E-Content

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UNIT 29 *THE PRELUDE* BK. 1

Structure

29.0 OBJECTIVES

The objective of the Units is to elucidate and critically interpret Wordsworth's *The Prelude* Book I and in this connection to give a historical account of the Romantic Revival to the target student studying English literature at the Post Graduate level.

29.1 INTRODUCTION

William Wordsworth, the greatest poet of the nineteenth century Romantic Revival, wrote *The Prelude*, a long autobiographical poem in fourteen Books, in 1800, when he was thirty and at the pinnacle of his poetic talent. If Matthew Arnold is correct in his observation, then Wordsworth's best poetry came during ten years, between 1798 and 1808, and of his 'best' poems *The Prelude*, for its bulk, philosophy, seriousness of purpose, and tonal quality, is the 'greatest' also. ['Wordsworth composed verses during a space of some sixty years; and it is no exaggeration to say that within one single decade of those years, between 1798 and 1808, almost all his really first-rate work was produced'.] This long poem of 7883 lines in blank verse is an epic of a very special type : its 'story' is in the account of the growth of a 'spirit', the development of an awareness, the evolution of a sensitive mind.

29.2 NINETEENTH CENTURY ROMANTIC REVIVAL

What is Romanticism?

While trying to define 'Romanticism' J.A. Cuddon, in his *A Dictionary of Literary Terms* refers to the American scholar A.O. Lovejoy who once observed that the word 'romantic' has come to mean so many things that, by itself, it means nothing at all, and in a paradoxical statement tries to indicate its variety and charm: 'It is a word at once indispensable and useless'.

In the Middle Ages Latin was the language of learning and in contradistinction to it 'romance' denoted the vernacular languages. Later on, fanciful or highly imaginary books were called 'romantic', and gradually the term began to signify 'a popular book'. In the seventeenth century the term had acquired the derogatory connotations of bizarre and chimerical. In eighteenth century Germany it meant 'gentle' and 'melancholy'.

During the Renaissance, plays were called 'classical' or 'romantic' according to their adherence or non-adherence to the Aristotelian principles of dramatic art. The

playwrights who observed the 'unities' in their plays were called 'classical' and those who flouted them or took liberties with them were called 'romantic'. In this sense Ben Jonson was classical and Shakespeare romantic.

Often the ancient and the pagan were called 'classical' and things pertaining to Christianity 'romantic'. It is so because Homer and Vergil have stood the test of time, and their poetry, despite vastness and magnitude, is perfectly ordered and arranged as if by some basic rules of artistic creation. The Bible, on the other hand, is cryptic and suggestive. Faith itself is an act of imagination. And Christ's life, particularly his Resurrection, is full of 'mystery'. Auerbach in his essay *Odysseus' Scar* makes this distinction clear. He says that the poetry of Homer is 'the poetry of the foreground' whereas the poetry of, say, Job, is 'the poetry of the background'. The former is classical, the latter romantic. In 'the poetry of the foreground' everything is detailed clearly, objects are described in detail, and actions are narrated in proper sequence, and in 'the poetry of the background' hints are given, suggestions are made, symbolism is used, and the most powerful factor in creating artistic balance and effect is imagination. In the words of C.M. Bowra (in *The Romantic Imagination*), the single characteristic that distinguishes the English Romantics of the 19th century from the 18th century poets is to be found in the importance which they attached to the imagination.

Nineteenth Century Romantic Revival

Chronological division of literary periods is more often than not arbitrary, and yet, for practical purposes, literary critics and historians of literature mark off 'ages' on the basis of dominant characteristics and often they coalesce with decades, half centuries, and centuries: The sixteenth century as the Elizabethan Age or the Age of the Renaissance. The pre-Restoration seventeenth century as the Jacobean Age and the post-Restoration seventeenth century as the Restoration period or the pre-classical Age, the eighteenth century as the neo-classical Age, the first half of the nineteenth century as the Age of Romantic Revival, the second half as Victorian period and the twentieth century as the Modern period.

The first half of the nineteenth century is known as the age of the Romantic Revival because the Elizabethan Age was popularly known as a romantic period. This romanticism was in contradistinction to what was called 'classical', and the status of the classical was given to the ancient works that had stood the test of time. So, romanticism meant novelty and its degree directly depended on its departure from well established and acknowledged norms or principles of writing.

The nineteenth century Romantic Revival also, one may say, begins on this kind of a negative note : it is different from or opposite of eighteenth century poetry, the neo classical culture which achieves its fulfilment in Alexander Pope. But it is not only this. There is much more in nineteenth century Romantic poetry, much that is positive, a poetry that is not just defiance or departure, but standing on its strong legs, having the spine of a solid philosophy of life, a distinct angle and attitude, a new and befitting poetic diction.

The distinct angle and attitude is born of, in the words of C.M. Bowra, a special view of imagination which started with the eighteenth century dissenters like Blake and Collins and matured up in Wordsworth and Keats. Partly, though very spontaneously, it was an attempt to resist the onslaught of technology ('The Industrial Revolution') and to check the corrosion of human values caused by the growing desire for new-found material comfort and prosperity, and concomitant trade boom:

> The world is too much with us : late and soon;
> Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers :
> (Wordsworth)

Poets like Wordsworth felt that the world was going the wrong way which would lead to unhappiness and it was their moral *duty* to warn it and to show it the path of truth and bliss. Imagination, to them, was the tool or instrument in human hand to discover or explore 'unknown modes of being'. They differentiated fancy and imagination : fancy, to them, was a mechanical process of mental permutation and combination, and indulgence in fantasy, for transient entertainment of the mind, an escape into the unreal; whereas, imagination was a living thing having organic growth and development, leading us to know our 'self' and its relation to the cosmic universe. This 'imagination' includes intellectual curiosity and emotional participation.

The most widely recognized feature of the English romantic movement is often spoken of as the 'Return to Nature'. Side by side with return to nature in poety, there was a movement initiated by Rousseau for a return to nature in social life, a movement of which the French Revolution was, in some degree at least, the outcome. It is curious to note that the poets of the early nineteenth century were drawn without exception into the romantic vortex, in some cases doubtless in spite of themselves, and to observe how they were severally affected by the political movement.

Essentially, romantic poetry is an attempt to establish harmony – harmony between the matter and the spirit, between the external and the internal, between the finite and the infinite. It is a swing between the outfit and the essence, between living and life, between heaven and home. It is acutely aware of the sphere of our sorrow and at the same time it is the desire of the moth for the star. Hence, its appeal to the Indian mind. It is easier for a civilization that has sprung from the *Tapovan* culture to appreciate Wordsworth's poetry than for a civilization that has built itself by banishing nature outside of its walls or has tamed nature not by love but by lash.. If the system of Yoga says that it is through the body that we reach and enrich the soul, and see life or God in everything – animate or inanimate – through the power of this harmony, then Wordsworth's poetry is its best explanation :

That serene and blessed mood,

In which the affections gently lead us on,-
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul :
While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things.

(Wordsworth, *Tintern Abbey*)

W.J. Harvey also points to this *unity* of Yoga in Wordsworth's poetry : 'The basic values asserted by Wordsworth are those of unity, integrity, wholeness. Unity of the mind with itself, of the present self with the plurality of all one's past selves –this is what dictates his quest for identity. Unity of the mind with Nature he had already expressed in some famous lines of *Tintern Abbey* ..... The experience he extends in *The Prelude* ..... The creative force thus manifested in Nature has its dim analogies in all of us, even in "the grossest minds".'

This 'high' priest of Nature' is no less a poet of man, a moralist who prescribes the cure of the disease of modernity sprung from intellectualism, dependence on technology, love for material prosperity and lack of basic values.

If we trace a thin line of division between two generations of English Romantic Poets, we have Wordsworth, Coleridge and Scott on one side, and Byron, Shelley and Keats on the other.

Though more famous for his great critical work *Biographia Literaria*, Coleridge (1772-1834) is widely appreciated for his highly romantic poems, especially *Kubla Khan. The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* and *Christabel*. Most of his poems are of a fragmentary nature but that does not deter their merit which chiefly lies in their superb treatment of the supernatural, their lyricism, and glorious display of imagination.

Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832), novelist-cum-poet excels as a narrative poet in his 'romantic tale in verse' in which we have a natural development of the old ballad and medieval romance. He does not have the depth and seriousness of a Wordsworth or a Coleridge but as a versifier of fanciful tales based on hazy historical material he is excellent.

The eldest of the younger generation of poets, George Gordon Byron (1788-1824) was more representative of the revolutionary spirit of the age than anyone else.

His *Childe Harold* had once taken England by storm. But Byron's fame with posterity will rest, among other poems, chiefly on the *Vision of Judgement* and *Don Juan*. Of course, in general, his fame has declined with time. His greatest defects are as an artist : his versification is slovenly; he bestowed sufficient care neither on the conception of his subject as an organic whole, nor on the working out of details.

Matthew Arnold, in his somewhat laboured plea for the supremacy of Wordsworth and Byron in 19th Century poetry, describes Shelley (1792-1822) as a 'beautiful and ineffectual angel, beating in the void his luminous wings in vain'. But, in the words of W.H. Hudson, 'As a lyric poet, he ranks with our very greatest, and no praise would be excessive for the ecstasy of feeling, the lightness and grace, the felicity of phrase and the verbal magic of such poems, for example, as 'The Skylark', 'The Cloud', 'The Sensitive Plant', the 'Ode to the West Wind', and 'A Lament'. And the fullest and finest expression of Shelley's faith and hope is to be found in his superb lyrical drama, *Prometheus Unbound*. His dreams of freedom are achieved in the freedom of the great Titan representing the paid, hope and fulfilment of mankind.

John Keats (1795-1821) was the last and youngest of this later revolutionary group. He was neither a rebel like Byron nor a utopian dreamer like Shelley. He believed in the cult of beauty: *Endymion*, his first long narrative poem opens with the line 'A thing of beauty is a joy for ever' and 'Ode on a Grecian Urn', one of his famous Odes, closes with the prophetic pronouncement, 'Truth is Beauty, Beauty Truth'. Keats wrote six long narrative poems, quite a good number of sonnets and short lyrics, six 'great' Odes and a verse drama. For a mature view of life, exposition of the essential drama of existence, and density of imagery, he is even ranked with Shakespeare.

Among the less important poets of the time, mention should be made of Samuel Rogers (1763-1855), James Hogg (1770-1835), Robert Southey (1774-1843), W.S. Landor (1775-1864), Thomas Campbell (1777-1844), Thomas Moore (1779-1852), Leigh Hunt, (1984-1859) and Thomas Hood (1799-1845).
The Romantic fervour did not last long. By the third decade of the nineteenth century it had started waning, and the Reform Bill of 1892 announced the beginning of a new age (in poetry, the Age of Tennyson) with its new problems, new equations, and new awareness. The romantic ideals lost much of their relevance in this age of social interests and practical ideals.

29.3 WILLIAM WORDSWORTH : HIS LIFE AND LIFE-VIEW

William Wordsworth was born on April 7,1770, at Cockermouth, and his sister Dorothy, with whom he had close, friendly relationship throughout his poetic career, was born on September 25, next year, at the same place. William lost his mother in 1778 and his father in 1783. The spirit of classicism was waning in English Literature during these final decades of the century, and in Germany, Goethe's *Werther,* which was a landmark in the romantic literature of Europe, was published in 1774, and Rousseau's *Confessions* which had no less of influence on the romantic poets of England saw the light of the day in 1781. And a very important event, the American Declaration of Independence, took place in 1776.

Wordsworth's first published poem, *Sonnet, On Seeing Miss Helen Maria Willians Weep at a Tale of Distress* appeared in *The European Magazine* in March, 1787. *An Evening Walk* was written the year the French Revolution started with the storming of Bastille (1789). In 1790 Wordsworth had a walking tour of France. He came back to England in early 1791 and returned to France late in the year to see revolutionary fervour in Paris. He had a love affair with Annette Vallon, and their daughter Caroline was born in December 1792. He composed *Descriptive Sketches* in 1793 and returned to England to seek a livelihood. *Godwin's Political Justice* was published the same year, and the spirit of inquiry and quest took an artistic shape in 1794 in the publication of Blake's *Songs of Experience.* In 1795 Wordsworth and Coleridge came close to each other which finally resulted in the joint authorship of the *Lyrical Ballads* (1798). This very year Wordsworth wrote some autobiographical verse which was the foundation of *The Prelude.* This last decade of the 18th century saw a reign of terror in France with the meteoric rise of Napoleon.

In 1802 Wordsworth wrote much lyrical poetry and published a new edition of *Lyrical Ballads* with revised *Preface.* In 1804 *Ode to Duty* was composed and *Ode on Intimations of Immortality,* was completed. In 1807 Wordsworth published *Poems* in Two Volumes and it was ridiculed in Reviews. The next year he left Dove Cottage for a larger house in Graspmere, and then in 1813 moved to Rydal Mount, home for the rest of his life. *The Excursion* was published in 1814, prefaced by an account of the plan for *The Recluse.* The argument and classification advanced by Wordsworth in the Preface to the Collected Edition of *Poems* spurred Coleridge to complete his own theoretical statement, *Biographia Literaria,* which was later published in 1817. In 1843 Wordsworth became Poet Laureate on Robert Southey's death. By now Wordsworth was a widely celebrated figure and there was steady increase in his American reputation. He died in April, 1850, and *The Prelude* which he wrote and rewrote almost throughout his life was published after his death. Throughout his life he wrote poems of philosophical issues, metaphysical problems and man-nature

relationship, and saw great writers at work : Goethe, Coleridge, Jane Austen, Keats, Shelley, Byron, Balzac, Dickens, Carlyle, Tennyson, Ruskin, Browning, Thackeray, Arnold, etc. His own best poetry, as pointed out by Matthew Arnold, came, of course, between 1797 and 1807, the most fruitful ten years of his long poetic career. In the remaining years good writing came occasionally and sporadically. Wordsworth felt with pain this waning of poetic power in him and presented it in the *Immortality Ode*. The drama of a crisis is very convincingly and impressively presented in that poem though the philosophy given by Wordsworth to explain the crisis is wide open to debate and controversy.

The question of the order in which Wordsworth's poems are to be arranged and studied is to be debated. He himself rejected the chronological arrangement in favour of what he called the psychological classification : poems of the Affections, the Fancy, the Imagination, Sentiment and Reflection. Others have proposed classification by form and theme. But, actually, this question is subsidiary in Wordsworth. His best things are scattered up and down his poetry in whatever order it is arranged (the period of ten years mentioned by Arnold, of course, supply the richest material). As a sonneteer, Wordsworth's merits are simply remarkable. The best sonnets of Wordsworth are worthy of Shakespeare and Milton, unsurpassable, perfect. There can be no doubt that Wordsworth found the discipline of sonnet writing helpful and beneficial; indeed he says so himself in 'Nuns fret not'.

So far as form is concerned, apart from his sonnets, he excels in lyric poetry. As lyrics, the Lucy poems are matchless : impassioned, disciplined, concentrated in content, informal, dramatic. The essential Wordsworthian, theme lies in every fibre of these lyrics, and yet the 'palpable design' of his longer works is not to be found in them.

Wordsworth had the ambition of writing a 'great' poem –very long, very rich, containing all his thoughts, and the history of the maturing of his poetic sensibility, an epic simultaneously personal, national, and universal. But he could never write this poem. Attempts remained unfinished. *The Prelude* was designed to be the *Prelude* to that poem. Throughout his life he kept on revising *The Prelude* but could not publish it. When it was published posthumously, the critics did not hesitate to call it a 'great' poem. Wordsworth's greatest and having wonderful coverage, depth and variety. Much of its content, of course, is to be found in the *Tintern Abbey* poem.

In his youth Wordsworth was inspired by the ideas (Voltaire, Rausseau) that led to the revolutionary movement in France. He welcomed the new democratic ideas because they tuned well with his reaction against the urban insularity of the 18th century English literature. Even when he was disillusioned with the French Revolution and began to hate its developments, his first concern was the poor, the rural, the lowly. His rich humanism made him very sympathetic to the suffering humanity in an age when industrialism and commercialism made the difference between the rich and the poor wider, uglier and more acute. He heard 'the still sad music of humanity' and was sad to see 'what man has made of man'. He felt that 'the world is too much with us', and realised that, as a poet, he had some responsibility. He wanted to show man the right path, and this made much of his poetry didactic. The moral concern, therefore, is very prominent in his poetry. This caused ire in Keats but did not deprive him of popular appreciation.

Apart from deep emotional concern for humanity, there is another very important theme in his poetry. It is his approach to and understanding of nature. 'Nature never did betray the heart that loved her', he said. If one goes to nature with an open heart, nature gives one everything, especially strength to face and overcome all sorrows and sufferings of life. In the words of W.H. Hudson, "As an interpreter of nature he still holds the first place unchallenged. His love of nature was boundless, and his knowledge of nature was equal to his love." With a keen eye he saw everything in nature, the minutest details did not escape his attention. And he believed that all these 'natural objects' are just manifestation of the spirit of nature. Through these

objects one reaches the centre, the essence; comes in contact with the infinite source of life and beauty, and gets all food and nourishment one requires in life. When one is in true contact with nature, nature becomes a guardian of one" soul—he friend, philosopher and guide. From time to time Wordsworth lost this holy contact with nature and lamented the loss, but never was his belief in nature's benign power shaken.

Since he knew the 'panacea' and found 'illness' all around him, saw people ignoring what could cure them, he was sad. The tragic awareness of the suffering of man made him more inclined towards mankind, and so his love for nature and love for humanity became parts of the same awareness or philosophical truth he adhered to.

Even his poetic diction, that poetry should be written in the natural, unaffected language that the common man uses in his normal speech or communication, is derived from his concern for humanity at large, from his respect for the 'uneducated' rural people who have a rich heart, sincere feeling, and direct contact with nature, and do not 'lay waste' their powers in 'getting and spending'. Thus, his thought and art are essentially the outcome of the impact that the new vision leading to French Revolution created upon his mind. It is a turn from capitalism to socialism, but socialism of a very special kind in which the first criterion is the recognition of merit to be found abundantly in the poor and hardly in the rich.

29.4 *THE PRELUDE* (GENERAL)

Wordsworth kept on working on *The Prelude*, his longest poem, throughout his life—writing and rewriting it, often copying it, changing, rearranging and revising it, but never published it during his lifetime. Though it is a complete poem, a complete statement, he always cherished the thought that it was only a 'prelude' to a much longer poem. *The Recluse,* which he could never finish. *The Prelude* is much longer than the unfinished poem whose prelude it was intended to be. This caused embarrassment in the poet and it is perhaps one of the reasons that he could never publish *The Prelude.*

The poem has a complicated textual history. The poet worked on it at intervals for more than forty years. The first drafts were written in 1798 and the last full scale revision was made in 1839. In 1799 a short version of the poem was published in two parts. In 1805 Wordsworth wrote the whole of it but did not give the poem a name. It was just 'a poem to Coleridge': Wordsworth wanted to hear a few words of appreciation from his friend so that he could go happily with the composition of *The Recluse.*

The 1850 *Prelude* is the outcome of three large – scale reworking of the poem, and many minor revision. The poem was finally printed just ten weeks after Wordsworth's death. In stylistic quality and tone the 1850 poem is very different from the 1805 one. Continuous revision improved it quite a lot. In this unit we are to discuss the final version of the poem. The 1805 *Prelude* has thirteen Books whereas the final version has fourteen. The first Book has the title *Introduction : Childhood and School – Time* and the last Book is the *Conclusion* which comes just after the Book on *Imagination.*

The Prelude is a landmark in English literary history because it is a stupendous work the significance of which reveals itself to successive generations in various ways. M.H. Abrams in his work *Natural Supernaturalism* says that the 'characteristic concepts and patterns' of Wordsworth are mot clearly "displaced and reconstituted theology, or else a secularised or of devotional experience". The sub-title of *The Prelude,* 'Growth of a Poet's Mind' is also very significant. Romanticism in Europe was a much-varied thing, but one thing was common in all literatures of the time : psychological explorations. The human mind, all romantic writers believed, was the centre of the divine scheme, the arena of the struggle of Good and Evil. It is a

strange thing, and each discovery of its inner recesses is a thrill. And the poet has a richer mind, more sensitive and dynamic than anybody else's, in its creativity it is akin to God; and therefore the study of the growth of a poet's mind is not only a thrill in itself but also a religious pursuit, a study in godhead. The human mind is the arena of all tragedy and comedy, of all history, the sence on which is played out the continual drama of fall and redemption. From childhood to adulthood, this mind, through its experiences and responses, achieves maturity, a shape and a dimension, sensitivity of perception and intensity of feeling. In a poet's case, the acquisition is greater than in anybody else's case. Man's moral being depends on how the mind has worked and from what sources it has drawn its sap. The poet remembers past incidents and their impact on his mind. Stephen Gill says, "Memory is both the agent by which the poet explores his past, so binding together all phases of his being, and the power which retains and highlights moments of experience which, Wordsworth avers, haunt the adult with an inexplicable redemptive power. They are *spots of time* which with *distinct preeminence* retain a renovative virtue".

The Prelude is about the poet himself; and so it is autobiographical. It is about the nature and function of the human mind; so it is psychological; it gives certain definite moral conclusion; so it is didactic; it is about the infinite power and harmony of nature; so it is spiritual; it is an attempt to define the role and potentiality of imagination, and so it is intellectual. Even with all these aspects of *The Prelude*, one often doubts its social relevance, its relation to its time and topical issues. But we must remember that *The Prelude* is a poem of self consciousness and search for identity written at a time when entire Europe, reeling under the nightmare of Napoleonic onslaughts, was looking for a stable identity, a solid value system. In this sense. *The Prelude* is the most representative work not only of English romanticism but also of European experience and its concommitant romantic idealism. W.J. Harvey goes to the extent of saying, 'The world of *The Prelude* is not just the world of the mind communing with Nature, it is also the world of the university, the metropolis and the arena of power and politics.' Wordsworth spent the whole of his lifetime to perfect the poem which in its turn absorbed all new ideas and experiences that came to the poet and finally became a solid body of poetic work that has embodied the history of humanity standing on the crossroad of selfishness and humanism, science and imagination, adventure and utilitarianism, materialism and spiritualism. *The Prelude* is humanity's last and most fervent attempt to discover 'pure joy' in life.

The poem is an autobiography. As a chronological narrative, the poem is an account of the growth of the poet's mind upto the point at which he conceived *The Recluse* in 1798. Through reviscons from 1798 to 1805, the poem took a shape and character which was different from what it was when the poem was conceived. Naturally so, because Wordsworth who began *The Prelude* was not the Wordsworth who finished it. The first two parts deal with his childhood and boyhood experiences, and in the subsequent parts the growth of the mind is emphasised upon. The experience of his early life had remained stored in his mind, and he went to France to have direct contact with the Revolution, saw the towns and cities in both France and England, heard with pain 'the still sad music of humanity', came back to England and his friends, realised the most fundamental truths of life, and formulated his philosophy of nature.

29.5 *THE PRELUDE*, BK. I

29.5.1 The Idea

The Prelude is a long poem and very difficult to categorize. Its huge body has an epic form, lofty style, and tone of moral seriousness, but for want of a story, a sequential development of narrative, it cannot be called an epic proper. It is an autobiographical poem but only those episodes in the poet's life have been narrated which have something to do with his contact with nature and which cast a deep

influence on him in as much as they shaped his mind and fostered its growth, and gave him the joy of imaginative perception of the eternal and the universal. The moral overtone is very prominent; from every experience he draws a conclusion, and feels that it is moral duty to convey his observations to his readers because the world which is 'too much with us' should be brought back on the right track and made a blissful and peaceful place.

Book I of *The Prelude* introduces the theme and attempts to give a proper background to the proposed ambitious work, *The Recluse*. It refers to the poet's own 'Childhood and School Time', the morning years of life that showed the day.

In a very vital sense Wordsworth is a profoundly religious poet. He continuously evokes experiences which are spiritual. Ordinary incidents become extraordinary when seen through the prism of imagination, and in them the poet can perceive the continuous fusion of the limited and the unlimited, 'the kindred point of heaven and home'. Wordsworth is a religious poet not in the sense Herbert and Milton and Hopkins are: Wordsworth does not derive from or depend upon the Christian doctrines; but the essence of Christianity can easily be discovered in his poetry which is out and out secular. Neither inspired like mystic mendicants nor like the 18th century rationalists who tried to prove God's existence 'logically', Wordsworth explored his experience with highly sensitised concentration in which reason and imagination fused into one entity.

The Prelude Book I opens with a reference to the divine ecstasy that he had in the lap of nature (in a more condensed way he described it in *Tintern Abbey*). Then he goes on to refer to a few encounters with nature in his childhood, bringing them out of the store of his memory. They are not chronologically arranged, but they all lead to the central point: that nature shaped his personality and nurtured his moral being. Fortified with what he got from nature, he was immune from the onslaughts of a heartless, commercial words. Each small incident is described with all delicate details, as if every detail gives him the ecstasy of coming in sensuous proximity to nature. Autobiography turns to the exploration of a universal truth, and sensuous appreciation becomes the fabric of a philosophy, a metaphysical appreciation that is simultaneously secular and religious.

The Prelude is organised not chronologically but thematically. M.H. Abrams succintly writes about the thematic structure of the poem in his *Natural Supernaturalism: "The Prelude* .....is ordered in three stages. There is a process of mental development which, although at times suspended, remains a continuum; this process is violently broken by a crisis of apathy and despair; but the mind then recovers an integrity which, despite admitted losses is represented as a level higher than the initial unity, in that the mature mind possesses powers, together with an added range, depth, and sensitivity of awareness, which are the products of the critical experiences it has undergone." (p.77).

The poem opens with a note of joy. The wind suggests calm and peace and is matched by a 'corresponding mild creative breeze' within which becomes a storm and, breaking the frost, invokes the spring. The theme is announced in the very beginning: the discovery of nature's beauty and the discovery of man's true self. There are quite a few charming passages in *The Prelude*, rich in poetry and also endorsing Wordsworth's philosophy of life and nature. It is the 'fair seed time' in his life which he describes in the opening book of the poem. The childhood experiences tell that the poet's soul had fair seed time in his childhood. The philosophical foundation of the poem is also laid here. Though it is not a philosophical poem, the word 'philosophy' comes spontaneously in the analysis of the poem because, in the words of Stephen Gill, "*The Prelude* is a poem in which thought is brought to bear upon experience, and its ground is established in these opening books".

29.5.2 Autobiographical Element

"Exploring it (*The Prelude*) takes us unavoidably to the biographical matrix of the poem", says Stephen Gill. Wordsworth himself made it known to his family and friends as 'the poem on his own early life' or 'the poem on the growth of his mind', or 'the poem addressed to Coleridge'.

Wordsworth had in his mind the writing of a long 'philosophical' poem. The 'autobiographical' poem *The Prelude* was meant to be a 'preface' to that poem. But the philosophical' poem was never completed; only a few pages were written. The 'preface', on the other hand, kept on acquiring bulk and polish through continuous revision and retouching almost throughout the poet's life and finally took the shape of a huge 15-Book epic-like composition. Actually the poet wanted to give his reader the impression that his 'philosophy' was not just a concept but a system of faith that came out of simple but significant incidents of his life. But the 'philosophical' poem never came into its full being and the autobiographical 'prelude' became more philosophical than autobiographical. If we take *The Prelude* as a chronological narrative, it is a record of Wordsworth's life upto the point at which he conceived *The Recluse* in 1798. It is about the growth of a poet's mind which becomes fully mature to make 'feeling' the subject matter of a philosophical poem. But the poet chooses the incidents of his early life erratically with little regard for chronology and magnitude of incidents. Perhaps he remembered some experiences more vividly than others and felt that those experiences contributed more vitally to the growth of his mind. *The Prelude* is a biography of the soul, the story of an awareness, of the revelation of the power of human mind which can act in harmony with nature and get nourishment thereby. He remembers his pre-1798 days when his mind was continually invigorated and challenged by new ideas and concepts. He wrote both prose and lyric poetry at the time, each casting its influence on the other. This fruitful time owed itself to his uncommon experience in nature and with nature. He remembers the 'spots of time', small happenings serving as a key opening the door of the vast hall of realisation, wisdom and joy. It is a kind of 'freedom' that one enjoys within the framework of nature's principles. The 'elfin pinnace' (a pinnace is a small boat) experience, for example, was apparently a 'small' incident but it gave the poet an idea of 'the unknown modes of being', and it is not just an abstract concept but a concrete feeling, something that he could feel 'in the blood'. Incidents remembered and half-remembered shaped his mind so perfectly that he was in a position to tell the world what is right and what is wrong and make it see 'the light that never was on sea or land'.

A poet's poetic life is the story of the development of his imaginative perception of man in relation to 'the other'. Outer experiences nourish the inner realisation. Not all experiences have this nourishing power, only some have, and in *The Prelude* Wordsworth chooses them, at times recreates the half-remembered experiences, and all the time his intention is to focus on the evolution of a realization. It is futile to seek biography in his poetry; it is worthwhile to seek the dimension and depth of his poetry through the aid of biography. He, for example, avidly listened to the song of the cuckoo in his boyhood days as almost every boy does; the important point is that the continuity of the enjoyment of the birdsong reveals to him the essential thread that fruitfully connects man and nature. Every small incident of life referred to in the poem has this glorious function of revelation and building up of a philosophy of life.

29.5.3 Diction, Metre, Imagery

The Prelude is a long poem. It gained its length through slow and steady writing, through revisions and changes, arrangements and re-arrangements throughout the life of the poet. Finally it took the shape of a long epic-like blank verse composition in fourteen books. In 1798, after the publication of *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth thought of writing a long philosophical poem under the title *The Recluse*. But he felt that some 'preface' would be necessary for this long philosophical poem. This preface took the shape of the two book *Prelude* and was published in 1807 under the

title *Poems in Two Volumes*. Then it was a long story of working and reworking on the poem until it was revised for the last time in 1839.

The question of structure comes first to the mind of the reader of this poem of great length, divided into fourteen books, each book containing about six or seven hundred lines. On reading the whole poem one feels that there is hardly any progression, the poem raising various philosophical questions and attempting solutions, often referring to the poet's personal experience in short narrative sketches, building the entire superstructure on the central theme of man-nature relationship. There is an easy flow though hardly any beginning, development and finale. It begins with a feeling: The feeling of being free, and ecstasy on account of that. The intention of the poet is to communicate this mental state. There is no hurry, no pressure to move forward, poetry moves with the ease of a soft breeze; long sentences run through blank-verse lines stopping, as if, when a full breath is over, a complete picture given, and a mental state is communicated. Then another sentence begins and a very special kind of poetry seems to be at the command of the mood which is expressed almost effortlessly. But the blank verse pattern, the ambic pentametre never fails, the lines are of uniform length and the rhythm regular. It is 18th century poetry inferfused with Miltonic seriousness at the service of romantic sensibility. Milton had a 'fable' in *Paradise Lost*, and much of the 18th century poetry is 'complete statement' in couplets; Wordsworth, on the other hand, has neither a fable nor the urgency of flinging morals through complete statements in perfect couplets. Yet wordsworth, in his diction and intention is closer to the age preceding his than the one in which he lived or the one that followed his. There is hardly any suggestive 'imagery' in the modern sense of the term – hardly a symbol or a metaphor – and yet in the communication of sensibility *The Prelude* is very modern; it reaches after the depth of an awareness, and in it the versification, the diction and the total pattern have their vital role. Description of personal experience and philosophical observations go together, one illustrating and endorsing the other. The personal experience – mostly of childhood and boyhood in Book I – are the 'spots of time', memorable incidents that illustrate the viewpoint. Quality of verse improves when the poet comes to these 'spots', and this gives the reader the impression that Wordsworth could have been an excellent narrative poet had he attempted it.

The pattern of the poem is not linear but circular, coming to the central issue from various sides, as if creating circles of waves around it. And, unlike *The Waste Land* where also the structural movement is circular, there is no conscious imposition of form, the 'content' – as if by its intrinsic natural force –makes and sets its own 'form'. There is much truth in Matthew Arnold's assertion that 'Wordsworth's poetry, when he is at his best, is inevitable, as inevitable as Nature herself. It might seem that nature not only gave him the matter for his poem, but wrote the poem for him. He has no style'.

And yet the poem has wonderful variety. It is more than a mere Conversation Poem ('The Conversation Poems operate within limited parameters of manner and tone, striving to create the impression of an extempore meditation.'). *The Prelude*, as pointed out by Stephen Gill, 'exploits diversity of manner and tone (within the general overall limitations imposed by the blank verse) for the multiple purposes of the long poem.'

The inner force of the verse becomes more dynamic in the narrative passages. Vivid memory of personal experience gives extra strength and colour to these lines but in narrating these experiences Wordsworth never follows chronology: the intention is to highlight the essential function of these experiences : that they lead the poet to discover Nature's 'unknown modes of being'. So every narrative patch is followed by a long patch of meditative and reflective poetry. The reflective passages rise naturally from the experience which is their matrix. Stephen Gill writes. "Wordsworth dramatises and highlights significant experiences only, turning back on himself and collapsing chronology bewilderingly". Much of the verse of *The Prelude*

is meditative and reflective. It is thought versified. The blank verse, without losing its metrical discipline and rarely taking recourse to Miltonic sonority, takes the reader alongwith it effortlessly. The simplicity of the poetic mode is deceptive because it ushers one, almost unawares, into the world of mystical vision and joy.

Everywhere in the poem it is nature imagery; images drawn from the world of nature: water, mountains, valleys, breezes etc., and everything is literal, true, the object as it is. The poet remembers his childhood experiences and in that connection come the names of the objects of nature that exist most literally, materially, in the poem as part of the poet's physical experience. But at the same time each image dissolves into a symbol of the poet's spiritual relationship with nature and the concomitant joy he derives therefrom. Herbert Lindenberger puts it aptly" 'When Wordsworth describes a stream he knew in childhood he can start out wholly on the level of literal description – the poem is, after all, an autobiography – and before the reader has gone much further the stream has become a metaphor for the workings of the imagination. It is difficult to distinguish between the literal and metaphorical level in Wordsworth, for the literal becomes figurative and then literal again.' The imagery of *The Prelude* is, Lindenberger holds, 'something concretely observed by the poet, and something he must constantly return to as he narrates the events of his life; yet it is also something he thinks through, a mode of language which continually leads him away from itself to encompass larger areas of human experience.

29.5.4 Important Lines and their interpretation

(i) Oh there is blessing ..... to settle where I will.
(lines 1-9)

The 'gentle breeze', a 'visitant' coming from the 'green fields' and the 'azure sky', touches the cheek of the poet. It is more a spiritual touch than a physical one though the sense of physical comfort also is conveyed. The breeze itself is 'half-conscious of the joy it brings'; through this personification the poet conveys his involvement with nature, his joy is shared by the natural agencies, or it is the same emotion working both in the giver and the receiver and binding them together. The soft breeze has a 'mission'; obviously it is the mission of nature, coming close to man with her blessings. And none can be more grateful to nature than the poet himself because he has finally got in her a soothing shelter. The 'vast city' disappointed him; its cruel fetter chained him. He was a slave of manners and customs, conventions and hypocrisies there. Now, in the lap of nature, he feels as free as a bird that can fly in the sky at will. The poet is free to meditate, to fly in the infinite sky of his soul, to search for the harmony between man and nature.

(ii) What dwelling shall receive me ....out my course?
(lines 10-32)

The whole world of nature is before the poet. The vale, the grove, the clear stream: 'the earth is all before me'. Joy fills the heart of the poet. He enjoys the liberty that he has got after so many years. Even the 'wandering cloud' shows him the right way. His thought is at rest; his mind goes to lofty heights. The poet realizes that now he has got his cherished place. The busy world of the town was a heavy weight on him. He was a misfit there. Now he has the prospect of a long peaceful time before him. In great joy he runs hither and thither. He knows any trifle thing now can take him to the joyful world of mental peace that comes with the discovery of one's true identity.

(iii) Dear liberty ! ..... harmonious verse
(lines 31-45)

Liberty turns the joy holy. It is the spiritual experience of purity. The external breeze causes a stir deep within the mind of the poet. There is a 'corresponding breeze' in his heart. It gradually becomes 'a tempest, a redundant energy'. The poet is happy that there is a harmony between the external and the internal, between matter

and spirit, and this union brings with it 'vernal promises', as if the 'frost' of the heart is melt away. The poet can work now for long hours. New energy fills his heart. Time passes quickly but it is justified by the poet; productive work is life's greatest justification. Life now moves with a leisurely pace: there is no anxiety, on hurry. But writing of poetry continues. The poet writes in the morning, writes in the evening, and this regular writing of 'harmonious verse' makes his life holy and blissful.

(iv) ..... a higher power
Than fancy ..... performed. (lines 77-80)

After having wandered hither and thither, the poet finally turned to the 'known vale' and 'reached the very door of the one cottage which methought I saw'. It was such a calm and beautiful place that the poet decided to write a glorious poem there. The calm of the place was conducive enough for such a work. The poet means to say that external atmosphere is an aid to inner growth. Conducive circumstances enrich creativity and a poet can create a work of high merit if he gets the peaceful charm of nature's company 'far from the madding crowd' of urban people, Imagination is born of meditation, and this imagination is a faculty much superior to fancy, it has the harmonising power to establish living truck between the world of matter and the world of spirit. Imagination, of course, is Nature's gift, and this gift follows one's love for Nature. In distinguishing between Fancy and Imagination, Wordsworth here comes close to Coleridge's view of these creative agents.

(v) The Poet, gentle creature .... Unmanageable thoughts.

The poet is a 'gentle creature': he is like a 'lover': he has his 'unruly times', his 'fits', and in these moments he is 'neither sick nor well'; his only 'distress' is his 'unmanageable thoughts'. So, according to Wordsworth, the poet is possessed. Something, as if, descends on him, takes hold of him, and he can't help it. It is like sexual urge which blinds one, switches reasoning off, and makes one act 'the nature's way'. But it is creative or procreative, a design of nature, a human act through which nature operates. There is little play of intellect or reasoning in it. So, the moments of excitement or inspiration are 'unmanageable'. It is the typical romantic view of a poet.

(vi) .....I neither seem
..... build up a Poet's praise.

It is the poet's self assessment. He has the 'first great gift' of the 'vital soul' which is capable of deriving life-force from the inexhaustible storehouse of nature. He does not lack the understanding of 'general Truths', the basic scientific laws that control and guide the functioning of nature. They are 'under-powers' in the sense that they remain only 'subordinate helpers of the living mind'. The poet knows the physical laws, but goes beyond them to discover the spiritual principles of nature. The physical Laws are neither ignored nor taken for everything. And then, there are the objects of nature as manifestation of the spirit. Through these objects, a poet reaches the spiritual core of realization. The objects have their forms and shapes and a minute study of these forms and shapes is also a matter of 'toil', but all these things are necessary for the making of a poet. So, a poet must know the basic laws, observe the objects, and gradually be led to spiritual realization.

(vii) Ah better far than this ..... an interdict upon her hopes

The desire of writing a philosophical poem, in which there would be embodied the truths of life, fills the mind of the poet very often. It is a burden, the load of an ambition which is very difficult to achieve. The poet tries to ward this desire off by telling himself that the ripe time for this would come in maturer years. Now he wants

to move freely in the word of nature, just enjoying her sights and sounds, caring little for philosophy etc.

It is a state of the mind that the poet had in his early youth, a state of confusion, whether to choose this path or that, whether to enjoy nature or to build up a moral philosophy about this enjoyment, finally leading him to choose the former and to enjoy the blessings offered by nature. A sense of liberty gives freshness to the lines, an artless smoothness, a simple unaffected rhythm.

The poet contrasts this life with the busy life of the town plagued by industrial commercial culture. It is the typical Wordsworthian theme expressed in his famous sonnet 'The world is too much with us'.

(viii) I heard among .... Turf they trod (lines 322-325)

Sense of guilt has been expressed. A bird caught in the snare became the poet's victim. It was an act of cruelty and a crime. So he felt Nature admonishing him. He 'heard among the solitary hills' 'low breathings' following him. It was the spirit of Nature coming, like a guardian, to punish him for the sinful act he had done. Nature has been personified. And very deftly the poet has been able to express his guilt, fear and remorse, and also Nature's guardian like role. The simile in the last line is a beautiful example of the poet's artless but accurate imagery.

(ix) Dust as we are .....In one society (lines 340-344)

Man, physically, is no more than 'dust', but that is not his entire existence. He is part of the immortal spirit, and gradually, through maturity grown out of experience, this realization comes to him. Apparently or externally, the elements of life are discordant, but, inwardly or spiritually, there is wonderful harmony. This is the 'dark inscrutable workmanship' of nature. It is not possible to explain this miracle, but it is very much there, connecting the human spirit with the spirit of Nature. The idea of 'connection' and concomitant rhythm in harmony, the merger of the finite into the infinite, the spiritual relationship between the human soul and the soul of Nature, brings Wordsworth very close to the Indian philosophy of Yoga" In *Tintern Abbey* the poet explains it in more powerful terms.

(x) Thanks to the means .....as best might suit her aim.
(lines 351-356)

Nature is man's true and most dependable, most sympathetic guardian. She has her own ways of keeping man on the right track. She applies her methods when necessary. At times these methods may be very soothing, and at times they may be harsh, but Nature's intention is always holy. The poet is thankful to all those methods employed by Nature. At times she creates 'terror' in the mind of the wrong-doer, reveals herself to him in such a manner that he is not only overawed but also aware of the 'unknown modes of being'. The 'boat episode' in the poet's life was one such experience; he could feel the infinite power of nature watching, following, and admonishing him.

(xi) .....but after I had seen .....to my dreams.
(lines 390-400)

Here the poet becomes a mystic. When he saw the huge hill moving towards him as if with will of its own, he 'saw' nature and was aware of 'unknown modes of being'. It was a 'revelation'. The world 'revealed' was entirely different from the world we perceive and know through our senses. Nothing familiar can compare with it. And in that moment of revelation the familiar world disappeared, the poet was lifted to another plane of realization, to a different world or awareness. Wordsworth's romanticism lies in this mystical approach to nature but he describes his 'personal' experience with such force as to give it universal validity and appeal.

29.5.5 Glossary and Allusions

38 vexing its own creation : much greater in force and power than the mild breeze which led to it.

46 Matins and vespers : religious incantations of prayer sung in the morning and in the evening respectively.

72 Vale : The 'vale' in Grasmere; Dove cottage, into which the Wordsworths moved on December 20, 1799, and where they stayed until 1808, was then divided from the lake only by fields.

97 .....defrauded : The Aeolian harp, or wind harp – a fashionable toy in the late eighteenth century – became for the Romantics a symbol of poetic creation. It consisted of a set of strings stretched across a rectangular sounding box from which the wind evoked varying tones and harmonies.

112 self-congratulation : used without the modern pejorative implication, to mean 'rejoicing'.

141 ....brooding : the human mind initiates the creative process by brooding, as the Holy Spirit in Milton's Christian epic had brooded over Chaos.

155 images : landscapes as they present themselves to the eye or are retained within the mind.

158 manners: general way of life: morals; habits.

169 ..... unsung : Milton's decision not to write a romance about knights in battles and tournaments is recorded in Paradise Lost IX, 25-41, a passage that seems frequently to have been in Wordsworth's mind as he attempted to define his own position as a poet.

185 faithful loves : it echoes the opening stanza of *The Faerie Queene,* 'Fieree warres and faithful loves shall moralize my song.'

187-190 How .....Empire: Mithridates the Great, King of Pontus, was defeated by Pompey in 66 B.C. and died two years later; Odin, in one tradition, was a barbarian who led his tribe north from the sea of Asov to Sweden in the hope that one day their descendants might carry out his revenge upon the Romans.

202 ..... Of natural heroes : The Roman general Sertorius, contemporary and ally of Mithridates, gained control of most of Spain, but was unsuccessful in his attempt to master Rome from the provinces; he was assassinated in 72 B.C. According to legend, his followers emigrated to the Canary Islands after his death, and there founded a race that flourished until the arrival of the Spanish at the end of the fifteenth century.

212 Withering the Oppressor : 'Dominique de Gourges, a French gentleman who went in 1568 to Florida to avenge the massacre of the French by the Spaniards there' (*Prelude* note, 1850).

213 Dalecarlia's mines : Gustavus Vasa of Sweden raised support among peasants in the mining district of Dalecarlia, and freed his country from Danish rule in 1521-23.

217 Wallace : William Wallace, hero of Scottish nationalism, was captured and executed by Edward I in 1305. Wordsworth's interest had been stirred during his tour of Scotland with Dorothy in August-September, 1803.

237.....And clearer insight: Another reference to *The Recluse; Home at Grasmere,* which was to be the first Book of the main philosophical section of the poem, does precisely cherish the daily life of the Wordsworths, holding it up as a type for general future happiness. Later tradition represented Orpheus as a philosopher rather than a musician.

237-42 Wordsworth, in the mood he describes here, is not decisive enough to be either vicious or virtuous; he cannot distinguish between vague but feeble longings to write *The Recluse*, and an overwhelming impulse to do so, between timorousness and prudence, between mere delay and circumspection.

246 blank reserve : total inaction.

260 interdict : prohibition

268 false steward : refers to the parable of the false steward, Matthew 25.

269-74 This question had of course been the opening of the two-part *Prelude*, expressing already in October-November 1798 the poet's discontent at failure to make progress with *The Recluse,* The river is the Derwent, which flows along the far side of the garden wall of the house where Wordsworth was born at Cockermouth.

275 holms : Islands.

284 a shattered monument : Cockermouth Castle.

295 Skiddaw : nine miles east of Cockermouth, it is the fourth highest peak in the Lake District.

305 transplanted : the experiences that follow take place after Wordsworth has been 'transplanted' to Hawkshead Grammer School, thirtyfive miles from Cockermouth, in May 1779.

320 toil : snare of labour

327 the cultured Vale: the part of the valley that was under cultivation

330 end : result

373 pinnace: small boat

379 instinct : imbued

408 vulgar : ordinary : commonplace.

450 reflex: shadow; reflection.

460 diurnal: daily

461 train : sequence

471 characters: marks

495 courser : swift horse

535 .... By royal visages : In Wordsworth's extension here of the card game in 1799, the influence of Cowper is less apparent, and that of Pope (*The Rape of the Lock*) becomes more obvious

543 Bothnic Main: The northern Baltic.

547 .....And made me love them : in his childhood days it was not his conscious enjoyment of nature, but nature coming forward to him and impressing upon his tender mind her benign and permanent stamp which in later years made the poet love her.

554 intellectual charm : spiritual bliss

555 first-born affinities : affinities with which a child is born.

549-58: Here is affirmation of Wordsworth's view that in the spontaneous sensuousness of childhood there is a quality of mind which is vital to the development of spiritual life.

564 Organic : sensual; bodily

568 Cumbria's : Cumberland's

581 vulgar joy: ordinary pleasure

591 evil-minded fairies: fairies were supposed to cause ill-assorted couples to fall in love, as in Shakespeare's

Midsummer Night's Dream

593 Collateral : indirect

612 affections : feelings

620 tedious tale : the banal alliteration is a joke for Coleridge about poetic craftsmanship

626 honourable toil : the writing of *The Recluse*

633 visionary things : things seen in the imagination with the inward eye.

645 discomfited : unfit.

29.6 QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. Write a note on the Romantic Revival and examine Wordsworth's role in it.
2. Comment on the various texts of *The Prelude.*
3. Justify the sub-title of *The Prelude* as 'Growth of a Poet's mind'.
4. Discuss *The Prelude* as an antobiographical poem.
5. Analyse the philosophical content of *The Prelude.*
6. Can autobiographical poetry be great poety? Discuss with reference to *The Prelude.*
7. Critically appreciate the Boat Episode in *The Prelude.*
7. Write a short essay on the diction and imagery of *The Prelude.*
9. Do you think *The Prelude* is Wordsworth's greatest work? Give reasons for your answer

29.7 SUGGESTD FURTHER READING

Editions:

The standard edition of the poems remains *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth*, ed. Ernest de Selincourt and Helen Darbishire (5 vols. Oxford, 1940-9).

The accompanying volume *The Prelude*, ed. Ernest de Selincourt (1926), 2nd revised edition ed. Helen Darbishire (Oxford, 1959) is still of use. *The Prelude 1799, 1805, 1850,* ed. Jonathan Wordsworth. M.H. Abrams, and Stephen Gill (New York, 1979), often called the 'Norton *Prelude*', is best for students.

Biography:

(i) Christopher Wordsworth, Memoirs of William Wordsworth (2 Vols.)
(ii) Stephen Gill, *William Wordsworth, a file* (Oxford, 1989)

Background:

(i) Basil Willey, *The Eighteenth Century Background* (1940)
(ii) Jonathan Wordsworth, Michael C. Jaya, & Robert Woof, *William Wordsworth and the Age of English Romanticism, (New Brunswick and London. 1987).*
(iii) Max Byrd, London Transformed : *Images of the City in the Eighteenth Century* (New Haven, 1978).

Language:

(i) Francis Austin, *The Language of Wordsworth and Coleridge (1989)*
(ii) Josephine Miles, *Wordsworth and the Vocabulary of Emotion (Berkeley, 1942).*

Criticism:

(i) M.H. Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism : Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature* (New York, 1971)
(ii) Herbert Lindenberger, *On Wordsworth's 'Prelude'* (Princeton, 1963)
(iii) W.J. Harvey and Richard Gravil, *Wordsworth : The Prelude*, a Casebook (Macmillan, 1972).