjoy reading a certain amount of this fanciful type of poetry. They read it

6 William Wordsworth, Complete Poetical Works, Cambridge, ed., Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., c1904, p. 291.

with both eyes open knowing that the poet is not trying to deceive them and make them believe that something which is false is true. It is pleasant poetry for it stirs the imagination.

Personification is one type of willfulfancy. One need not read far before he discovers numerous lines where abstractions such as sorrow, reason and truth are personified. In cases like these, the writer is fully aware that these abstract qualities may not accurately be given human attributes. Personification then, is used by a writer who realizes that he is employing a fallacy and who, in most instances, has a definite purpose in mind when he uses it.

The second type of fallacy has already been defined as being caused by a highly emotional state of mind which makes the poet, for the time, more or less irrational. It is evident that this type is different from the fallacy of willful fancy. The emotional condition of the writers of each type is antithetical. The impression left with the reader is very different in each case.

It is the second type of fallacy, the fallacy which is occasioned by intense feeling which makes the faculties for observing faulty, that Ruskin styles the "pathetic fallacy." The feeling back of the error is true and only the impression is false.

Tennyson's reason was swayed by grief over the death of Arthur Hallam, his friend; and from the depths of his soul he cried out:

O Sorrow, cruel fellowship,
O Priestess in the vaults of Death,
O sweet and bitter in a breath,
What whispers from thy dying lip?

'The stars,' she whispers, 'blindly run;
A web is wov'n across the sky;
From out waste places comes a cry,
And murmurs from the dying sun:

'And all the phantom, nature, stands---
With the music in her tone,
A hollow echo of my own,---
A hollow form with empty hands.'

And shall I take a thing so blind,
Embrace her as my natural good;
Or crush her, like a vice of blood,
Upon the threshold of the mind?[7]

This is without doubt pathetic fallacy. Here Tennyson has personified sorrow. He has done it consciously and with no idea that sorrow is really an individual capable of speaking as a human being. But after he has personified it, he allows sorrow to speak the thoughts that are natural to his own grief-stricken mind. Even if sorrow could speak it could not accurately accuse the stars of running blindly or the sun of dying. Yet the poet's grief was so intense that it really seemed to him that the whole natural order of things was disturbed. It is one of the well known facts of life that great emotions may well produce a falseness in impressions of external objects. To John Masefield's love of the sea and his wish to follow its call may be attributed his use of the pathetic fallacy in his poem Sea-Fever.

I must down to the seas again, to the
lonely sea and the sky,

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7 Alfred, Lord Tennyson, Poems, op. cit., p. 298.

And all I ask is a tall ship, and
a star to steer her by,
And the wheel's kick and the wind's
song and the white sail's shaking,
And a grey mist on the sea's face and
a grey dawn breaking.[8]

To this man, the sea was a personality and he naturally endowed it with human characteristics in his thoughts. It had a face and the wind that blew over it sang a song.

It is surprising the extent to which the pathetic fallacy and the fallacy of willful fancy are used in literature. It may be true that to the average reader the poem that employs the fallacy is enjoyed more than that which avoids it either because of the poet's inability to feel deeply and thus see falsely, or his ability to see clearly in spite of his strong emotion.

The pathetic fallacy has found its way into so many poems that the reading public has come to believe that it is a poetical device to be used whenever possible. However, it is Ruskin's opinion that a close examination will show that "the greatest poets do not often admit this kind of falseness,--- that it is only the second order of poets who take much delight in it."[9]

With the pathetic fallacy in mind, Ruskin places poets in one of three classes. In the first rank are the creative poets, Homer, Dante and Shakespeare. They compose his third class and they are the men who, in spite of their emotions, see things as they are. They, to John Ruskin, are the greatest poets. He

8 John Masefield, Poems and Plays, Vol. I, New York, the Macmillan Co., 1920, p. 31, (Sea-Fever).
9 Works, op. cit., p. 205.

uses to prove his point Dante's description of the condemned spirits who fell from the banks of the river Acheron, each at a beck,

> ---As fall off light autumnal leaves,
> One still another following, till the bough
> Strews all its honours on the earth beneath;[10]

With this picture Dante portrays vividly the feebleness and utter helplessness of those lost souls without ever letting the reader forget that they are spirits and not leaves. He compares the spirits to the leaves and does not assign human characteristics where they do not belong. On the other hand, using leaves as the natural objects again, Ruskin shows how Coleridge gives them life and merry dispositions in Christabel:

> The one red leaf, the last of its clan,
> That dances as often as dance it can,[11]

It is well that Ruskin moderated his statement by saying that the greatest poets do not <u>often</u> admit of the pathetic fallacy, for it is comparatively easy to find examples of this type of writing. For instance, Shakespeare places a definite and natural fallacy on the lips of Romeo who speaks to Juliet in these words:

> But soft! what light through yonder window breaks?
> It is the last, and Juliet is the sun.
> Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,
> Who is already sick and pale with grief
> That thou her maid, art far more fair than she.
> Be not her maid, since she is envious;
> Her vestal livery is but sick and green
> And none but fools do wear it; cast it off.[12]

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10 Cary, tr., <u>The Divine Comedy Of Dante Alighieri</u>, London, G. Bell and Sons, 1926, p. 14, Inferno III, 104-106.
11 <u>Works</u>, <u>op. cit.</u>, p. 206, (Christabel, part 1).
12 <u>William Shakespeare, Complete Works</u>, Student's Cambridge ed., Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 1906, p. 843, (Romeo and Juliet).

And again:

> Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,
> Having some business, do entreat her eyes
> To twinkle in their spheres till they return.[13]

These fallacies are natural to a young man who has an imagination and who is very much in love, and similar ones may be found in this and other plays of Shakespeare. And so I say that Ruskin did well to insert a limiting clause in his statement concerning the greatest poets. Lorenzo is deeply moved by a moon-light night in Belmont:

> How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!
> Here will we sit and let the sounds of music
> Creep in our ears: soft stillness and the night
> Become the touches of sweet harmony.
> Sit, Jessica. Look how the floor of heaven
> Is thick inlaid with patterns of bright gold.
> There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st
> But in his motion like an angel sings,
> Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubims;
> Such harmony is in immortal souls;[14]

So much for the first order of poets. In Ruskin's second class are the reflective or the perceptive poets. In this group are found Keats, Tennyson, and Wordsworth. They are the poets who, at times, allow themselves to be swept away by their emotions, and because of their intense feeling they frequently see things falsely. They ascribe to external objects qualities which they do not possess. Ruskin believes that these poets have their place in literature, but he insists that their very use of the pathetic fallacy brands them as being of an inferior school from that to which the creative poets belong. He believes that it is a sign of a greater mind when the intellect

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13 Ibid.
14 Ibid., p. 34, Merchant Of Venice, Act V, Sc. I.

can be dazzled by emotion than when the spirit is incapable of feeling deeply at all. Some poets there are to whom the moon will always be the moon, nothing more or less, and to whom a daisy is only a very common wild flower. With such writers Ruskin has little patience. On the other hand he believes that "it is still a grander condition when the intellect also rises, till it is strong enough to assert its rule against, or together with, the utmost efforts of the passions; and the whole man stands in an iron glow, white hot, perhaps, but still strong, and in no wise evaporating; even if he melts, losing none of his weight.[15]

Ruskin's first class has already been discussed indirectly. In this group he places those men who are not really poets at all. They are incapable of feeling deeply, so of course they perceive rightly. With this group the pathetic fallacy has nothing to do except as it is necessary to show that the figure used is not really pathetic fallacy because of the shallowness of the feeling which prompted its use. It may be true that many have used it because it seemed to be thing to do. That is the impression one sometimes gets when reading a poem by a poet of the first class.

For example, read Pope's version of Homer's Odyssey. Ulysses is almost overcome with astonishment over the sudden appearance of Elpenor among the shades he is calling up and says:

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15 Works, op. cit., p. 208.

O, say, what angry power Elpenor led
To glide in shades, and wander with the dead?
How could thy soul, by realms and seas disjoined,
Outfly the nimble sail, and leave the lagging wind?[16]

The time was inappropriate for anything but the simple truth. Ulysses was so anxious about his friend that anything in addition to a straightforward inquiry is a jarring note in the poem.

Ruskin has said that the greatest poets do not often employ the pathetic fallacy and that its use in any extent is the evidence of an inferior mind. Then he apparently contradicts himself and says that there are subjects which should awe even a great man and throw him off his balance. There are some which should prove overwhelming for even his superior intellect and reduce it to a vague state of perception so that when he attempts to express himself, his language will be "obscure and wild in metaphor."[17]

In reality his statements are not as contradictory as they appear to be because of his possible fourth class of poets and the fact that he has not placed limits on the poets as if to say thus far and no farther. The different classes are closely connected and from time to time poets step from one group into another for a little while. The distinction is made primarily for purposes of clarity and convenience.

The fourth class just mentioned includes those poets who are in a condition of prophetic inspiration. They see things

16 Ibid., p. 207.
17 Ibid., p. 209.

untruly because that which they are trying to comprehend is so very far above them. This is the situation when the prophet cries: "The mountains and the hills shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands."[18]

The prophet Habakkuk trembled at the thought of God's majesty and said in his prayer:

> He stood, and measured the earth: he beheld, and drove asunder the nations; and the everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow: his ways are everlasting.[19]

> The mountains saw thee, and they trembled: the overflowing of the water passed by: the deep uttered his voice, and lifted up his hands on high.
> The sun and the moon stood still in their habitation: at the light of thine arrows they went, and at the shining of thy glittering spear.[20]

Stability is the characteristic quality of the really great poet, Ruskin's creative poet. He is big enough and knows enough that he is not swept off his feet at the sight of some particularly beautiful waterfall or by the loss of some cherished friend. He may be compared to the house that was built upon a rock and which stood secure against the winds and the floods. The smaller man is influenced by circumstances. He is melancholy or extremely happy according to his stimulus. His emotions are capable of reaching either extreme. Because of this instability, the great poet may seem, in contrast, impassive. He observes the emotion, it appears, from a distance, while the poet of the second order plunges into the very heart of the stimulus and allows it to make its imprint on his mind and

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18 Isaiah 55:12.
19 Habakkuk 3:6.
20 Habakkuk 3:10,11.

to be seen in his poems.

The average reader does not object to the use of the fallacy. He even enjoys it when he feels that the emotion back of it is true and intense. When the reader receives this impression, the poet has managed to make his own experience live again. But, the moment the reader does not feel that the poet is sincere, then the fallacy loses whatever value it may have had for him. Ruskin aptly expresses this idea in the following words: "There is no greater baseness than the habit of using these metaphorical expressions in cool blood."[21]

It is permissible that Coleridge, writing in a fit of dejection, should feel that the wind was raving outside and say:

> Thou Wind, that rav'st without,
> Bare crag, or mountain-tairn, or blasted tree,
> Or pine-grove whither woodman never clomb,
> Or lonely house, long held the witches' home,
> Methinks were fitter instruments for thee,
> Mad Lutanist! who in this month of showers,
> Of dark-brown gardens, and of peeping flowers,
> Mak'st Devil's yule, with worse than wintry song,
> The blossoms, buds, and timorous leaves among.[22]

But it is deplorable when just any writer whether or not he speaks from the depths of experience gets in the habit of writing about the "raving wind" or the "timorous leaves." By doing so he reveals his own inferiority and also makes it difficult for the poets who really speak falsely because of the intensity of their feelings. It is best for the writer to keep his mind centered on pure fact only. Then if he feels deeply,

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21 Works, op. cit., p. 211.
22 James Dykes Campbell, ed., op. cit., p. 161, (Dejection: An Ode).

he may be sure his emotion is a true one. Given first a false impression, the writer may stir his emotions to a high pitch, but they would not be true. The feeling must come first and the impression, false or true, must follow.

It is possible to speak only the exact truth and still produce the desired impression. Ruskin uses to point out the dignity of passages which limit their expression to pure fact the scene in which Helen is telling Priam the names of the Greek captains. She had located them all except her two brothers, Castor and Pollux, and she wonders where they can be.

Then Homer with matchless dignity and feeling explains:

> But them, already, the life-giving earth possessed, there in Lacedaemon, in the dear fatherland.[23]

The emotion aroused in the mind of the reader is one of sadness, and yet he is not allowed to forget for a moment that the same earth which shelters the brothers after death is the earth that gives and maintains life in abundance to all natural things.

Sometimes though even Homer stoops to the use of the pathetic fallacy. His description of morning is an illustration. He does not seem to be thinking of the morning as Aurora, the beautiful goddess of the dawn, but simply of a particularly lovely daybreak.

> Now morn in saffron robes had shed her light
> O'er all the earth, when Jove the Thunderer
> Summoned the gods to council on the heights
> Of many peaked Olympus.[24]

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23 Works, op. cit., p. 213, (Iliad, III, 243).
24 William Cullen Bryant, tr., The Iliad Of Homer, New York, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1916, p. 196, Bk. VIII, l. 1-4.

In Ruskin's opinion a poet is great in proportion to the depth of his feeling and in the degree of his control over his emotions. He never loses sight however, of his assertion that some things should, by reason of their greatness, awe even a poet of the first order. His four-fold classification of poets could be reduced to two groups, for he is unwilling that writers incapable of deep feeling should be called poets. At the other extreme is the prophet who is completely swept off his feet by the contemplation of some wonderful event or object. It would not be well even if it were possible for the poet in such a condition to try to restrain his emotions. The prophet Isaiah, in his wonder and joy at the thought of the ultimate flourishing of the kingdom of Christ, cries out:

> The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.
> It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God.[25]

Such an expression of joy is perfect as it is and could not be improved upon through a studied control of the emotions. So far as the use of the pathetic fallacy is concerned, the real poets belong to one of two classes. Either they belong in the group of creative poets and are seldom guilty of using the fallacy or they are of a more temperamental type and use it extensively. It has been pointed out that the use of the pathetic fallacy is not restricted to one particular group of poets. Therefore the question to be considered is not the

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25 Isaiah XXV, 1, 2.

number of poets who have used the fallacy or the extent to which they have used it; but rather can the use of the fallacy always be justified?

The use of the pathetic fallacy is justified when there is sufficient cause for it. All other use of it is mere affectation and to be avoided. The greatest sin of all is that some clever writer who has not felt deeply himself should take the metaphorical expressions that have been used by real poets and use them consciously and deliberately. In Ruskin's own words it is as if he were trying to "make an old lava-stream look red again, by covering it with dead leaves, or white-hot, with hoar-frost."[26] Then there is the would-be poet who has them in his vocabulary for stock phrases and tosses them into his work wherever they seem to fit.

There can be little doubt that Byron's passion for liberty and his sympathy for any individual or nation that was not free influenced him so that his feeling was true when he spoke in this way to Chillon:

> Chillon! thy prison is a holy place,
> And thy sad floor an altar---for 'twas trod,
> Until his very steps have left a trace
> Worn, as if thy cold pavement were a sod,
> By Bonnivard! May none those marks efface!
> For they appeal from tyranny to God.[27]

The feeling back of this poem is true and therefore the fallacy is justified since there is no discord created by the thought of the "sad floor" on which, for many years, tired prisoners had paced up and down leaving on the stones the traces

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26 Works, op. cit., p. 216.
27 George Noel Gordon, Lord Byron, Poetical Works, London, Oxford University Press, 1928, p. 326, (Sonnet on Chillon).

of their steps. How very different is the poem Reveille by Alfred Edward Housman:

Wake: the silver dusk returning
Up the beach of darkness brims,
And the ship of sunrise burning
Stands upon the eastern rims.

Wake: the vaulted shadow shatters,
Trampled to the floor it spanned,
And the tent of night in tatters
Strews the sky-pavilioned land.

Up, lad, up, 'tis late for lying:
Hear the drums of morning play;
Hark, the empty highways crying
"Who'll beyond the hills away?

Towns and cities woo together,
Forelands beacon, belfries call;
Never lad that trod on leather
Lived to feast his heart with all.[28]

In this poem the fallacies seem to literally tumble over each other. There are so many and they are so far-fetched that immediately the reader begins to doubt whether even a very happy and enthusiastic poet would be so elaborately impressed by the dawn. It rather appears as if he had gathered together a host of stock phrases and placed them all in one poem. Such a use of the pathetic fallacy obviously is not justified. It does not even give the impression that it was intended to be a poem of willful fancy.

A poem that has the power to make the reader relive the experience of the author and see natural objects as the author saw them has accomplished its purpose; and if there has been a fallacy in the poem, it is justified. But, if the poem has been written in "cool blood" the reader will know it upon a

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28 Sperlin, Ottis Bedney, Studies In English-World Literature, New York, The Century Co., 1923, p. 85, (Alfred Edward Housman--Reveille).

careful study of it, for it will leave him as cool as the author was when he wrote it.

It is said that Tennyson's lyrics "are a perfect blending of emotional impulse and exquisite form."[29] Certainly there is a perfect example of the pathetic fallacy in his lyric poem Maud:

> The slender acacia would not shake
> One long milk-bloom on the tree;
> The white lake-blossom fell into the lake
> As the pimpernel dozed on the lea;
> But the rose was awake all night for your sake,
> Knowing your promise to me;
> The lilies and roses were all awake,
> They sighed for the dawn and thee.
>
> Queen rose of the rosebud garden of girls,
> Come hither, the dances are done,
> In gloss of satin and glimmer of pearls,
> Queen lily and rose in one;
> Shine out, little head, sunning over with curls,
> To the flowers, and be their sun.
>
> There has fallen a splendid tear
> From the passion-flower at the gate.
> She is coming, my dove, my dear;
> She is coming, my life, my fate;
> The red rose cries, 'She is near, she is near;'
> And the white rose weeps, 'She is late;'
> The larkspur listens, 'I hear, I hear;'
> And the lily whispers, 'I wait.'
>
> She is coming, my own, my sweet;
> Were it ever so airy a tread,
> My heart would hear her and beat,
> Were it earth in an earthy bed;
> My dust would hear her and beat,
> Had I lain for a century dead;
> Would start and tremble under her feet,
> And blossom in purple and red.[30]

The young lover believes that even the flowers are responsive to the nearness of his loved one. The poem is lovely and the

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29 Paul Robert Lieder, Robert Morss Lovett, Robert Kilburn Root, ed., British Poetry and Prose, New York, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1928, p. 1054.

30 Alfred, Lord Tennyson, Poems, op. cit., p. 415.

fallacies might easily be the impressions that came to him as he thought of his love. There is no discordant note.

Ruskin insists that the pathetic fallacy, so far as it is a fallacy, is the sign of a comparatively weak mind, saying that a great mind is able to maintain its sense of proportion and see things as they really are. Whether or not everyone would agree with Ruskin on this point, it must of necessity be admitted that one type of poet is prone to see things falsely under stress of strong emotion and another type is able generally to keep pure fact uppermost.

The pathetic fallacy, then, is a false impression of an external object caused by intense feeling or emotion. It is found most frequently in the works of the reflective or the perceptive poets; but it may be found, although rarely, in the works of the creative poets. It is right or wrong according to the genuineness of the emotion which causes it. It is pardonable and even enjoyable when rightly used, but cannot be tolerated when it is used under false pretenses. Then it ceases to be pathetic fallacy in the true sense and only represents a poor attempt at imitation of better poets or an effort to create in the mind of the reader an emotion which the writer himself has never experienced.

CHAPTER II

A BRIEF SURVEY OF THE LIFE OF WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

It has always been true that whenever a nation, or the world, is ready and waiting for a leader in any field, that leader is available. One needs only to recall such leaders as Alexander the Great, Charlemagne, Cromwell, Washington, Lincoln, and others to see that this is true. And it has been in the realm of poetry as well. At intervals for hundreds of years great epic poets have appeared, performed their work and passed on. There were Homer, Virgil, Dante and Milton, besides the writers of the Persian Shah Nameh and the Indian Rahmayana and Mahabharata. So when Germany was ready for some poet to lead the people into a new relationship with nature, Goethe was born; in France, Rousseau was the guiding spirit. England had Wordsworth.

William Wordsworth was well fitted for the work he was destined to do. The experiences through which he passed, his native ability, and his strict mental discipline all combined to make him the interpreter of nature that he was. The three stages of man, -childhood, youth and early manhood, - and the years of maturity broadening into old age, provide interpretations of nature which are almost as distinct and well-defined as the stages themselves. A child's love of nature is apt to be an intensely real love, and at the same time an almost unconscious one. He knows that he enjoys more than anything else playing out of doors, roaming the hills, with the

wind in his face, looking for nuts, rabbits or whatever happens to strike his fancy. Sometimes he may be frightened by the vastness or the quietness of nature, but probably he is not able to define his feeling and returns shortly to his earlier occupations as joyously and lightheartedly as ever. The second stage of life sometimes carries with it so much interest in business, politics, literature or science that the individual has little time or inclination to think about or enjoy nature. Sometimes the pleasure he received from nature in his childhood never returns to the mature, aging man; but when it does, then he finds there a solace, a refreshment and a contentment which he has never before discovered or needed.

A far-sighted and imaginative thinker might conjure up three parallel stages of civilization. He likens childhood to the primeval era of man when nature was everything to him and he accepted it unthinkingly as his right. Youth is compared to a material civilization in which there is neither time nor room for a contemplation of nature. The third stage of man represents the 'back to nature' movement which sweeps over the country every now and then. One of these movements showed itself during the last part of the eighteenth century and was noticeable in the foremost countries of Europe. In Germany Goethe was the leader; in France, Rousseau; in England, Wordsworth.

When Wordsworth was a child, he was reckoned an average boy by his playmates and those who knew him well. However, there must have been something different about him judging

from his account of himself in The Prelude and from what he proved to be in later years. The circumstances of his boyhood and young manhood can hardly be overstressed as influences which moulded him and made him what he was. A brief survey of his life will aid tremendously in understanding Wordsworth's type and style of writing and his poetic philosophy. A careful reading of his Lines Composed A Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey, discloses Wordsworth's own division of his life so far as he had lived it in 1798. He spoke of three periods, and it is necessary to add a fourth to include all of his life.[1] The fourth period is a kind of anti-climax and need not be stressed in such a study as this. The first period covers the first ten or twelve years of his life. This includes the first part of his career at Hawkshead grammar school. It is the period of purely animal pleasure in nature. It is mentioned only once in "Tintern Abbey." Then Wordsworth was describing the second period of his life saying that

> The coarser pleasures of my boyish days,
> And their glad animal movements all gone by,[2]

Nature was everything to him.

The second period in his life begins with the last years at Hawkshead and extends to the poet's residence in France in 1791. It must be kept in mind that the dates for the different

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1 See "the three ages" in Arthur Beatty, William Wordsworth, University of Wisconsin. Studies In Language and Literature, Madison, 1927, p. 72.
2 William Wordsworth, op. cit., p. 92, ll. 73, 74.

parts of Wordsworth's life cannot be set arbitrarily. His attitude toward nature and man did not change over night. The dates are used only for purposes of convenience. The changes mentioned were gradual. It was during the second division of his life that nature was "all in all" to him. Consciously and deliberately he sought her company. His was no longer the joy of pure sensation. He said:

> I cannot paint
> What then I was. The sounding cataract
> Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,
> The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
> Their colours and their forms, were then to me
> An appetite; a feeling and a love,
> That had no need of a remoter charm,
> By thought supplied, nor any interest
> Unborrowed from the eye.[3]

The third period, in which he wrote "Tintern Abbey," extends from 1792 approximately to 1805. Wordsworth himself explained the changed outlook which is evident in the third period of his life. He said that he was not sorry that his ideas of nature had developed and changed. He believed that for any loss he might have sustained, he was recompensed in his new mode of thinking.

> 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,
> Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
> To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
> A presence that disturbs me with the joy
> Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean and the living air,
> And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;
> A motion and a spirit, that impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thought,

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3 Ibid., p. 92, l. 75-83.

And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still
A lover of the meadows and the woods,
And mountains; and of all that we behold
From this green earth; of all the mighty world
Of eye, and ear, - both what they half create,
And what perceive; well pleased to recognize
In nature and the language of the sense,
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
Of all my moral being.[4]

In this third period he came to believe that every natural object possessed a soul and was capable of thought and feeling. He endowed the rocks, trees, streams and flowers with personalities. He said that he saw them feel. Such a conception of nature provides fertile soil for the pathetic fallacy.

The fourth stage, which perforce is not found in Tintern Abbey, shows Wordsworth bound more or less to the conventions of the day. His earlier pantheism, or his pantheistic tendencies, gave way before the more conventional idea of God. However, his love for and enjoyment in the natural forms around him did not disappear entirely, and frequently there are hints in his poems of his earlier conception of nature. Harper stressed the significance of the three first and most important divisions in Wordsworth's life. He said of Wordsworth that "his soul lay passive at first; then it awoke to observe actively, and at last to contemplate and respond."[5]

William Wordsworth was born at Cockermouth in the north of the English lake country in 1770. His relatives had lived for generations in the neighborhoods of Yorkshire and Cumber-

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4 Ibid., p. 92, l. 88-111.
5 George McLean Harper, William Wordsworth, New York, Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1916, Vol. I, p. 38.

land and occupied positions in the social strata somewhere between the squires and the yeomen. His father was an attorney-at-law. Students are at a loss to account for the poetic tendencies in several of the Wordsworth children. William's sister, Dorothy, was, in a way, almost as great a poet as he. His brother, John, the sailor, was a man of poetic sympathy and appreciation; yet there is no known poet in the family before this. Wordsworth's mother died when he was eight years old and he was sent to Hawkshead to grammar school. His early years must have been happy ones, when he and his brothers and sister were allowed to play about the terrace of the family garden which overlooked the River Derwent. But the years spent at Cockermouth and Penrith where his grandparents lived did not exert nearly so great an influence as did the years he spent at the grammar school in Hawkshead.

In Hawkshead he lived in the cottage of Dame Tyson. She was a friendly soul and the boy felt more at home with her than with his own relatives who lived at Penrith. "Her cottage was, and is, a grey stone dwelling, two stories high, on a side-street. An ash-tree stood before it, and through its garden sang the imprisoned brook. A sweet harmony bound together the hours in school with the unmeasured time of play and repose in Hawkshead homes, and of adventure in the open country; and the sunny seat 'round the stone table under the dark pine, 'before Dame Tyson's cottage was friendly alike to studious 'or to festive hours.'"[6] The school in Hawkshead

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6 George McLean Harper, op. cit., p. 35.

had very little in common with our present high-pressure system. The boys had ample time to wander through the hills and around the lakes before and after school. Their lessons were all prepared in the school room and they had all of their time outside of school to themselves. During those years at Hawkshead, Wordsworth came very close to nature. He seems to have possessed certain native apptitudes which fitted him for the poet's art. He had an extraordinarily keen organic sensibility and was especially susceptible to nature's stimuli. This keen faculty of perception added to a unique emotional regard for nature provided the necessary combination for a nature poet. These powers were called into play in the environment afforded by the lakes in the neighborhood of Hawkshead, and by reason of the freedom of his school life which permitted him to wander almost at will through nature's domains.

The first book of The Prelude presents a vivid picture of Wordsworth as a growing lad. He roamed about over the hills alone or with his schoolmates. He engaged in all the sports and activities which a healthy, active boy would like. He robbed the bird trap that belonged to someone else, took a small boat out on the lake without permission, and ice-skated every chance he had. The whole country side was one huge playground, and it belonged to him.

Wordsworth had not yet learned to seek out nature's company deliberately. The idea was not yet definitely formed in his mind that nature had a message for him. It is true that he was influenced by her. He often remarked that he was vague-

ly conscious that all nature seemed to be disturbed when he transgressed against the moral code. He explained how greatly he was enjoying his stolen boat-ride

> When, from behind that craggy steep till then
> The horizon's bound, a huge peak, black and huge,
> As if with voluntary power instinct,
> Upreared its head. I struck and struck again,
> And growing still in stature the grim shape
> Towered up between me and the stars, and still,
> For so it seemed, with purpose of its own
> And measured motion like a lively thing,
> Strode after me.[7]

The fact that such an experience so affected Wordsworth is indicative of his sensitive nature. It perhaps marked the beginning of the active observation of which Harper speaks.

The poet often spoke of those early years spent in Esthwaite Vale as being very important in their relation to his mental and spiritual development. He was surrounded by beautiful scenery and responded to that scenery in a manner which showed his poetic temperament.

In the Prelude, Wordsworth's autobiographical poem, he has recorded the powerful influences exerted on him by his physical surroundings. He has written of several incidents which show that influence. In one place he told of his yielding to the temptation to rob the bird-trap which belonged to someone else and how he heard "low breathings" coming after him,

> and sounds
> Of undistinguishible motion, steps
> Almost as silent as the turf they trod.[8]

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7 William Wordsworth, op. cit., p. 29, l. 377-385.
8 Ibid., p. 128, (Prelude, I, 323-325).

If incidents such as this there is evident something more than an ordinary boy's ordinary conception of nature. There is a vague consciousness of a spiritual life in natural objects. The wind utters a strange speech in his ears, and the sky wears an unearthly aspect. He unconsciously projected his own feelings and emotions into the natural objects around him. Once when he was rowing on Esthwaite lake, he said that the craggy peak in front of him grew in stature as he rowed along and seemed a grim form indeed. He rowed back and secured the boat to its mooring. He had taken it without permission and nature was punishing him for the moral offense he had committed.

Such was the religion of William Wordsworth when he entered Cambridge in 1787.

But nature did not always appear to him as an avenging instrument. Very often she aroused in him deep feelings of joy. Ice-skating was a favorite sport for the grammar school students and they had many opportunities for indulging in this pastime, for many of the lakes were shallow and froze solid early in the winter. The boy Wordsworth so enjoyed skating that he described it saying that while he skated, the precipices rang aloud and the bare trees and mountain crags tinkled like iron.

Gradually, as he grew older, Wordsworth came to think of nature deliberately and to pursue consciously the pleasures she afforded. This marked the beginning of the second period of his life of which he spoke in Tintern Abbey. In addition to the purely animal pleasure he derived from contact with

natural forms, he became active in his observation of those forms. Nature's influenced was recognized and Wordsworth sought her company. As was mentioned earlier in the chapter, the change in his mind and attitude was gradual and nearly imperceptible. Looking back over his whole life, scholars are able to detect the development more readily than Wordsworth probably realized it himself. The approximate dates for this stage may be set at 1782 and extend to 1791, or the period of his residence in France.

The boys at Hawkshead were thrown upon their own resources as far as entertainment was concerned. They had very little spending money and were accustomed to storing up what they did have until the sum was large enough to allow them a real holiday. In between 'holidays' they had to amuse themselves as best they could. The territory around Hawkshead provided ample space and opportunity for natural sports. Given such an opportunity, nature was not slow in impressing herself on Wordsworth's mind. The process which she employed is recorded in the first book of The Prelude.

> Ye Presences of Nature in the sky
> And on the earth! Ye Visions of the hills!
> And Souls of lonely places! can I think
> A vulgar hope was yours when ye employed
> Such ministry, when ye through many a year
> Haunting me thus among my boyish sports,
> On caves and trees, upon the woods and hills,
> Impressed upon all forms, the characters
> Of danger or desire; and thus did make
> The surface of the universal earth,
> With triumph and delight, with hope and fear,
> Work like a sea.[9]

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9 Ibid., p. 130, l. 464-475.

At length, in the second book of The Prelude, we find these lines:

> Those incidental charms which first attached
> My heart to rural objects, day by day
> Grew weaker, and I hasten on to tell
> How Nature, intervenient till this time
> And secondary, now at length was sought
> For her own sake.[10]

From that time on, he was alone with nature much of the time. He arose early and walked the five miles around Esthwaite Lake before school. He said that he walked with nature and his mood or spirit was that of "religious love." This is a new aspect. However, Wordsworth hastened on to assure us that he did not lose his "first creative sensibility." There was a plastic power within him which was, for the most part, subservient to natural law. He had reached his seventeenth year.

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

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10 Ibid., p. 135, l. 198-203.

> Most audible, then, when the fleshly ear,
> O'ercome by humblest prelude of that strain,
> Forgot her functions, and slept undisturbed.[11]

His was no longer merely a receptive soul. The creative faculty in him had been awakened. There came to him the knowledge that he had a purpose to fulfill in the world. A little earlier, at approximately ten years of age he is discovered rejoicing in a new power within himself.

> Twice five years
> Or less I might have seen, when first my mind
> With conscious pleasure opened to the charm
> Of words in tuneful order, found them sweet,
> For their own sakes, a passion and a power.[12]

It dawned upon him that man was happiest when his life was the most simple. Shepherds especially appealed to his imagination.

It is evident from what has been said, although the subject has been lightly touched indeed, that the years which William Wordsworth spent at home and especially those at Hawkshead were among the most important years of his life as far as his poetry was concerned. They may be placed along with the seven years when the poet lived at Grasmere.

The second stage of William Wordsworth's life includes the time he spent at Cambridge and the time in which he became interested and anxious about the success or failure of the revolution in France.

The register at Cambridge reveals the information that Wordsworth matriculated at the university on December 17,

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11 Ibid., p. 137, l. 396-418.
12 Ibid., p. 158, (Prelude, V, 552-556).

1787, and that he was granted his Bachelor of Arts degree on January 21, 1791. In his autobiographical notes dictated to his nephew, he has little to say concerning his college career. From his references to it in the Prelude it is gathered that he did not care for it particularly. If any years in a man's life may be said to be unprofitable, then surely the time spent at Cambridge were among the least profitable in Wordsworth's life. He composed almost no poetry there, and there are numerous little hints of discontent to be found in his autobiographical poem.

He was not in sympathy with the formal methods of instruction at the university; they were so very different from the kind of education he had received at Hawkshead. More than that, Wordsworth found it difficult to display as great a reverence for those in authority as was politic. Harper has explained aptly the reason for Wordsworth's dissatisfied feeling about Cambridge. He said "that if Wordsworth had been inclined to purely scholastic pursuits, particularly in theology or mathematics, he need not have complained about his atmosphere of Cambridge being uncongenial."[13] He probably was in sympathy with the religious and political radicals of the university, and the fact that this group was frowned upon by the school authorities may have added to his uncomfortable feeling. At any rate, it is known that he held himself from the majority of the student body.

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13 George McLean Harper, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 61.

By the time he had reached Cambridge, Wordsworth's philosophy had expanded. Then, he attributed not only life but moral life to things. The power working in him is evidence of profound mystical insight. He has given us an interesting description of his feelings concerning nature in the third book of the Prelude.

> I was mounting now
> To such community with highest truth--
> A track pursuing, not untrod before,
> From strict analogies by thought supplied
> Or consciousnesses not to be subdued.
> To every natural form, rock, fruits, or flowers,
> Even the loose stones that cover the highway,
> I gave a moral life: I saw them feel,
> Or linked them to some feeling: the great mass
> Lay imbedded in a quickening soul, and all
> That I beheld respired with inward meaning.
> Add that whate'er of Terror or of Love
> Or Beauty, Nature's daily face put on
> From transitory passion, unto this
> I was as sensitive as waters are
> To the sky's influence in a kindred mood
> Of passion; was obedient as a lute
> That waits upon the touches of the wind.
> Unknown, unthought of, yet I was most rich--
> I had a world about me--'twas my own;
> I made it, for it only lived to me,
> And to the God who sees into the heart.[14]

Wordsworth did not always remain aloof. Sometimes he mingled with the students, enjoying their fellowship. Also he was interested in the memories that were about Cambridge. He was stirred by the thought that illustrious poets and philosophers had lived and worked there for generations. On the whole however, the first part of his stay at the university is disappointing to those of his followers who dislike to find any period in his life of which there could be criticism. His imagination seemed to be comparatively in-

14 William Wordsworth, op. cit., p. 140, (Prelude III, 122-143).

active during much of his college career.

Wordsworth spent one of his summer vacations at Hawkshead; and when he returned to his studies, it was with a refreshed spirit. He could again visit Esthwaite lake and feel his own soul merged with the spirit of nature into one harmonic whole. About this time he received his call to be a poet; and he realized that unless he sinned greatly against the dictates of his conscience he was to be a "dedicated Spirit." He believed that he was possessed of intuitive powers, and that he was called to be nature's oracle. Wordsworth's second vacation that of 1789, was spent visiting the scenes in England which were noted for their beauty. He was joined during the trip by his sister, Dorothy, and Mary Hutchinson who later became his wife. It was in this holiday season that he completed his poem An Evening Walk. In this poem his imagination was allowed to improvise on nature. Instead of using his third summer vacation in preparing for the competitive examinations of the senior year, he decided, with his friend, Robert Jones, to tour the Swiss Alps. It was natural that a visit to one of the most beautiful sections of the whole world should make a deep impression on the poet. He was alert and keenly sensitive to all that nature provided him. Carefully trained for observation, he was able to see things which were not noticed by his companion, who took charge of all the practical affairs which came up during the journey.

His reasons for making the trip are set forth in the sixth book of The Prelude.

When the third summer freed us from restraint,
A youthful friend, he too a mountaineer,
Not slow to share my wishes, took his staff,
And sallying forth, we journeyed side by side,
Bound to the distant Alps. A hardy slight,
Did this unprecedented course imply,
Of college studies and their set rewards;
Nor had, in truth, the scheme been formed by me
Without uneasy forethought of the pain,
The censures, and ill-omening, of those
To whom my worldly interests were dear.
But Nature then was sovereign in my mind,
And mighty forms, seizing a youthful fancy,
Had given a charter to irregular hopes.
In any age of uneventful calm
Among the nations, surely would my heart
Have been possessed by similar desire;
But Europe at that time was thrilled with joy,
France standing on top of golden hours,
And human nature seeming born again.15

The closing lines indicate a growing consciousness of and interest in the affairs of men. He was not yet intimately concerned with the rising tide of discontent in France and Switzerland. He said that he looked upon existing social conditions as from a distance. His mind was so preoccupied with its thoughts of nature that there was little room for anything else.

When Wordsworth graduated from Cambridge, the poet's vocation was the only one that appealed to him. He was not attracted by either the law or the ministry. Not having come to any definite decision concerning his life work, he decided to go to London for a few months. While he was in the metropolis, he saw it with the eyes of a poet. To him the city was alive and capable of feeling. He did not think of it as being composed of numerous individuals, but as a whole. Wordsworth had come a long way since his school days at Hawkshead.

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15 Ibid., p. 163, l. 322-341.

He now had two main themes, nature and man. And of the two, he deemed man the more important. It was his opinion that nature was the best teacher for man, and that eventually she would bring him to a state of "plain living and high thinking."

In 1791 he plunged headlong into the spirit of the French Revolution. The third stage of his life began here and extended to 1805. The revolution aroused high hopes in him that a new era had dawned and that the equality of man was to be an actuality. For him it had more than just a local meaning. It held promise for humanity at large. Even during the Reign of Terror, his faith remained unshaken and he went so far as to consider becoming a leader in the revolutionary movement himself. When England declared war on France, Wordsworth could find no reason to justify the act and he grew bitter at the ministry and the whole system of government. But when he saw emerge from the conflict in France, not the universal brotherhood for which he had hoped, but Napoleon with his armies, his high hopes gave way. It seemed to him that mankind was doomed and he wandered about aimlessly over the country, dejected and despondent.

Wordsworth's interest in France had doubtless been aroused by reason of his tour in 1790. He had been charmed by the people and knew the language fairly well. He was in sympathy with the spirit of the Revolution and was probably actuated by a very human desire to be near the spot where great events were taking place. At any rate, he went to France in November, 1791, planning to spend the entire winter at Orleans. The

Revolution was then progressing in an orderly manner. Anyone who believed in freedom from tyranny had reason to be proud of the orderly way in which that tyranny was being abolished. Feudal privileges had been abolished and the powers which had once belonged to the king were severely reduced. There had been some riots and bloodshed, but, on the whole, the prospects seemed bright.

The Constituent Assembly had passed a law which proved unfortunate. The law forbade the re-election of the members and consequently, when the Assembly dissolved, many of the most able and steady statesmen lost their contacts with political affairs.

Wordsworth had stated that he intended to spend the winter at Orleans, but his stay there and in other French towns was prolonged into a visit of fifteen or sixteen months. The ninth, tenth, and eleventh books of The Prelude are concerned with the poet's residence in France and the effect of his experiences there upon his mind.

After the king had fallen and the Republic had been declared, Wordsworth went to Paris. After two winters he returned to England and remained in London until he and Dorothy settled down in Racedown in 1796.

Wordsworth was bitter in his scorn when England declared war on France. Later he saw France, losing sight of the original goal of the revolution, assume the role of a conquering nation.

> But now, become oppressors in their turn,
> Frenchmen had changed a war of self defense

> For one of conquest, losing sight of all
> Which they had struggled for: up mounted now,
> Openly in the eve of earth and heaven,
> The scale of liberty. I read her doom.
> With anger vexed, with disappointment sore,
> But not dismayed, nor taking to the shame
> Of a false prophet.[16]

He regretted that he had ever turned aside from Nature's way. He said that he was confused, "more and more misguided, and misguiding."[17]

Wordsworth's attitude toward nature had again changed. Where once he accepted her and loved her, now he surveyed her critically and from an impersonal standpoint. She no longer taught him of moral truths, simplicity and beauty.

> the lordly Alps themselves,
> Those rosy peaks, from which the Morning looks
> Abroad on many Nations, are no more
> For me that image of pure gladsomeness
> Which they were wont to be.[18]

He needed time in which to readjust his sense of values. Naturally, these troubled years have a marked significance for his art. In the first place, his sister, Dorothy, saw his restlessness and with sympathy and understanding she guided him back to nature where he was comforted. He returned to nature, but with a difference. His mental attitude was changed and colored by the difficult experiences through which he had just passed. Nature reminded him of man. There was a kind of human note in her and Wordsworth looked to her for consolation, calmness and peace.

Dorothy Wordsworth knew that her brother was destined to

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16 Ibid., p. 204, l. 206-214.
17 Ibid., p. 205, l. 292, 293.
18 Ibid., p. 207, l. 409-413.

be a poet and so, in her efficient way wherever his welfare was at stake, she led him back to the English lakes where he could commune with nature and regain his interest in the life of the humble folk who lived and worked about him. For these reasons the poetry written at Grasmere was intensely human. It has been said that the evidence of passion is not to be found in Wordsworth's poetry, but who can read such poems as Michael, The White Doe of Rylstone and others of the same period and still maintain this opinion? The artist who could write these poems must either have seen great suffering or endured it himself.

Is it possible to find in this period, a period which Professor Dowden might have termed his 'storm and stress' period, any reasons why Wordsworth might have used the pathetic fallacy in his writing? We are aware of the fact that nature was always somewhere in the background of his thinking. We are impressed with the intensity of his feelings, and cannot but feel that almost any fallacy of which he is guilty must be pathetic fallacy. Certainly his feelings were true although his impressions may have been false in some cases. It is to be expected that poems written during this period or concerning it would contain fewer fallacies than those passages in which the poet was intent on describing his beloved nature.

William Wordsworth and his sister moved to Grasmere in 1799 and lived there for eight years, a period which, in the opinion of Wordsworthians, which equals in importance the

years at Hawkshead. Naturally of an austere and somewhat obstinate temperament, the poet was influenced by his sister to see the minute things in nature which were lovely. He became interested in the common people around him, and felt that when not pinched by poverty, those humble men were freer and stronger than when they were weighted down with social trappings. Sometimes he even saw qualities in the common people which were really uncommon, and something in every day experiences that was unique and unusual.

A word should be said about the friendship which developed between Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. They met in 1796 and their acquaintance soon ripened into a firm friendship. For many years the friendship was marred by an unpleasant event. A misunderstanding caused a long estrangement some years later. The two men learned to rely tremendously on each other. Each one knew how to furnish just the stimulant which the other needed. They were both fond of walking and spent considerable time roaming about visiting their friends or merely enjoying their mutual friendship.

The result of their companionship was Lyrical Ballads, a volume which contains some of the best poetry of each author. Together Wordsworth and Coleridge roamed over the hills, along the seashore and planned the Rime of the Ancient Mariner which Coleridge was to write, and which was one of the few poems he ever completed.

Throughout the earlier part of his life, little is said about Wordsworth's religion. He seemed to worship nature as

much as anything. But with the death at sea of his brother, John we find him thinking in terms of the Christian faith rather than the nature faith which he had earlier professed.

A study of Wordsworth's life from 1805 to 1807 shows that he was a very different man from the Wordsworth of the French Revolution. He had bowed to the conventions. He was a property owner and a man of considerable influence in his country. His views concerning nature were undergoing changes. Nature was no longer self-sufficient. But he did not discard his earlier ideas of nature; he expanded them to include the principles of Christianity. Harper says that "at this time he began to respect and appreciate, and later he learned to love, the specific means by which Christendom has attained and embodied religious conceptions."[19]

The period from 1805 until his death in 1850, has been called the anti-climax of Wordsworth's life. Then nature spoke to him less frequently of her divine mysteries. Of it, Harper says:

> He lost much of his confidence in human nature. His sympathies became less general. His admiration went out more and more to the privileged classes, to persons of distinction, to notable events in history. The poor and humble still figured in his poetry, but in smaller proportion, in a less true proportion, considering the part they play in life. Liberty remained dear to him; but equality, which was a vastly more important and imperilled principle, now became a matter for doubt and endless qualifications. The change may not have amounted to apostasy; it was certainly reaction.[20]

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19 George McLean Harper, op. cit., p. 130-31.
20 Ibid., p. 132-33.

In thinking of possible reasons and evidences why Wordsworth may have used the pathetic fallacy, it might be well to set down in a few words his philosophy of nature. In the first place, he believed that nature was endowed with conscious life. Sometimes he gives things and places souls of their own, and at other times he seems to have in mind a universal soul for all natural objects. Then, he conceived of the heart of nature as being a joyful one. He really thought as he said "that every flower enjoys the air it breathes." He thought that birds and even trees and inanimate objects were joyful at times. Besides being happy, nature was also ethical. She was capable of teaching man right from wrong and of punishing him for offenses committed. Nature's life was one of love and wisdom, and it was Wordworth's firm belief that she consciously takes a hand in moulding man's character and personality. To him nature was a moral teacher punishing wrong living and rewarding right as the occasion required. He believed in her power to soothe and comfort anyone in distress, and to minister to him in all her lovely forms and images.

Wordsworth never seemed to be vitally aware of or interested in the cruel side of nature. This fact may be attributed to the mildness of the section of the country in which he lived. The hills were not rugged and sinister there as they are in the great mountain ranges. It is said that one sees what he is looking for, and it may be that Wordsworth was more interested in the beautiful side of nature. He was a lover of nature in the truest sense of the word; and out of

his love for her came his love for man.

A poet with the background and the natural inclinations which belonged to Wordsworth could scarcely have refrained from some use, at least, of the pathetic fallacy. He felt so deeply and was so interested in the two themes which he had chosen for his poetry, that he may have stepped beyond the pale of exact truth in some instances. Whether or not he was justified in any departure from the truth will be discussed in a later chapter.

CHAPTER III

A DISCUSSION OF SOME OF THE PATHETIC FALLACIES FOUND IN THE POEMS OF WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

To the trained observer, it is evident that Wordsworth has made frequent use of the pathetic fallacy, and to those who make a more intensive study of this particular phase of his poetry, it is evident that by far the majority of the fallacies were committed when Wordsworth was writing about natural objects. Such a discovery is not surprising to anyone familiar with the life and activities of the poet. That part of his life in which he was close to nature included the most formative period. Never, throughout the remainder of his busy life, was he allowed to forget for very long at a time the lessons nature taught him.

The fallacies found in Wordsworth's poetry number several hundred. Of those pertaining to natural objects, the majority allude to water. Many of them concern the sun, moon, flowers, trees, wind, and hills. Stars, clouds, rocks, birds, and the sky were all used by Wordsworth, but less often.

Most of the pathetic fallacies occur in Wordsworth's so-called nature poems. However, when he was speaking of individuals, politics, or church affairs, he sometimes inserted a reference to some natural object in which the pathetic fallacy appeared. Finding fallacies in such unexpected places is rather conclusive evidence that nature and her influences were never very far away from the poet, and that in moments of great emotion he returned to her for his illustrations. Nature was dis-

covered to be in happy, stern, or sad moods, depending on the feeling of Wordsworth when he was writing. Sometimes the thought that the very stars fought in their courses and that all nature was out of tune. At other times the sun smiled genially, the trees nodded gently, and all things were peaceful. There was no discordant note anywhere.

A study of some of the fallacies themselves will help to clarify any questions arising concerning them. Since examination shows that there are more pathetic fallacies used in connection with the subject of water than with any other subject, some of these will be discussed first.

> Far from my dearest Friend, 'tis mine to rove
> Through bare gray dell, high wood, and pastoral cove;
> Where Derwent rests, and listens to the roar
> That stuns the tremulous cliffs of high Lodore.[1]

Such are the opening lines of An Evening Walk. It was composed at school during Wordsworth's first two college vacations. He made the statement years later in the introductory notes to the poems that there was not an image in it which he had not observed and was not able to recall at the age of seventy-three. He did not give voice to his feelings at the time of his experience, but rather he allowed the experience to impress itself on his mind; and later he was able to remember that which was most characteristic. In this way he acted in accordance with his theory that poetry is "emotion recollected in tranquillity." His almost unique theory has brought the charge against him that his work is lacking in passion. However, an acceptance of

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1 William Wordsworth, op. cit., p. 3, ll. 1-4.

the word of the poet himself and a study of his life and poetry leads one to conclude that in a great many cases, at least, Wordsworth was actuated by the deepest of emotions. Knowing the tremendous influence which natural objects exerted on Wordsworth, one can well imagine that he really believed that the river Derwent rested and listened to the "roar that stunned the tremulous cliffs of high Lodore." The word 'tremulous' seems to indicate an effort to reproduce a natural scene which the poet himself had seen.

The entire poem, one of the first ever published by Wordsworth, has many faults. Dorothy Wordsworth regretted that her brother had not had someone read and correct it before it went to the press. There are a great many phrases and quirks of style which belonged to other writers. Yet that poem has a great many good points. Of the poem, Harper says:

> Remembering the enthusiasm of Coleridge, we can do no less than look below the diction and the versification for some deeper quality. And here we find an occasional directness of observation, an occasional freshness of energy, which are indeed worthy of note. The poem is scarcely more than a series of ill-connected pictures, but these pictures, one feels, are records of real sensations. This is the beginning of naturalness. None can doubt that the writer had seen most of the things he described.[2]

The experiences recorded in the poem came to Wordsworth while he was young, and his happy, carefree existence made him believe that

> In foamy breaks the rill, with merry song,
> Dashed o'er the rough rock, lightly leaps along.[3]

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2 George McLean Harper, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 191.
3 William Wordsworth, op. cit., p. 5, l. 136-37.

This was giving the brook human qualities which it did not possess. It gave to water the power to be glad and to sing. It also leaves the impression with the reader that the stream was leaping along because of sheer joy, and not because it was a mountain stream with rocks in its bed, and must, perforce, flow swiftly. Wordsworth was accustomed to seeing mountain streams and it was easy for him to see in the motion of the water an inward life and consciousness. Since his mind was so keenly susceptible to all natural influences, it was no hard task for him really to believe this. The fallacy just quoted was taken from the poem An Evening Walk.

During a walk along the banks of the Cam, Wordsworth became impressed by the bright reflection cast on the water by the sun's last rays. He watched the bright spots on the water grow dimmer, and it came to him that the aspirations of youthful poets were like the surface of the water when it was bright. It is the young poet's fond belief that his ambitions for poetry will never fade.

> How richly glows the water's breast
> Before us, tinged with evening hues,
> While, facing thus the crimson west,
> The boat her silent course pursues!
> And see how dark the backward stream!
> A little moment past so smiling!
> And still, perhaps, with faithless gleam,
> Some other loiterers beguiling.[4]

Wordsworth projected his own emotions into the stream and so saw it smiling at first, but fickle underneath as was the fortune which often befell young poets. In another mood, Words-

4 Ibid., p. 9, ll. 1-8. (Lines Written While Sailing in a Boat at Evening).

worth would have seen the stream in an entirely different light.

The poem Ruth was written in Germany. Its subject was suggested to him by the account given him of a certain wanderer. Harper says that Ruth "is a study of moral evil, prompted and mitigated by the influences of natural beauty. The subject is the abandonment of an innocent woman by her husband, a man of genius and charm. Wild nature, amid whose glories he had roved, made this man indifferent to human feeling and to moral obligation. But to the heart-broken Ruth, nature, with grand impartiality, gave solace in her years of sorrow."[5] It is characteristic of Wordsworth that when all hope had gone, he made Ruth turn to nature for consolation and aid. During the three years which the mentally unbalanced woman lived in the prison, she had natural objects near her.

> They were all with her in her cell;
> And a clear brook with cheerful knell
> Did o'er the pebbles play.[6]

The lover of nature can understand how a small, clear, shallow stream might be believed to be playing around and among the pebbles. He can also understand how a mind wrung with grief might hear in the cheerful noise of the brook a knell which was a reminder of sorrows, past and future. Ordinarily the use of the word 'knell' in such a way would seem incongruous, but it is in keeping with the rest of the poem Ruth, and is not inharmonious.

The Prelude, Wordsworth's 'magnus opus', was intended to

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5 George McLean Harper, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 375.
6 William Wordsworth, op. cit., p. 121, ll. 202-04.

show the growth and development of the poet's mind, and it is, therefore, invaluable in throwing light on his views of nature. When he was ready to write the poem, the first few lines came spontaneously. Then came a period in which he was discouraged and felt that he was not making sufficient progress. He was confident that nature had a work for him to do, but it was extremely difficult for him to express his thoughts and feelings as he desired. He felt that he was being untrue to his calling and wrote in his disappointment:

> Was it for this
> That one, the fairest of all rivers, loved
> To blend his murmurs with my nurse's song,
> And from his alder shades and rocky falls,
> And from his fords and shallows, sent a voice
> That flowed along my dreams?[7]

The poetry just quoted reveals without doubt that Wordsworth believed in the power of the river to change its murmur to suit his nurse's song. It shows his belief that all his life, nature and all natural objects were deliberately training him for the task he was to pursue in later years. In this particular part of the poem, Wordsworth gives to the river a soul of its own instead of endowing all nature with one universal soul as he did in some of his other poems. When the reader stops to think, he knows that water is not capable of thought and speech; and yet he finds himself swept along with Wordsworth in this particular passage. The allusion is not a jarring one, and the reader is almost tempted to believe that perhaps the river really could think and talk.

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7 Ibid., p. 128, ll. 269-74.

With a characteristic use of the pathetic fallacy, Wordsworth describes the morning of the day in which he determined to be a poet. He had spent the entire night in revelry. Before the merry company dispersed the new day had begun to dawn. He started home alone, his heart brimful of happiness. All nature, responsive to his mood, was gay.

> Magnificent
> The morning rose, in memorable pomp,
> Glorious as e'er I had beheld -- in front
> The sea lay laughing at a distance; near,
> The solid mountains shone, bright as the clouds,
> Grain-tinctured, drenched in empyrean light;
> And in the meadows and the lower grounds
> Was all the sweetness of a common dawn.[8]

The feeling in this case was true. It was an emotion of pure joy. But the sea has never laughed, and the chances are that it did not laugh as Wordsworth thought it did. It was a false impression caused by the intensity of his emotion. Perhaps it is a little hard for the average person to understand just how it can be that any man in his right mind could seriously believe that the sea was laughing. But it must be kept in mind that Wordsworth had an artistic temperament and an unusually keen susceptibility to all natural forms. Also, all his life he had been conscious of a personality in nature. She had talked with him, and he knew and loved her.

Mention has been made of the river, brook, and sea in merry moods. But it was not always thus. In the fifth book of the Prelude, he described nature as grieving because man is thoughtless of the pleasures and opportunities she affords

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8 Ibid., p. 150, ll. 323-29.

him. All natural forms were sorrowful.

> In their woodland beds the flowers
> Weep, and the river sides are all forlorn.[9]

Child of nature that he was, it was natural for Wordsworth to lament any seeming departure from the plan he thought was mapped out by mother earth for man's good. Wordsworth himself was forlorn and all the flowers and the river banks sympathized with him. Like many other passages written by this same poet, the lines sound quite far-fetched when they are taken from their proper setting. But read with the lines which go with them, and in the spirit in which they were written, they assume altogether a different aspect.

In the chapter just preceding there was a brief discussion of Wordsworth's attitude toward mankind. It was pointed out that nature taught him to love mankind, and that he was most interested and most in sympathy with the simple life. This love of nature and love of man are closely knit together in the eighth book of the Prelude. The poet had been describing an assembly of the common rural and village folk. He portrayed in minute detail their physical appearances and their occupations. Then he went ahead to express his conviction that all nature loved the common people and looked on with complacency and pride as they went about plying their humble tasks. It was a very sincere and convinced poet who spoke of the people thus:

> Them the morning light
> Loves, as it glistens on the silent rocks;

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9 Ibid., p. 166, ll. 339-40.

> And them the silent rocks, which now from high
> Look down upon them; the reposing clouds;
> The wild brooks prattling from invisible haunts;
> And old Helvellyn, conscious of the stir
> Which animates this day their strange abode.[10]

Now it matters little how deserving anyone is of love, he does not receive any affection from a brook. If he is an artist with the same ideas concerning nature, he might believe that the brook loves him, but the fact remains that water has no mind and is not capable of bestowing affection anywhere. Neither does a brook prattle. To say that it does places it on a level with human beings. Nevertheless, Wordsworth loved man and he loved nature. He believed that both were possessed of souls and therefore, why should the brook not love all mankind?

In the concluding book of the Prelude, Wordsworth tells how he was moved to see the sunrise from the top of Snowdon; how at midnight he roused a trusty guide and they sallied forth. The night was dark and misty, and the trip, for the most part, was made in silence. Occasionally the dog which accompanied them unearthed a hedgehog and barked loudly at his discovery. The mountain side was steep and the travellers were breathing hard before they reached the summit. The poet was walking ahead when, suddenly, the mist began to clear away and the moon was plainly seen. The surrounding country was visible and as Wordsworth looked out to sea, he was profoundly moved by what he saw there. Far out in the ocean he could discern headlands and promontories jutting out into the

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10 Ibid., p. 179, ll. 63-69.

main Atlantic. In the sky

> Only the inferior stars
> Had disappeared, or shed a fainter light
> In the clear presence of the full-orbed moon,
> Who, from her sovereign elevation, gazed
> Upon the billowy ocean, as it lay
> All meek and silent, save that through a rift --
> Not distant from the shore whereon we stood,
> A fixed, abysmal, gloomy, breathing space --
> Mounted the roar of waters, torrents, streams
> Innumerable, roaring with one voice!
> Heard over earth and sea, and, in that hour,
> For so it seemed, felt by the starry heavens.[11]

Wordsworth's impression was faulty when he thought that the sea was meek. Meekness is a quality which can never be accurately attributed to the sea. There is a feeling of power and ruthlessness in the mind of the majority of people who watch the sea. However, it would be a bold critic indeed, who could accuse Wordsworth of insincerity in this incident.

Again, he talks of the way in which the turbulent mountain brook broadens out into the quiet meadow. As in a fallacy discussed above, the poet seems to feel that the stream's course down the hillside was voluntary and full of glee. Giving the water some of the qualities of human beings, he said that after allowing the young brook to learn his strength, nature led him out into the quiet meadows. He likened the career of the stream to his own life and in the Recluse he explained her process in this way:

> But me hath nature tamed, and bade to seek
> For other agitations, or be calm;
> Hath dealt with me as with a turbulent stream,
> Some nursling of the mountains which she leads
> Through quiet meadows, after he has learnt
> His strength, and had his triumph and his joy,

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11 Ibid., p. 217, ll. 51-62.

His desperate course of tumult and of glee.[12]

Grief has power to warp minds so that things appear differently from that which they really are. In a short poem which he has entitled 'Tis Said That Some Have Died For Love, Wordsworth has caught the mental anguish which must have characterized the man who grieved for his dead loved one. It is doubtful whether any lover who was not a poet would have said just the things Wordsworth made him say; but he would have felt that the elements must respond in some way to his grief. Very likely the pleasant sound of the brook had once pleased him, but now "it haunts the air." All of his being is so affected that he cannot resist crying out:

> Roll back, sweet Rill! back to thy mountain-bounds,
> And there forever be thy waters chained!
> For thou dost haunt the air with sounds
> That cannot be sustained;
> If still beneath that pine-tree's ragged bough
> Headlong your waterfall must come,
> Oh let it then be dumb!
> Be anything, sweet Rill, but that which thou art now.[13]

The White Doe of Rylstone was written in 1807, two years after the death of Wordsworth's sailor brother, John. The poet's disappointment over the outcome of the French Revolution and his grief for his brother had caused him to think more seriously about the meaning of life from a religious standpoint. His views had developed gradually from a belief in the sufficiency of nature herself to a belief which made nature more or less subservient to the will of a divine power. At any rate, it is interesting to note that while Wordsworth's ideas had

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12 Ibid., p. 230, ll. 726-32.
13 Ibid., p. 256, ll. 29-36.

undergone considerable change, yet he never broke entirely away from his own idea of nature. Whenever he described anything in nature, he frequently confused human and natural qualities. And so in his description of Rylstone Hall and its surroundings, he wrote:

> The garden pool's dark surface, stirred
> By the night insects in their play,
> Breaks into dimples small and bright.[14]

There could be comments about this quotation as to whether insects consciously play or not. Certainly, the ripples on the water could not be mistaken by a clear thinker for dimples, by such a statement, I do not imply that Wordsworth was not a thinker; but he was so affected by natural scenes that it was easy and natural for him to attribute to the pool a soul and a personality. The poetry leaves the impression that the garden pool was an entity which was pleased and flattered that the night insects would choose it for a playground.

Wordsworth, in commenting on his own collection of sonnets, called The River Duddon emphasized the fact that "the power of waters over the minds of Poets has been acknowledged from the earliest ages."[15] He used to supplement his own opinion, the "simple ejaculation" of Burns:

> The Muse, nae Poet ever fand her,
> Till by himsel' he learned to wander,
> Adown some trotting burn's meander,
> And na' think lang.[16]

Sonnet twenty-nine tells of a burial-place and ends with

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14 Ibid., p. 372, ll. 29-31.
15 Ibid., p. 884.
16 Ibid., p. 884.

the declaration that although no record tells of the combat which had taken place or of those who lost their lives,

> Yet, to the loyal and the brave who lie
> In the blank earth, neglected and forlorn,
> The passing winds memorial tribute pay;
> The Torrents chant their praise inspiring scorn
> Of power usurped; with proclamation high,
> And glad acknowledgment, of lawful sway.17

All through Wordsworth's poetry there can be traced evidences of this belief in the power of water to think and to help mankind. This is not the first time that he declares the water to be chanting the praises of someone or something. Not every writer could make such a statement and escape accusations of a too vivid imagination. But knowing Wordsworth's life and philosophy, one finds that the explanation of the line is simple. Of course, the torrents do not chant praises, nor do the "passing winds memorial tribute pay;" but they are pleasant lines and present pleasant ideas, the idea of a close inter-relationship between nature and man. Doubtless at the time he wrote these lines, Wordsworth believed them to be true. It must have brought him a feeling of content and happiness to listen to the water, or nature chanting praises to his other love, man.

One other illustration will suffice to show how profoundly Wordsworth was affected by water all through his life. In 1833, at the age of sixty-three, the love of travel was still in him. He enjoyed traveling; sometimes he found new material for poems, and sometimes its chief value lay in the rest and refreshment he received. In the spring of 1833, he and Mrs. Wordsworth visited their son John at Moresby Rectory and in the autumn he,

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17 Ibid., p. 600, Sonnet 29, ll. 9-14.

with Crabb Robinson, visited the Isle of Man, Burns' country, in addition to other places. A little later, he and his wife visited in the north-east part of the Lake Country. As a result of the trips made in 1833, we have a collection of poems, mostly sonnets. One of the sonnets is called Nunnery. In it there is a description of the river Croglin in flood season.

> The floods are roused, and will not soon be weary;
> Down from the Pennine Alps how fiercely sweeps
> Croglin, the stately Eden's tributary!
> He raves, or through some moody passage creeps
> Plotting new mischief -- out again he leaps
> Into broad light, and sends, through regions airy
> That voice which soothed the Nuns while on the steeps
> They knelt in prayer, or sang to blissful Mary.[18]

By no means all of the pathetic fallacies to be found in Wordsworth concern water. Many of them are about the sun and a few of them will be discussed briefly.

Once while the poet was a student at Hawkshead, he, with some of his schoolmates, was resting in a boat in the shade of some magnificent sycamore trees. It was evening and about time for the sun to go down. The genial atmosphere of the place awakened a sense of peace and contentment in the boy, and it seemed to him that all things in nature responded to his mood. Even the mighty sun felt kind and at peace with the world. The poem, Extract, was written when Wordsworth was sixteen years old, although it was not published until 1815. It closes with these lines:

> Thus, while the Sun sinks down to rest
> Far in the regions of the west,
> Though to the vale no parting beam
> Be given, not one memorial gleam,
> A lingering light he fondly throws
> On the clear hills where first he rose.[19]

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18 Ibid., p. 720, ll. 4-8.
19 Ibid., p. 2, ll. 9-14.

The reader has little difficulty in understanding the emotions of the boy, Wordsworth. A great many people have had similar feelings, but have lacked the ability to express them in poetry.

Mention has already been made of the poet's journey through Switzerland with his Welsh friend, Robert Jones. The Alpine lakes reminded him of those in the northern part of England, and he remarked that nothing he had seen in nature impressed him so much as some of the beauty spots he discovered in the Alps. The glories of the sunset always thrilled Wordsworth and he often thought that the sun paused in its course for various purposes. Such an event was very improbable although not unheard of. Did not Joshua cause the sun to stand still? As he stood on some mountain top, watching the sun go down, he was so thrilled by the sight that in recording his emotions in Descriptive Sketches, he wrote:

> The tall sun, pausing on an Alpine spire,
> Flings o'er the wilderness a stream of fire.[20]

It is puzzling to know what the poet meant when he spoke of a "tall sun," but the fallacy of the sun's "pausing" can be seen readily. It seems ridiculous when the phrase is taken out of the proper setting; yet the feeling is not a strange one by any means. Perhaps it is more common to the majority of people than they realize.

Numerous passages may be found referring to the sun as fondly throwing a lingering light over the earth. In The Waggoner, the sun is merry. This time the mood of the sun is

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20 Ibid., p. 17, ll. 553-54.

in contrast with that upon which it shines. It was a mischievous sun shining on the Waggoner and his Sailor-friend. The horses were straining every muscle trying to make up for lost time and were breathing heavily. On all the sorry party,

> With slant ray, the merry sun
> Takes delight to play upon.[21]

More than once the sun is spoken of as having an eye, and as keeping a watch over the human beings on earth. Whenever a fallacy occurs, it must be studied from the standpoint of the character who uses it. Sometimes it comes from the mind and thinking of the poet himself, while other times the fallacy is used by a character within the poem. In The White Doe of Rylstone, Norton went to encourage the chieftains of the North who were showing signs of fear of the Royal Army sent out from London. After his address was delivered, he went back through the host thinking hard thoughts. He had so carefully prepared the banner for the Northern lords to carry, and had so willingly led eight of his sons to combat. Was he to be scorned for wanting to go ahead and meet the enemy? His thoughts on his way back to his sons ran in the following manner:

> And have I borne
> This Banner raised with joyful pride,
> This hope of all posterity,
> By those dread symbols sanctified;
> Thus to become at once the scorn
> Of babbling winds as they go by,
> A spot of shame to the sun's bright eye,
> To the light clouds of mockery!.[22]

It is the cry of deep disappointment and chagrin. He was

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21 Ibid., p. 338, ll. 106-07.
22 Ibid., p. 370-71, ll. 252-59.

deeply humiliated to think that his chieftains could be afraid and leave the battle field even before they had fought. He had faith in his religious belief and was willing to defend it against all opposition. He was humiliated both for himself and for the banner which he carried, and he felt that even the "babbling winds" and the "bright eye" of the sun must scorn them. The winds do not babble, and the sun does not spend its time looking down on men and criticizing them for their shortcomings.

Of a sonnet called On the Departure of Sir Walter Scott From Abbotsford, For Naples, the Cambridge editors say "there is no finer tribute of one great poet to another than is found in this poem."[23] The poem is typically Wordsworthian. It tells of natural forms joining in a long lament because of Scott's departure. It speaks of totally impossible things such as weeping rain and the pathetic light of the sun. The poem is impressive for its sincerity. It does not take long studying of Wordsworth's life to discover that he admired Scott tremendously. He was not intimate with him, although he visited in Scott's home during at least one of his tours. Scott did not live long after this poem was written, and his death, coming near the same time as that of Lamb, Coleridge, and Sara Hutchinson, caused Wordsworth much grief between the years of 1833 and 1837. The sonnet mentioned above opens with these lines:

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23 Ibid., p. 899.

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23 Ibid., p. 899.

A trouble, not of clouds, or weeping rain,
Nor of the setting sun's pathetic light
Engendered, hangs o'er Eildon's triple height;
Spirits of power, assembled there, complain
For kindred Power departing from their sight;
While Tweed, best pleased in chanting a blithe strain,
Saddens his voice again, and yet again.[24]

Some of the fallacies concern the moon. One reference is found in the fourth book of the Prelude. Wordsworth was spending one of his college vacations with Dame Tyson at Hawkshead. He was delighted to be there again and to relive some of his memories of childhood days. He told how good it seemed to him to sleep again in his accustomed bed where he so many times

Had lain awake on summer nights to watch
The moon in splendour couched among the leaves
Of a tall ash, that near our cottage stood;
Had watched her with fixed eyes while to and fro
In the dark summit of the waving tree
She rocked with every impulse of the breeze.[25]

It was a childish thought, yet, to a boy of Wordsworth's temperament and feeling a natural one. He had the same belief in the moon as in other natural forms, a belief which has been commented upon elsewhere. The thought evidenced in this passage is quite common in varying forms to children today. Many a child thinks that the moon is following him as he travels along the highway. It is not hard to think of the moon as a gentle, lovely goddess who lives in the sky.

In his great Ode on Intimations of Immortality, Wordsworth told of his different attitudes towards the earth; he told how his feeling toward it changed with the years. But in spite of all its changes, he still felt that the moon was endowed with

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24 Ibid., p. 687, ll. 1-7.
25 Ibid., p. 147, ll. 87-92.

a soul and could feel delight. He said:

> The Rainbow comes and goes,
> And lovely is the Rose,
> The moon doth with delight
> Look round her when the heavens are bare.
> Waters on a stormy night
> Are beautiful and fair;
> The sunshine is a glorious birth;
> But yet I know, where'er I go,
> That there hath passed away a glory from the earth.[26]

The rainbow, rose and water are described and given their true qualities, but the moon is given a personality. Usually Wordsworth's emotions are pleasant ones when he is thinking of the moon. In one place he spoke of her as "sullen" but ordinarily she is gentle and affable. In a short, eight-lined stanza Wordsworth attributes to her an impossible quality, that of modest pride.

> As the clear Moon with modest pride
> Beholds her own bright beams
> Reflected from the Mountain's side
> And from the headlong streams.[27]

In still another eight-lined stanza she is called the Queen of Night. This poem was written around 1846 when Wordsworth was seventy-six years old; and there are traces in it of his old belief in the moon in the passage quoted from his memories of his childhood days. He still, actuated by an intense love for all natural forms, gave human qualities to natural objects. He saw the moon chasing scattered clouds over the sky, saw her struggling to free herself from a hidden place back of the clouds; and finally he saw her walking again in the "clear blue sky." By the time he had reached such an advanced age, he doubtless knew

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26 Ibid., p. 354, ll. 10-18.
27 Ibid., p. 781, ll. 5-8.

that the moon did not really possess the characteristics which he had assigned to it. But the beliefs of childhood and the habits of a lifetime sometimes proved too much for him, and he saw again as he had seen in his younger days.

It is a long way from the moon to the humble flowers that bloomed on the hillsides and along the lakes, but Wordsworth's love for nature reached the one as easily as the other. He must have agreed with Shakespeare who has the Duke say in the Forest of Arden, that he could find "tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in everything."[28] Going back again to those formative years at Hawkshead, Wordsworth described how he and his schoolmates were accustomed to ride madly over the country side. Then he stopped to describe the song of a wren and tell how it moved him so that he would have been satisfied to remain near the church where it sang and listen to it all day. He said he could have listened

> Though from recent showers
> The earth was comfortless, and, touched by faint
> Internal breezes, sobbings of the place
> And respirations, from the roofless walls
> The shuddering ivy dripped large drops.[29]

Here Wordsworth, with his extreme sensitivity is telling us that the ivy shuddered which, if true, would be indeed phenomenal. Plants do not shudder. They may be blown and shaken by the wind, but they cannot accurately be said to shudder. Shuddering is a verb to describe the action of human beings, not the condition of plants.

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28 William Shakespeare, op. cit., p. 213.
29 William Wordsworth, op. cit., p. 134, ll. 120-124.

This ability of Wordsworth to see things in natural objects which are not there, or at least are not seen by ordinary eyes, is carefully explained in the third book of The Prelude. There the poet convinces the reader of the sincerity of his philosophy. Some critics may call him "queer," but it can be plainly seen that he really felt that all natural forms were possessed of souls. He even said that he saw them feel.

> To every natural form, rocks, fruits, or flower,
> Even the loose stones that cover the highway,
> I gave a moral life: I saw them feel,
> Or linked them to some feeling: the great mass
> Lay embedded in a quickening soul, and all
> That I beheld respired with inward meaning.[30]

Such was Wordsworth's belief in nature. It included all natural objects and did not confine itself to the larger and more imposing forms. He saw life and intelligence in the smallest of plants and the narrowest of rivers. For him all nature possessed emotional possibilities and his feelings were stirred by the smallest bird or the most gorgeous sunset alike. When the student deals with Wordsworth's manner of description, he must bear in mind the fact that he is considering the style of a man whose early habits and impressions were different from the habits of a modern American.

On the thirtieth of April, 1802, William Wordsworth and his sister, Dorothy, paced up and down in their orchard. He was composing a poem, To The Small Celandine, and was reciting it to his sister. The next day he wrote another poem and called it To The Same Flower. He had made a minute study of natural objects under the direction of his sister, and so he

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30 Ibid., p. 140, l. 127-132.

could compare the celandine with the primrose. He called the rose "patient", while the celandine seemed to be of a brighter, gayer nature. Speaking to the celandine he said:

> Blithe of heart, from week to week
> Thou dost play at hide-and-seek;
> While the patient primrose sits
> Like a beggar in the cold.[31]

The Excursion tells of an interesting experience. A group of friends had gathered on the lake shore for a picnic. The diversions of the little company were many and varied. Some of the younger boys raced up and down the shore; a girl sang as she busied herself around the fire; the entire party skipped stones and later they gathered wild flowers. Wordsworth says:

> Rapaciously we gathered flowery spoils
> From land and water, lilies of each hue --
> Golden and white, that float upon the waves,
> And court the wind; and leaves of that shy plant,
> (Her flowers were shed) the lily of the vale,
> That loves the ground, and from the sun with holds
> Her pensive beauty; from the breeze her sweets.[32]

The blue violet is often spoken of as a shy violet. Ordinarily it signifies simply the flower's tendency to grow best in the damp, dim places beside some stream. The student of Wordsworth's life and poetry would be able to gather considerable material to support an opinion that in using the word "shy", the poet really meant just what he said. Passages have been quoted showing that at different times he thought the moon was modestly proud and the sun, merry. Why should not a flower be shy? The lily of the valley does not love the ground. It simply is not the nature of the plant to grow tall. Neither does it voluntarily with hold its beauty from the sun --

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31 Ibid., p. 280, l. 33-36.
32 Ibid., p. 521, ll. 538-44.

that is to say, in the opinion of the average man. But to Wordsworth it did.

The Warning was not a nature poem. However, its opening lines concern the ground flowers of March. The note preceding the poem indicates that it was written "during the fever spread through the nation by the Reform Bill."[33] The poet was sixty-three years of age and yet here is his old belief in nature making its appearance. In the last illustration the flowers were shy; in this, they are meek and afraid.

> List, the winds of March are blowing;
> Her ground flowers shrink, afraid of showing
> Their meek heads to the nipping air,
> Which ye feel not, happy pair
> Sunk into a kindly sleep.[34]

Besides flowers, Wordsworth loved trees and leaves. Probably his Whirl-Blast From Behind the Hill is one of the most frequently quoted of his poems. Usually it is cited to prove his belief in the life and personality of natural forms. It may serve a second purpose, -- that of illustrating the pathetic fallacy. For this poem, we have exact information concerning its source. The source which provided the subject matter was observed in the holly grove at Alfoxden. The time of writing was the spring of 1799. In the poem, Wordsworth makes the leaves all skip and hop just as children do. His intense joy in watching them made him think that they were dancing out of sheer joy. And thus his strong feeling caused a false impression, for leaves bounced aimlessly about by hailstones have no thought or intention of skipping just for fun.

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33 Ibid., p. 702.
34 Ibid., p. 702, ll. 1-5.

The quotation follows:

> But see! where'er the hailstones drop
> The withered leaves all skip and hop;
> There's not a breeze -- no breath of air--
> Yet here, and there, and every where
> Along the floor, beneath the shade
> By those embowering hollies made,
> The leaves in myriads jump and spring,
> As if with pipes and music rare
> Some Robin Good-fellow were there,
> And all those leaves, in festive glee,
> Were dancing to the minstrelsy.[35]

In a lilting little poem entitled Stray Pleasures, Wordsworth told of the pleasure received from watching a man and two girls dance on a boat on the Thames. They were not dancing for him, but he was enjoying the sight. In a burst of philosophy, he explained that in just such a way, stray pleasures spread all through the earth. They were gifts for whoever might find them. From his description of the dancing, he might be expected to describe some phase of nature, and he did not fail his readers. But, although his emotions were true, his impressions were faulty. He wrote:

> The showers of the spring
> Rouse the birds and they sing;
> If the wind do but stir for his proper delight,
> Each leaf, that and this, his neighbor will kiss;
> Each wave, one and t'other, speeds after his brother:
> They were happy, for that is their right![36]

In a sonnet written in 1819, there is found the story of one who "was suffering tumult in his soul." He could find no relief for his suffering, and in despair, he went out into the storm. There, while the thunder crashed and the wind whistled about him, he chanced to look up into the heavens and saw a

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35 Ibid., p. 83, ll. 12-22.
36 Ibid., p. 344, ll. 31-36.

patch of blue sky. It was unexpected and seemed to him a portent of good things to come. The storm without and the tempest within his heart combined in warping his reason, so that the trees that tossed in the wind seemed frenzied creatures to him, and he saw them in the dim light "tear the lingering remnant of their yellow hair." This is true pathetic fallacy. The disturbed mind of the man projected itself in the natural forms about him and he truly thought that nature was in sympathy with his emotions. Wordsworth wrote that he

> Went forth -- his course surrendering to the care
> Of the fierce wind, while mid-day lightnings prowl
> Insiduously, untimely thunders growl;
> While trees, dim-seen, in frenzied numbers tear
> The lingering remnant of their yellow hair,
> And shivering wolves, surprised with darkness, howl
> As if the sun were not.[37]

Wordsworth sensed life in the wind and air as much as in any other natural form. Not once, but frequently the wind whispered messages to him. The air was alive and he was sensitive to its moods. He has recorded in the Prelude things that happened to him while he was a resident of France. He reported that as he sat in the sun near the Bastille, the little "zephyrs sported with the dust." It is easy to imagine a man like Wordsworth sitting in quiet contemplation while a slight breeze shifted the dust particles at his feet. This was the poet who advocated waiting quietly while nature taught her lesson. The emotion here represented is not a showy one but the true feeling is there anyway. The wind that moved the dust around probably really appeared to Wordsworth as if it

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[37] Ibid., p. 567, ll. 3-9.

were acting consciously and with a purpose in mind. He said:

> Where silent zephyrs sported with the dust
> Of the Bastille, I sate in the open sun.[38]

The feeling left with the reader is one of restfullness. It calls to mind a picture of a sort of pleasant idleness which, at some time or other, sounds inviting to everyone.

In the opening lines of The Recluse, the influences of the natural scenery surrounding Grasmere are described. The things that appealed to a growing boy -- Wordsworth himself -- were recounted. The description of the hills and valleys is followed by a statement that the boy was stirred emotionally by what he saw. He saw the clouds and the winds playing, saw the breezes chasing each other through the fields of grain that dotted the hillsides.

> For rest of body perfect was the spot,
> All that luxurious nature could desire;
> But stirring to the spirit; who could gaze
> And not feel motions there? He thought of clouds
> That sail on winds: of breezes that delight
> To play on water, or in endless chase
> Pursue each other through the yielding plain
> Of grass or corn, over and through and through,
> In billow after billow, evermore
> Departing.[39]

Here again the breezed are taking delight in their opportunity to play on the water; and then they enjoy playing at hide-and-seek in the fields. These are impossible assertions for one with an over-practical mind, but they might easily be made and believed by someone with the soul of a poet. If there could be any criticism on the lines just quoted, it might be said that breezes do not move in billows even to artistic souls.

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38 Ibid., p. 188, ll. 67-68.
39 Ibid., p. 222, ll. 22-31.

It is difficult to see how even intense emotion could produce such an impression.

In an earlier quotation, the water was chanting praises. About the year 1802 when Wordsworth was so interested in the outcome of the French Revolution, he wrote a sonnet To Toussaint L'Ouverture. Toussaint L'Ouverture was a negro emancipator in one of the islands of the coast of South America. He advocated freedom from tyranny and in this, he and Wordsworth were kindred spirits. Throughout the years in which Wordsworth was worried about the Revolution, nature was more or less in the background of his thinking, while the welfare of humanity was outstanding in his mind. Yet frequently, there appeared some of his work which showed a blending of his two great themes, nature and man. In the sonnet To Toussaint L'Ouverture, Wordsworth exhorted him to keep up his courage, telling him that he had set in motion powers which could not be stopped. Nature appeared in the poem.

> Thou hast left behind
> Powers that will work for thee; air, earth, and skies;
> There's not a breathing of the common wind
> That will forget thee.[40]

In a sonnet founded, the poet tells us, on simple fact, Wordsworth pleads for greater tolerance in religious affairs. The poem, At Albano, tells of the depressing effect which mist and wind had upon his spirits. He tells how upon his confession of his feelings, he was cheered by a peasant woman. That part of the sonnet which concerns the pathetic fallacy is the description of the weather with which the poem opens. There is

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40 Ibid., p. 286, ll. 9-12.

apparent a relation between the weather and the spirit of Wordsworth. The mist and cloudiness depressed him and made him believe that the wind too was unhappy, and was sobbing.

> Days passed -- and Monte Calvo would not clear
> His head from mist; and, as the wind sobbed through
> Albano's dripping Ilex Avenue,
> My dull forebodings in a Peasant's ear
> Found casual bent.[41]

The poem, To The Clouds, contains the following note: "The clouds were driving over the top of Nab-Scar across the vale; they set my thoughts agoing, and the rest followed almost immediately."[42] In his contemplation of the clouds, the thought came to Wordsworth that they were lovely and the winds must love them.

> And the wind loves them; and the gentle gales --
> Which by their aid reclothe the naked lawn
> With annual verdure, and revive the woods,
> And moisten the parched lips of the thirsty flowers --
> Love them; and every idle breeze of air
> Bends to the favorite burthen.[43]

This would seem a bit of fancy; but when stock is taken of the poet's beliefs concerning nature, the lines appear in a different light. Wordsworth has always more or less firmly believed that natural elements possessed souls, so of course there is nothing to hinder the wind from loving the clouds or anything else.

A discussion of the fallacies used in connection with mountains and valleys has been left until the last. Wordsworth grew up among the hills and he loved them as he cared for his playmates. Many times he drew away from the other boys and

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41 Ibid., p. 750, ll. 1-5.
42 Ibid., p. 774.
43 Ibid., p. 775, ll. 66-71.

went into the hills alone. The hills in Northern England are different from the rugged mountain peaks of the Swiss Alps or of the American Rockies. It may be expected that the terms used by the poet in describing the mountains willbe appropriate to the nature of the English hills. Of course, he visited the Swiss Alps and was so greatly impressed with their beauty that he has written considerable concerning them. It would be interesting to study the ways in which he could describe the two types of mountains.

The first illustration is taken from the Descriptive Sketches made during a tour among the Alps. Two short lines describe the first impression of the towering Alpine peaks. He exclaimed:

> But lo! the Alps ascending white in air,
> Toy with the sun and glitter from afar.[44]

It seems to have been the height and grandeur of the snow-capped mountains that impressed him at first. The first sight anyone has of a high mountain range gives him such a feeling as is here set down in words. The peaks really do look as if they reach the sun. This is a feeling which is common to a great many travelers and is not peculiar to Wordsworth or to poets in general.

A difference is noticed in his description of the hills and valleys around Grasmere. They were not austere and forbidding, but genial and kind.

> But I would call thee beautiful, for mild,
> And soft, and gay, and beautiful thou art.

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44 Ibid., p. 11, ll. 50-51.

Dear valley, having in thy face a smile,
Though peaceful, full of gladness. Thou art pleased,
Pleased with thy crags and woody steeps, thy Lake,
Its one green island and its winding shores;
The multitude of little rocky hills,
Thychurch and cottages of mountain stone
Clustered like stars some few, but single most,
And lurking dimly in their shy retreats,
Or glancing at each other cheerful looks
Like separated stars with clouds between.[45]

The fallacy lies in the smile on the face of the valley, and in the pleasure it receives from its lake, its woods and its cottages. A valley does not smile, but extreme contentment might make a poet believe that it does. Such seems to have been the case with Wordsworth. He was thinking and speaking of his home in Grasmere. The years he spent there were among the most productive of his life. We know from various sources that he was happy there. The quotation given is taken from the first part of The Recluse.

There is a gay little poem called Written in March which expresses the thoughts we all feel at the advent of spring. There is a joy in living that comes to everyone at this season of the year and in 1802 William Wordsworth's joy and enthusiasm burst into verse and he exclaimed:

There's joy in the mountains;
There's life in the fountains;
Small clouds are sailing,
Blue sky prevailing;
The rain is over and gone.[46]

It is impossible not to catch the spirit and rhythm of the poem, and the reader feels with Wordsworth that there must be "joy in the mountains."

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45 Ibid., p. 223, ll. 114-25.
46 Ibid., p. 278, ll. 16-20.

In exact antithesis to the sentiment just expressed is the description of the huge mountain on the south-west coast of Cumberland. Wordsworth takes care to say that he was far from his home in Grasmere when this incident occurred. He wrote that they were sojourning on "the bleakest point of Cumbria's shore." The scenery was bleak and it had the same effect on those who observed it. Even the mountain frowned and sulkily hid itself from sight in storms.

> Day by day, grim neighbors! huge Black comb
> Frowns deepening visibly his native gloom,
> Unless, perchance rejecting in despite
> What on the Plain we have of warmth and light,
> In his own storms he hides himself from sight.[47]

It would be possible to write at greater length about the fallacies concerning water, the sun, and the hills; but enough have been given to illustrate Wordsworth's use of the pathetic fallacy. Nothing has been said of the few fallacies found in connection with clouds, skies, rocks, and stars. There are not so many about those subjects.

Book one of The Excursion describes a typical summer forenoon. It tells of the fleecy clouds that float slowly across the summer sky. Wordsworth has used a word in describing them which fits them exactly. He called them the "brooding clouds."

> 'Twas summer, and the sun had mounted high;
> Southward the landscape indistinctly glared
> Through a pale stream; but all the northern downs,
> In clearest air ascending, showed far off
> A surface dappled o'er with shadows flung
> From brooding clouds.[48]

The picture is vivid and although, according to the or-

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47 Ibid., p. 395, ll. 5-9.
48 Ibid., p. 411, ll. 1-6.

dinary concensus of opinion, clouds do not brood, the reader has no difficulty in catching the mood of the author. Here again, the background of Wordsworth has to be taken into consideration. This being done, we realize that at the time he wrote the poem, he very clearly believed that the clouds were brooding ones.

Other illustrations could easily be cited concerning Wordsworth's use of the pathetic fallacy. All of the fallacies discovered are recorded in the appendix to this work. Whether or not such an extensive use of the pathetic fallacy is justified from the standpoint of both the author and the reader will be discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER IV

A JUSTIFICATION OF THE USE OF THE PATHETIC FALLACY FROM THE STANDPOINTS OF BOTH THE POET AND HIS READERS

That Wordsworth did make considerable use of the pathetic fallacy is evident from the discussion in the previous chapter. Whether or not he was justified in so doing is, as yet, an open question. In order to reach any kind of a conclusion, a study will need to be made of Wordsworth's use of the pathetic fallacy from his own standpoint and from the standpoint of his readers. Certain questions will need to be discussed and answered. Why did Wordsworth use the pathetic fallacy? Is the pathetic fallacy in keeping with his theory of poetic diction? Could he have refrained from using the pathetic fallacy and still have written poetry that was typical of him? Considering the subject from another point of view, we shall need to ask ourselves other questions. Does the use of the pathetic fallacy enable the reader better to enter into the spirit of the poem? Is the pathetic fallacy effective in stirring the emotions of the readers? Would the poems have had as much appeal without the use of the fallacies?

To answer the last group of questions, the opinions of some well-known Wordsworth critics may be cited to supplement those of the writer. If, after a definite and unbiased investigation of the several questions just mentioned, it is found that Wordsworth used the pathetic fallacy because of his in-

herent sensitivity and background, and that he could scarcely have refrained from using it, then the pathetic fallacy in Wordsworth is poetry, will be justified, especially if its use appears to aid the reader in an understanding of the poem.

Why, then, did William Wordsworth use the pathetic fallacy? The answer lies partly in the early environment of the poet and partly in the native snsitivity so apparent in him. Out of these two factors, supplemented by the opportunities which were constantly open to him to observe nature in all her aspects, came two great beliefs. Wordsworth believed in the power of all natural forms to feel and to think. He believed in the inter-relationship between man and nature. To him nature was capable of sharing man's moods, of being sorrowful when he was sad, of being merry when he was happy.

The facts of Wordsworth's early life have been described. It was then that he received the impetus that was to carry him through life and give him the name of "Nature Poet." He was born and reared in the English lake country, a region of beauty and natural charm. He was not poor and yet not wealthy. Consequently, he was forced to supply his own entertainment from the free materials at hand. The hills and lakes were free to the public and he learned to amuse himself at home. There is no indication that he found such a lesson hard to learn. He seems to have been happy and contented with the playthings which nature provided for him. He hunted, trapped, skated and went boat-riding just as the other boys did. He was not above stealing a boat ride or robbing another boy's trap. On the surface

of things he was an average English boy.

Even his schooling at Hawkshead appears, as we look back upon it, to have been subordinate to his nature training. He was not so closely confined to his books that he had no time for out-door sports. The time in which he was not actually in the classroom was his to spend as he pleased. When he grew older and went to Cambridge, it remained one of his chief delights to return to nature for his college vacations. Sometimes he left the school and went for lonely walks in order that he might get closer to nature. It has been pointed out and must be remembered that during these years in which he was surrounded by natural objects and was being moulded by nature, his ideas did not remain static. They were constantly growing and developing from a purely animal pleasure in natural forms, through the period in which he consciously felt and was aware of nature to the time when he contemplated her and formulated his ideas and philosophy concerning her.

I have said that Wordsworth used the pathetic fallacy partly because of his early environment. Such a statement was not intended to preclude any influence which may have been exerted in his later life. However, the foundation for all his thoughts concerning nature was laid in his childhood and therefore the greater credit must necessarily be assigned to that period of his life. Wordsworth, of course, was not conscious that all of his early training pointed toward the fact that some day he would use the pathetic fallacy. He was interested chiefly in the sense enjoyment he could get from nature, and a little later

in the pleasure he received from an active observation of natural forms.

During all of those years nature was making a deep impression on the boy. Almost constant association with her had aroused in him mingled feelings of respect, fear and love, with love the predominant emotion. It was dawning upon him that the whole natural world was something more than his playhouse; it was a living, breathing personality. It rejoiced when he was happy and mourned when he was sad. It was a sympathetic world. Sometimes he thought of the whole universe as being possessed of one great soul. At other times, individual objects had individual souls. Nature was a moral teacher to him. Her code of morals was high and she was an exacting teacher. When he overstepped the law, she punished him.

When he became a poet, he turned to nature and to man for subject matter. His beliefs of nature carried over into his poetry, and there is abundant evidence of the way in which he projected his own emotions into natural forms. Many, many times he was guilty of fallacy. But to him his statements were not false, but true. And therein lies the definition of the pathetic fallacy, a false impression but a true feeling.

With these few facts in mind, it is easy for us to see how all of William Wordsworth's early environment and training fitted and prepared him, as it were, for the use of the pathetic fallacy. All of his ideas of nature were conducive to the use of the pathetic fallacy. The conscious soul of nature expressed itself intelligently in the primrose, the mountain

stream, or any other natural form.

The case of Wordsworth is different from that of other poets. There have been many great poets who, under the stress of strong emotion, have seen inaccurately. But usually their false impressions were of comparatively short duration. Not so with Wordsworth. It was a part of his creed that flowers could feel. This was a belief that clung to him not for moments, but for years. Even after a poem was written he could read it and be stirred emotionally because deep in his heart he felt that what he had written was true. His unusual natural philosophy made out of Wordsworth just the sort of poet who had to use the pathetic fallacy in order to express his ideas of nature truthfully.

In the opening sentence of Wordsworth's definition of a poet in his Preface to the Second Edition of Lyrical Ballads we read that a poet "is a man speaking to men--- a man, it is true, endowed with more lively sensibility, more enthusiasm and tenderness, who has a greater knowledge of human nature, and a more comprehensive soul, than are supposed to be common among mankind."[1] Here Wordsworth is telling us that a poet must be more highly sensitive to stimuli than other men. When nature provides the stimulus, there can be no doubt of Wordsworth's superior sensitivity. He had added specific training and practice to already keen powers of perception and insight. He looked at a star and saw more than the star. He saw the spirit behind it. He looked at "the meanest flower that blows" and

1 Howard Judson Hall, ed., Poems of William Wordsworth, Lake library ed., Chicago, Scott, Foresman & Co., c1924, p. 359.

his own soul reached out in sympathy and comradeship to the soul of the flower. He was essentially a poet and if we are to accept his own theory, then his was a hyper-sensitivity. It is difficult for ordinary men and women endowed with very practical minds to understand this quality which was Wordsworth's in so rich a measure. It is necessary to study his life, his philosophy, and his poems with considerable care in order to comprehend the poet. Such a study shows convincingly that Wordsworth was a "man in a thousand" so far as his nature beliefs were concerned. Reuben Post Halleck in his New English Literature remarked that "many poets have produced beautiful paintings of the external features of nature. With rare genius, Wordsworth looked beyond the color of the flower, the outline of the hills, the beauty of the clouds, to the spirit that breathed through them, and he communed with 'Nature's self, which is the breath of God.'"[2]

The keen sensibility of the boy Wordsworth is illustrated in some of the incidents which have already been cited. His thought that the grim peak was striding after him to avenge the theft of the boat, and that all the mountains rang in sympathy with his own enjoyment of ice-skating are typical of the average boy in a lesser degree.

There is still another factor which very likely influenced Wordsworth's use of the pathetic fallacy. His two main poetic themes were nature and man. During the first part of his life man was subordinated to nature, while in his later years the reverse was true. In the second and third stages of his life

2 Reuben Post Halleck, New English Literature, New York, American Book Company, c1913, p. 392.

Wordsworth came to believe in a strong inter-relationship between nature and man. Nature was man's moral teacher. She taught him in the way that he should go. For many years nature was the best friend Wordsworth had. He spent many hours in natural haunts and in time he worked out his own unique natural philosophy--- the philosophy which made it inevitable that he should assign to natural forms qualities which, by all rights, belonged to men.

Of the close relationship between nature and man Walter Pater has this to say:

> And it was through nature, thus enobled by a semblance of passion and thought, that he approached the spectacle of human life. Human life, indeed, is for him, at first, only an additional, accidental grace on an expressive landscape. When he thought of man, it was of man as in the presence and under the influence of these effective natural objects, and linked to them by many associations. The close connection of man with natural objects, the habitual association of his thoughts and feelings with a particular spot of earth, has sometimes seemed to degrade those who are subject to its influence, as if it did but reinforce that physical connection of our nature with the actual lime and clay of the soil, which is always drawing us nearer to our end. But for Wordsworth, these influences tended to the dignity of the human nature, because they tended to tranquillise it. By raising nature to the level of human thought he gives it power and expression: he subdues man to the level of nature, and gives him thereby a certain breadth and coolness and solemnity. The leech gatherer on the moor, the woman "stepping westward," are for him natural objects, almost in the same sense as the aged thorn, or the lichened rock on the heath. In this sense the leader of the "Lake School," in spite of an earnest preoccupation with man, his thoughts, his destiny, is the poet of nature.[3]

In the part of England where Wordsworth lived and about which he wrote, the people were more or less permanent settlers.

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3 Walter Pater, Appreciations, New York, Macmillan Co., 1908, p. 47.

They were born, they lived and they died all within a very small area. They were almost religious in their habits of connecting certain natural landmarks with certain great events in their lives. Pater said that they continued this habit "till the low walls, the green mounds, the half-obliterated epitaphs seemed full of voices, and a sort of natural oracles."[4] These things were definite links between the people and the earth. Their religion was "literally a religion of nature."[5]

Wordsworth was acquainted with the customs and beliefs of the people. He observed them and saw how they were affected by the natural forms around them. And so, believing in the directness with which they expressed their deepest feelings, he chose to depict those humble folk for the subjects of his poetry.

From the quotation from Pater, the close connection between nature and man in Wordsworth's thinking is evident. Each one influenced the other. The spirit and emotions of the people carried over into natural objects, while the vastness and the majesty of natural scenes had their effect on man. Wordsworth was deeply stirred whenever he contemplated nature. Consequently, he frequently described her in terms of his own human emotions. His extreme sensitivity accounts for his ability to think of natural forms in the intimate terms of human feelings.

Wordsworth would have been the last man to admit that he used the pathetic fallacy. It was his firm belief that man and nature were embued with one and the same spirit. When he wrote of the "merry brook" and the "pensive hills," he was

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4 Ibid., p. 49.
5 Ibid., p. 49.

telling what he really thought was the truth. His whole environment and natural characteristics pointed to an unusual philosophy. Wordsworth's impressions of nature were not temporary affairs. They were enduring. It would have been necessary for him to evolve an entirely new system of thought if he had admitted that his impressions of nature were ever false.

There are a great many people who do not conform to Wordsworth's beliefs. There are many who believe that his philosophy was too extreme, and who are sure that he was many times guilty of using the pathetic fallacy. These people are in the majority. After all, there are not many people in this modern age who could bring themselves to think, for any length of time anyway, that the trees, the flowers, the wind, and all other natural objects were capable of showing themselves sympathetic with the moods of man.

From these few remarks it is obvious that although William Wordsworth would never have admitted that he used the pathetic fallacy, in the eyes of the majority of his critics and readers he was guilty many times over.

The second problem which must be solved in the process of our justification may be stated thus: Is the pathetic fallacy in keeping with Wordsworth's theory of poetic diction? What was Wordsworth's theory and where may it be found? His poetic principles are set down in the Preface to the Second Edition of Lyrical Ballads and should be summarized before any attempt is made to decide whether or not the use of the pathetic fallacy is in keeping with them.

Wordsworth wrote that the principal object proposed in the poems included in the Lyrical Ballads "was to choose incidents and situations from common life, and to relate or describe them throughout, as far as was possible, in a selection of language really used by men, and, at the same time, to throw over them a certain coloring of imagination, whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual aspect, and further, and above all, to make these incidents and situations interesting by tracing in them, truly though not ostentatiously, the primary laws of our nature; chiefly, as far as regards the manner in which we associate ideas in a state of excitement."[6]

The simple, humble life was chosen because Wordsworth believed that in that condition the emotions which stir life were less restrained. He believed too, that the plainest language should be used in poetry, and he thought that the common people conveyed their ideas in simpler terms than any other class in society.

It was his theory that "all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings."[7] Hence, the good poet must be possessed of a keen sensibility. Wordsworth scorned the idea that a violent stimulant was necessary before the mind could be excited. The man who can be stirred emotionally with only a slight stimulus is a far greater man than he who requires a more violent stimulus. It is one of the tasks of a writer to help develop man's powers of perception and appreciation.

A large part of the essay is an explanation of Wordsworth's

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6 Howard Judson Hall, op. cit., p. 353.
7 Ibid., p. 354.

ideas on style. He recommended the use of personification only when it was prompted by passion, and discouraged its use as a mechanical device. His reason for doing so was that in ordinary language men seldom used personification.

He said that he purposely refrained from using what is usually called "poetic diction" for the same reason that he rejected personification. Moreover, "poetic diction" had been used by so many inferior poets that readers of poetry had come to dislike it.

Wordsworth did not discourage the use of all metaphors, but suggested that well-chosen subjects for poems would lead to passions, which, in many cases, should be expressed in terms of metaphors and other figures. He logically maintained that the language should suit the emotion it represents.

He has gone into detail in explaining what a poet is and his mission in the world.

> He is a man speaking to men -- a man, it is true, endowed with more lively sensibility, more enthusiasm and tenderness, who has a greater knowledge of human nature, and a more comprehensive soul, than are supposed to be common among mankind; a man pleased with his own passions and volitions, and who rejoices more than other men in the spirit of life that is in him; delighting to contemplate similar volitions and passions as manifested in the goings-on of the universe, and habitually impelled to create them where he does not find them. To these qualities he has added a disposition to be affected more than other men by absent things as if they were present; an ability of conjuring up in himself passions, which are indeed far from being the same as those produced by yet (especially in those parts of the general sympathy which are pleasing and delightful) do more nearly resemble the passions produced by the real events than anything which, from the motions of their own minds merely, other men are accustomed to feel in themselves;-- whence, and from practice, he has acquired a greater readiness and power in expressiong what he thinks and

> feels, and especially those thoughts and feelings which, by his own choice, or from the structure of his own mind, arise in him without immediate external excitement.[8]

The poet is under one restriction only. He must provide immediate pleasure. It is the duty of the poet to realize the inter-relationship existing between man and nature. "He considers man and nature as essentially adapted to each other, and the mind of man is naturally the mirror of the fairest and most interesting properties of nature."[9] The thoughts and feelings of men are usually connected in some degree with the elements. So natural objects are described by the poet since they are the objects which arouse deep feelings in men. Poets do not write for other poets. They write for men. Consequently, they must use the language of ordinary men in order that their poems may give pleasure.

The subjects may and should be the same for both prose and verse. Wordsworth recognized this and chose to write in verse because of its added metrical charm. Moreover, verse has a restraining effect on the emotions. Strong excitement and powerful images might be carried beyond their proper bounds in prose.

On the other hand, certain metrical forms are especially adaptable to certain emotions, and the use of the proper kind of verse is a great aid in expressing a given emotion.

Wordsworth explained the process of poetry. Poetry "takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity; the emotion is contemplated, until, by a species of reaction, the tranquillity gradually disappears, and an emotion, kindred to that

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8 Ibid., p. 359-60.
9 Ibid., p. 362.

which was before the subject of contemplation, is gradually produced, and does itself actually exist in the mind."[10] He believed that when a poet was occupied with a poem, his own mood must necessarily be that of enjoyment, and that the passions he described must be accompanied by feeling of pleasure in the mind of the reader. The remaining part of the preface is devoted to particular poems and references which serve mainly to supplement previous statements.

Thus in the Preface Wordsworth has defined his own theory of poetry. He has discussed its subject matter, its language and its purpose. Is Wordsworth's use of the pathetic fallacy justified from the standpoint of his own theory as to what poetry should be and do? He has said that "all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" that it is "emotion recollected in tranquillity." Here we have the first requisite for the pathetic fallacy--namely, emotion. A mere error in perception does not make a pathetic fallacy. It must be an error caused by strong feeling. Wordsworth advocated the use of the language of ordinary men. By this he did not necessarily mean only the every day language of the common people, but the language used by them under stress of strong emotion. It was his conviction that a good poet must possess a keen sensibility, a quality which Wordsworth himself possessed in the extreme. A poet had to be able to feel deeply.

It was Wordsworth's opinion that the language should be appropriate to the emotion it expressed. He did not believe in

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10 Ibid., p. 367.

an extravagant use of personification saying that it should be used only when prompted by passion. He said that poetic diction had come to be used by so many poets of inferior rank that people had begun to think of them as belonging to each other. Such an opinion is a reminder of Ruskin's assertion that many "would be" poets had made a collection of the phrases used in connection with the pathetic fallacy and were using them indiscriminately.[11]

Wordsworth believed that a scene or an incident should be contemplated long and deeply before the poem about it should be composed. He believed that it was possible by means of meditation to recall the emotion felt at the first. He scorned the man who did not or could not see and appreciate the sympathetic soul of nature. A short stanza from Peter Bell describes such a man.

> A primrose by the river's brim
> A yellow primrose was to him
> And it was nothing more.

In commenting upon a supplementary statement added by Wordsworth to the Preface for the edition of Lyrical Ballads in 1802, Harper said of Wordsworth:

> He attributes the use of the so-called poetic diction to the vanity of poets, and especially of poor poets, and to the artificial expectation of readers, who have been led to associate such language with passion and the pleasure derived from passionate expressions. A language, he declares "was thus insensibly produced, differing materially from the real language of men, in any situation. He denounces the abuse of the pathetic fallacy by which human feelings are attributed to inanimate objects, and sturdily maintains that in works of imagination and sentiment, in proportion as ideas and feelings are valuable, whether

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11 Op. cit., p. 216.

> the composition be in prose or verse, they require and exact one and the same language.[12]

On May 24, 1802, John Wilson, a student at Glasgow University, was impressed by Lyrical Ballads and wrote Wordsworth a long letter in which he praised the poet effusively for having discovered and written of the "wonderful effect which the appearances of external nature have upon the mind when in a state of strong feeling."[13] The youth admitted that at first he was dubious that a mere landscape could so affect human character but that after further consideration he had found that it could do so.

The intensity of Wordsworth's belief that natural objects possessed souls becomes evident when he concisely says that there is little falsehood in his descriptions. It is possible to understand how very real his convictions were when he insisted that he worked with his eye on the object and consequently produced true pictures.

> I do not know how to give my reader a more exact notion of the style in which it was my wish and intention to write than by informing him that I have at all times endeavored to look steadily at my subject, consequently there is, I hope, in these poems little falsehood of description, and my ideas are expressed in language fitted to their respective importance.[14]

It is impossible to read Wordsworth's poems and know the circumstances of his life without being convinced of his sincerity. He tried at all times to comment on objects and situations as they seemed to him. He was a fearless poet who

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12 George McLean Harper, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 435.
13 Ibid., p. 436.
14 Howard Judson Hall, ed., op. cit., p. 356.

wrote upon certain subjects and in certain ways despite the harsh criticism which came his way----adverse criticism which may be summed up in Francis Jeffery's opening statement of his review of Wordsworth's Excursion.-- "This will never do."[15] There is little to be done but to accept his statement at its face value and take into consideration the entire life and thought of the man himself.

Certainly then, the pathetic fallacy can be justified on the basis that it in no way is a departure from the poetic principles set forth in the Preface. While Wordsworth discouraged the effusive use of personification, he maintained that well-chosen subjects would arouse emotions which could sometimes be best expressed in terms of metaphors and other figures. When such a contingency was present, Wordsworth would have been the first to include any figures of speech necessary, for he firmly believed that language was one way of expressing emotion and that it should be suitable to the emotion it represented.

In the first chapter of this study[16] it was pointed out that Ruskin's conception of the pathetic fallacy was a false impression in which was brought about because of strong emotions. That there are evidences of false impressions in Wordsworth is obvious from the discussion in the third chapter; and if we accept Wordsworth's word and his actions as truth, then we are certain that he always felt deeply whenever nature was concerned, and that all of his thoughts of her were colored

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15 Ibid., p. 390.
16 See page 5.

in varying degrees by the excitement with which he contemplated her.

Finally then, could Wordsworth have refrained from using the pathetic fallacy and still have written poetry that was typical of him? In the light of the foregoing discussion the answer must obviously be a negative one. In his use of the pathetic fallacy Wordsworth was explaining his views of nature and of life. It was a serious procedure---his placing before the world an entirely new trend of thought. There was no place for falsehoods of any kind. It was Wordsworth's firm conviction that one of his missions in the world was "to teach," and so he taught of a nature that was sympathetic and at the same time, firm with man. He could not have given a true picture of his beliefs without the pathetic fallacy for the simple reason that the pathetic fallacy was his creed. Any other kind of writing would not have been typical of him.

Walter Pater, in his book called Appreciations, clearly expressed the peculiar situation in which Wordsworth is found in comparison with other poets. He said, "And so it came about that this sense of a life in natural objects, which in most poetry is but a rhetorical artifice, is with Wordsworth the assertion of what for him is almost literal fact."[17] It could scarcely be maintained that Wordsworth was not justified in his use of the pathetic fallacy since in his poetry it is more than a style device used only on certain occasions. Whenever Wordsworth contemplated nature he was emotionally stirred and conse-

17 Walter Pater, op. cit., p. 45.

quently when he wrote, his poetry was very apt to contain many of Ruskin's pathetic fallacies.

Pater has summed up in a few words the character of Wordsworth.

> Such is the figure of the more powerful and original poet, hidden away, in part, under those weaker elements in Wordsworth's poetry, which, for some minds determine their entire character; a poet somewhat bolder and more passionate than might at first sight be supposed, but not too bold for true poetical taste; an unimpassioned writer, you might sometimes fancy, yet thinking the chief aim, in life and art alike, to be a certain deep emotion; seeking most often the great elementary passions in lowly places; having at least this condition of all impassioned work, that he aims always at an absolute sincerity of feeling and diction, so that he is the true forerunner of the deepest and most passionate poetry of our ownday; yet going back also, with something of a protest against the conventional fervour of much of the older English poets, whose unconscious likeness often comes out in him.[18]

Such a character then, added to the unique philosophy of nature which has already been discussed makes it evident that the use of the pathetic fallacy in Wordsworth's poetry was inevitable.

We have seen that the use of the pathetic fallacy is certainly justified from Wordsworth's point of view. There remains the viewpoint of the reader to be considered. Does the use of the pathetic fallacy enable the reader better to enter into the spirit of the poem?

The foremost duty of a poem is to entertain. It may have minor purposes. It may teach a lesson or be an instrument for distributing information. If a poem succeeds in giving real

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18 Ibid., p. 63.

pleasure, then it is worthy of a place in literature. The successful poem is the one which permits the reader to enter into the mood or spirit of the work. No one enjoys reading a poem who feels that while he is doing so he is an outsider -- that he is observing the emotions expressed from a distance. What is the function of the pathetic fallacy if it serves such a purpose, in helping the reader to get closer to the spirit of the poem? For one thing, the use of the pathetic fallacy aids the reader in "getting the point" of the poem. It helps him understand the circumstances and the atmosphere of the poem. An apt illustration is the quotation from Ruth already cited.

> They were all with her in her cell;
> And a clear brook with cheerful knell
> Did o'er the pebbles play.[19]

To say that a brook plays at all appears a fallacy to the average person. However, the noise of the brook described as a cheerful knell admits the reader into the mood of the poem. It is easy to picture the half-crazed woman sitting in her cell listening to the brook which under most circumstances would have comforted her, but which in her grief seemed a "knell." The sorrow of Ruth is emphasized by the fallacy used in describing the brook.

Anyone familiar with the cold, fierce winds of March dreads to encounter them. This fact is expressed and enhanced by Wordsworth in his poem The Warning. In it he describes the flowers as shrinking and being afraid to show themselves. The reader who discovers that even the flowers are fearful of the March wind

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19 William Wordsworth, op. cit., p. 121, ll. 202-04.

is brought into sympathy with the thought of the poem. He is enabled to enter into the spirit of the poem more enthusiastically than if Wordsworth had written simply that the March winds were blowing and the air was too cold for the flowers to grow.

In the two instances just cited, there is definite proof of the value of the pathetic fallacy in helping the reader to enter into the spirit of the poem. Many other illustrations might have been given.

Now it is necessary to know whether or not the pathetic fallacy is effective in stirring the emotions of the reader. In considering this problem it is assumed that the reader is reading the poem in order to find real pleasure in it. He has a sincere desire to get out of it that which the author intended he should receive. He is not reading with the idea of destruction criticism uppermost in his mind. It is true that anyone reading Wordsworth in an over critical manner would find much to criticise. But he who reads seriously and tries to discover the poet in his works will be amply rewarded.

It is impossible to read the part of the poem Stray Pleasures without an emotional reaction. The tone of the poem is one of lilting joy and he who reads becomes infused with the happiness of the waves and the leaves. The fallacy, the meter and the rhythm all combine in producing a feeling of joy.

> The showers of the spring
> Rouse the birds and they sing;
> If the wind do but stir for his proper delight,
> Each leaf, that and this, his neighbor will kiss;
> Each wave, one and t'other, speeds after his brother;
> They were happy, for that is their right.[20]

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20 Ibid., p. 344, ll. 31-36.

An entirely different feeling is aroused in the reader when Wordsworth spoke of the "brooding clouds" in The Excursion. The time was a hot, summer morning. All the land lay still and dreaded the heat that would doubtless follow later in the day. The "brooding clouds" give the impression of calm and laziness. It is easy to picture the fleecy, slow moving clouds that now and then came between the sun and the earth and caused shadows to be flung over the land.

> 'Twas summer, and the sun had mounted high;
> Southward the landscape indistinctly glared
> Through a pale stream; but all the northern downs,
> In clearest air ascending, showed far off
> A surface dappler o'er with shadows flung
> From brooding clouds.[21]

A feeling of peace and harmony existing between man and nature is the result of reading that portion of The Prelude in which Wordsworth described the feeling of nature for the common people.

> Them the morning light
> Loves, as it glistens on the silent rocks;
> And them the silent rocks, which now from high
> Look down upon them; the reposing clouds
> The wild brooks prattling from invisible haunts;
> And old Helvellyn, conscious of the stir
> Which animates this day their strange abode.[22]

Just the assertion that the natural forms named love men is a source of gladness and contentment, and serves to arouse those emotions in the reader far more quickly than if Wordsworth had merely said that the weather was perfect and the people happy. His use of the pathetic fallacy makes a well-knit picture which would have been less charming and convincing had any other device been used.

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21 Ibid., p. 411, ll. 1-6.
22 Ibid., p. 179, ll. 63-69.

It would be possible to write at great length and cite numerous passages which would show the power of the pathetic fallacy in arousing the emotions of the reader. Sufficient illustrations have been given and interpretations of them made to offer evidence that the poems of Wordsworth would not have had as much appeal without the pathetic fallacies as they have with them. They are a great aid in interpreting and appreciating the poems.

So, both from the standpoint of the author, and that of the reader, the use of the pathetic fallacy is justified. Wordsworth used it because of his inherent sensibilities which are keener than those of the average individual, and because of his early environment. It is in keeping with his theory of poetic diction. Moreover, he could not have written of his philosophy of nature and avoided using it. Finally, from the view point of the reader, the pathetic fallacy is justified. It enables him to enter into the spirit of the poem. It is an aid in arousing his emotions, and after all, a good poet must be able to stir the feelings of his readers. It has been pointed out that Wordsworth's poems have a greater appeal for their readers partly because of the use of the pathetic fallacy--and therefore, it is justified.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Restatement of the Problem

The purpose of this study has been to determine whether or not William Wordsworth used the pathetic fallacy, and if so, to justify his use of it. The chapter on the pathetic fallacy written by John Ruskin served as a basis for the study.

Summary of Findings

The first chapter differentiated between the pathetic fallacy, which is the false impression caused by intense emotion, and the fallacy of willful fancy which is error used deliberately by the author who has no intention that it should be believed to be true. In the same chapter the peculiar position occupied by the writer who is in a condition of prophetic inspiration was discussed. It was found that Ruskin believed the use of the pathetic fallacy to be the sign of an inferior poet, yet he sturdily maintained that it was better to be guilty of the fallacy than not to be capable of feeling deeply at all. The second chapter threw some light on the circumstances of Wordsworth's life and their influence on his poetry. It was a general discussion designed primarily to familiarize the reader with Wordsworth in anticipation of a better understanding of his poetry, The third chapter was devoted to a study of the fallacies themselves. It was discovered that there were more pathetic fallacies which concerned water than any other one natural form. The trees, mountains, winds, sun, moon and stars came in for their share

also. The pathetic fallacies represented many emotions. Some were caused by great happiness, some by deep sorrow, others by a delicious feeling of contentment. But back of all of these feelings was Wordsworth's new natural philosophy---his belief in the universal soul of nature. Wordsworth's use of the pathetic fallacy has been justified in the fourth chapter. It has been pointed out that by reason of his inherent sensitivity and his early environment, which were important factors in the development of his philosophy, he could not have refrained from the use of the pathetic fallacy and still have expressed his real opinions truthfully. His use of the fallacy has also been justified from the standpoint of the reader by means of illustrations showing that the fallacies were aids in stirring the emotions of the readers and helping them to enter into the spirit of the poem.

Conclusions

The conclusion reached must obviously be that William Wordsworth was frequently guilty of using the pathetic fallacy in his poetry. It must also be concluded that his use of it is justified both from his own standpoint and that of his readers for the reasons which have been stated in the above paragraph and elsewhere in this thesis.

Limitations

A study such as this is necessarily largely subjective. It was impossible always to be exactly certain of the interpretation which Wordsworth intended should be placed on some

of his poems. However, in some cases his own notes on the poems were available. It is possible that the fallacies which I found in my reading may not include every one which someone else making the same study might find. Varying interpretations would probably account for the most of the differences. It has likewise been impossible to make a detailed observation of all of the pathetic fallacies found. A representative group has been discussed and records of the entire number are included in the appendix to this study.

Suggestions for Further Study

The study of Wordsworth's use of the pathetic fallacy has suggested to me other studies which might be made along this same line.

1. A study of the use of the pathetic fallacy in the poetry of other of the so-called Romantic Poets--Percy Bysshe Shelley, John Keats, or Lord Byron.
2. A study of the pathetic fallacy in contemporary poetry. Such an investigation might be made with the view to determining whether or not the pathetic fallacy was best adapted to the poetry of the romantic period, or whether it is suited to poetry of all times.
3. Despite the fact that John Ruskin believed that poets of the highest order did not often admit of the pathetic fallacy, the writer believes that enough examples of the pathetic fallacy could be found in the works of William Shakespeare to provide material for an interesting study.

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APPENDIX

A Complete Record of the Pathetic Fallacies Found in the Poems of William Wordsworth

Poem	Page	Lines
Extract	2	13-14.
An Evening Walk	3	3-4.
Ibid.	4	37-40.
Ibid.	4	53-54.
Ibid.	4	57-63.
Ibid.	5	86-89.
Ibid.	5	96-97.
Ibid.	5	104-105.
Ibid.	5	108-111.
Ibid.	5	114-117.
Ibid.	5	136-139.
Ibid.	6	156-157.
Ibid.	6	170-175.
Ibid.	6	189-191.
Ibid.	6	212-213.
Ibid.	7	279-280.
Ibid.	8	287-290.
Ibid.	8	309-310.
Ibid.	9	367-368.
Ibid.	9	375.
Lines Written While Sailing In A Boat At Evening	9	5-8.
Descriptive Sketches	10	4-7.

Poem	Page	Lines
Ibid.	11	15-16.
Ibid.	11	21.
Ibid.	11	31-32.
Ibid.	11	50-51.
Ibid.	12	103-104.
Ibid.	12	135-140.
Ibid.	13	198-199.
Ibid.	14	258-259.
Ibid.	15	319-322.
Ibid.	16	405-410.
Ibid.	16	461-471.
Ibid.	17	488-491.
Ibid.	17	528-535.
Ibid.	17	540-544.
Ibid.	17	553-554.
Ibid.	18	584-585.
Ibid.	18	601-603.
Ibid.	18	630-633.
Guilt and Sorrow	22	115-117.
Ibid.	23	167.
Ibid.	23	183-184.
Ibid.	27	411-414.
The Borderers	35	111-112.
Ibid.	54	129-130.
A Night Piece	71	14-18.
The Thorn	75	12-15.

Poem	Page	Lines
Lines Written In Early Spring	82	17-20.
A Whirl Blast From Behind The Hill	83	12-22.
The Old Cumberland Beggar	95	180-182.
The Simplon Pass	109-110	1-12.
Influence Of Natural Objects	110	41-42.
Ibid.	110	42-44.
Ibid.	110	52-60.
Nutting	112	52-53.
Three Years She Grew In Sun and Shower	113	19-30.
The Two April Mornings	116	9-10.
Ibid.	116	49-52.
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