



WORDSWORTH AND THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

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Abstract: Almost all the Romantic poets, with the possible exception of Byron, have accepted the existence of evil and considered pain and suffering as a part of human life. The sources of evil and suffering are diverse: socio-economic imbalance, political crisis, personal failures and disappointments of the poet, and, above all, a sense of alienation from social, economic, philosophical and religious dimensions. Wordsworth in his poetry has recorded the presence of evil in life and consequent human suffering. The tragic elements in Wordsworth's poetry demonstrate this inescapable pattern of human destiny. The spirit of Wordsworth's poetry lies, in the face of all individual, social and political evils, in denouncing warfare, in upholding democratic ideals and in finding a solution to the problems of evil and suffering that mankind has always confronted. He tried to find in his despair a consolation which lies in love for humanity, love for Nature, the transfiguration of vision, and a belief in an afterlife. Wordsworth undertook to reconstitute the grounds of hope for mankind in a world full of pain, sorrow, and despair. From a reading of his poetry, one can be familiar with Wordsworth's conception of the true end of man, which can be applied to the social, moral and metaphysical issues of our time. The purpose of this paper is to show that although Wordsworth's approach to the problems of evil and suffering follows theological and philosophical archetypes, his solutions are essentially aesthetic and humanistic.

Key words: evil, suffering, hope, despair, aesthetic, humanistic

In his early poems, Wordsworth seems to have been concerned with the social problems of evil and suffering. In his poetry of this period, human misery serves as a 'reason' for the poet "to lament/ What man has made of man".¹ Poems such as "The Female Vagrant," and "The Ruined Cottage" in the *Lyrical Ballads*, the episodes of the vagrant family, the gypsy, and the Discharged Soldier in "An Evening Walk," the "Descriptive Sketches" and "The Prelude" respectively, are written in the background of war and consequent human catastrophe. In all these instances, Wordsworth seems to have expressed his anger and dissatisfaction with a social environment in which such things constantly happen. In "The Prelude" IX, Wordsworth's fellow revolutionary Beauvais, pointing to a "hunger-bitten girl," says: "'Tis against that/ We are fighting".² In his later poems, particularly in the later books of "The Prelude," in the whole of his "The Excursion," and in his unfinished work "The Recluse," Wordsworth, however, becomes more concerned with the philosophical problems of evil and suffering. In these works he seems not to raise questions either against society, or state, or even God. Instead, he develops a sober, patient, and spiritual attitude in the face of all human predicaments. He now identifies the causes of human suffering with the loss

¹ "Lines Written in Early Spring," ll. 23-24.

² "The Prelude" IX, ll. 517-518.

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of man's elementary innocence which William Blake has called "Beulah," and he finds restoration of happiness in the recovery of that state, not in theological, but naturalistic, archetypes of human salvation.

Similarly, if we look at the poetry that comes after Wordsworth, for example, to the poetry of late Romantics up to Yeats, we find what might be called the reconciliation of suffering in the aesthetic vision. It relates that man is so various, so wonderful, capable of such triumph and agony, suffering and joy, that if one can shift one's sight from the individual case and allow him to see life in its totality, he can accept not only suffering but active wickedness as an inevitable and necessary part of the human drama, and can even rejoice in it his power of experience and endurance. This power of fortitude Yeats has called "a kind of joy," or in other words, a kind of spiritual joy, that must accompany tragic suffering.³

Metaphorically, Wordsworth's mind has escaped back to a "world of life" from its experiential equivalent of the hell that John Milton has described as "a universe of death, which God by curse/ Created evil, for evil is only good/ Where all life dies, death lives" (*Paradise Lost*, Book-II, ll. 622-24). The powerful stimulus that helps Wordsworth escape this "Universe of death" is "love":

Evil as one is rashly named by those
Who know not what they say. From love, for here
Do we begin and end, all grandeur comes,
All truth and beauty, from pervading love,
That gone, we are as dust.⁴

This 'love' for Wordsworth is a "higher love", a "love more intellectual" than that which is "human merely". This life giving love that Wordsworth speaks of "proceeds/ More from the brooding Soul, and is divine" (XIII, ll. 164-65). Wordsworth has grown up fostered alike by beauty and by fear. On the one side is the "sublime" and on the other the "lovely forms of nature". With the "sublime" are associated "fear" and "pain" and with the beautiful are associated "joy" and "love". Wordsworth denies that fear and pain are in themselves "evil", since, subordinated to the ultimate principle of love, these aspects of human experience are necessary to the formation of a mature and imaginative mind:

Through dislike and most offensive pain
Was to the truth conducted---of this faith
Never forsaken, that by acting well,
And understanding, I should learn to love
The end of life and everything we know.⁵

Wordsworth's justification of pain and fear as ultimately serving love is parallel to Milton's justification of God's ways to men:

O goodness infinite, goodness immense!
That all this good of evil shall produce,
And evil turn to good; more wonderful
Than that which by creation first brought forth

³ Wade, Allan (ed.), 1945. *The Letters of W B Yeats*. University of London Press, p. 128.

⁴ "The Prelude", XIII, ll. 148-152.

⁵ "The Prelude" IX, ll. 767-777.

Light out of darkness! Full of doubt I stand.
Whether I should repent me now of sin
By me done and occasion'd, or rejoice
Much more, that much more good thereof shall spring,
To God more glory, more good will to Men
From God and over wrath grace shall abound.⁶

Like Milton's, the conclusion of Wordsworth's 'theodicy' is also a kind of 'optimism' which, far from denying the reality of evil and suffering, insists that they are not only humanly inevitable but are indispensable conditions for the development of man's moral and intellectual insight into life. Thus in Wordsworth's poetic enterprise, it is his key argument that we can recreate the experienced world, and that this new world, despite its inescapable fact of evil and suffering—will provide a sufficient paradise to which we have ultimate access. He tells us that if we only let a man succeed in restoring his lost integrity by a marital union between his mind and Nature that have remained so far severed and alienated, he will find "Paradise, and groves Elysian ... A simple produce of the common day".⁷

Similar efforts have been made to find solutions to the problems of evil and suffering in the other books of Wordsworth's "The Excursion". There the Wanderer and the Pastor try to correct the pessimism and despondency of the Solitary. The Wanderer, in one of his solemn assertions, tells the hopeless Solitary:

One adequate support
Far the calamities of mortal life
Exists---one only; an assured belief
That the procession of our fate, howe'er
Sad or disturbed, is ordered by a Being
Of infinite benevolence and power;
Whose everlasting purposes embrace
All accidents, converting them to good.⁸

One can overcome evil and suffering, says the Wanderer

by faith,
Faith absolute in God, including hope,
And the defense that lies in boundless love
Of his perfection.⁹

With 'pain/Acknowledging, and grievous self-reproach' the "venerable Sage" calls upon humanity to hold courage and faith in the face of adversity:

...we need
Zeal, and the virtue to exist by faith

⁶ *Paradise Lost*, XII, ll. 469-478.

⁷ "Prospectus" to "The Recluse", ll. 47, 48, 55.

⁸ "The Excursion", Book 4, ll. 11-18.

⁹ *Ibid.*, Book 4, ll. 21-24.

As soldiers live by courage; as by strength
Of heart, the sailor fights with roaring seas.¹⁰

In his struggle with evil and suffering the victory is most sure

For him, who, seeking faith by virtue, strives
To yield entire submission to the law
Of conscience--- conscience revered and obeyed,
As God's most intimate presence in the soul,
And his most perfect image in the world.¹¹

Hence we hear the Wanderer's final assertion,

Trust me, that for the instructed, time will come
When they shall meet no object but may teach
Some acceptable lessons to their mind
Of human suffering, or of human joy.¹²

In his "Prospectus" Wordsworth has declared that he will

travel near the tribes
And fellowships of men, and see ill sights
Of madding passions mutually inflamed;
Must hear humanity in fields and groves
Pipe solitary anguish, or must hang
Brooding above the fierce confederate storm
Of sorrow, barricaded evermore
Within the walls of Cities;¹³

Thus in Wordsworth, the creative stimulation is human suffering, and the Catharsis is the creation itself. Wordsworth's assurance of hope in despair and consolation in distress is important, but more important is his poetic creation that excites that hope for mankind. Wordsworth conceived of the poet's social function no less gravely than had Spenser or Milton before him. Wordsworth indicated his explicit justification of poetic creation in the contemporary world of international crises and social dislocation. Such a service, he said, was never more needed 'than at the present time' when the brunt of 'great national events', and 'the uniformity of...occupations attended upon the increasing accumulation of men in cities' tend to reduce the mind 'to a state almost savage torpor'.¹⁴

Keats's poetry has professedly been that of a visionary and a dreamer. Yet he assigned high responsibility both to poets and poetry for the spiritual elevation of human condition in times of crisis and despair:

Sure not all
Those melodies sung to world's ear

¹⁰ Ibid., Book 4, ll. 201-204.

¹¹ Ibid., Book 4, 222-227.

¹² Ibid., Book 4, ll. 1235-1238.

¹³ "Prospectus" to "The Recluse", ll. 73-80.

¹⁴ Letter to John Wilson, *Wordsworth's Literary Criticism*, P. 7.

Are useless; sure a poet is a sage;
A humanist, physician to all men.¹⁵

To Shelley, as to Wordsworth and Keats, the importance of poetry as a spiritual instrument lies in its exercising and strengthening the understructure of moral action. The poets by conveying their power of universal sympathy and understanding can become 'the hierophants of an unapprehended inspiration' and 'the acknowledged legislators of the world'.¹⁶ Good literature, therefore, can bring about a kind of transfiguration in the moral vision of man (the example of which is evident in the poetic art of the Wanderer who effects such a change in the Narrator in his contemplation of Margaret's suffering in "The Excursion", Book I.), and can help him combat the evils of life.

Wordsworth's poetry thus offers us a broad vision of beauty and spirituality. It brings about the transfiguration of our vision in which man, nature, and the whole universe become one, and form a cosmic unity. Once this aesthetic state of mind is achieved, the weight and pressure of evil and suffering become almost insignificant. It is precisely this extraordinary power of Wordsworth's creative vision that helps mankind overcome sorrow and despair. Leslie Stephen held that "Wordsworth is the only poet who will bear reading in times of distress"¹⁷, and that his persistent concern with the possibility of transmuting sorrow into strength is "the single topic which... can really be called consolatory." What he does, said John Marley, "is to assuage, to reconcile, to fortify... to give us quietness".¹⁸ While entering London in Book VIII of "The Prelude" Wordsworth felt that

A weight of ages did at once descend
Upon my heart; no thought embodied, no
Distinct remembrances, but weight and power, -
Power growing under weight.¹⁹

Here "Power growing under weight" is noteworthy. It means, in the words of Jonathan Bishop, "suffering authorized strength",²⁰ in other words, suffering transmuted to strength. Wordsworth has turned defeat into victory. He has transmuted sorrows into food for aesthetic contemplation, and dwells upon the depth and fortitude of human nature. Wordsworth stored up his joys, and lived upon the interest while they paid in the form of hope and expectation. No poet ever drew from simpler sources than Wordsworth, but none ever made so much out of so little. He stemmed the commonplace currents of emotion, and often succeeded in so reversing them, that men were puzzled when they saw weakness transformed into power and sorrow into rapture. It has already been said that he uses human sorrow as a stimulus to stir up his own meditative spirit, till it loses its own nature and becomes

Sorrow, that is not sorrow, but delight;
And measurable love, that is not pain
To hear of, for the glory that redounds
Therefrom to human-kind, and what we are.²¹

This spiritual sense of joy distilled from sorrow worked a miracle in the transformation of man's vision. Wordsworth's first recorded success was with Coleridge himself. When in January 1807

15: "The Fall of Hyperion", ll. 187-190.

16: "Defence of Poetry", *Shelley's Literary and Philosophical Criticism*, P. 159.

17: "Wordsworth's Ethics", *Hours in a Library*, 3rd series, (London, 1879), PP. 218-19.

18: Marley, J. (ed.), 1895. *The Complete Poetical Works of William Wordsworth*, London, Introduction, pp. lxvi-ii.

19: "The Prelude", VIII, ll. 703-706.

20: Bishop, Jonathan, 1959. "Wordsworth and the 'Spots of Time'", XXVI, pp. 45-65.

21: "The Prelude", VIII, ll. 246-249.

Coleridge, sunk in spiritual torpor, first heard the poet read his “The Prelude” through, he seemed to have come back to life from the sleep of death:

Ah! as I listened with a heart forlorn,
The pulses of my being beat anew:
And even as Life returns upon the drowned,
Life’s joy rekindling roused a throng of pain-
Keen pangs of love, awakening as a babe
Turbulent, with an outcry in the heart.²²

And when the reading was over, “I found myself in prayer”.²³

John Stuart Mill in his “A Crisis in My Mental History. One Stage Onward” has described how his life was saved by his reading of Wordsworth’s poetry. He fell in sudden and total apathy and despair at the age of twenty. He illustrated his condition from Coleridge’s crisis-poem “Dejection: An ode”: “A grief without a pang, void, dark and drear”. However, the decisive factor for his recovery from his “dry, heavy dejection” was his introduction to Wordsworth’s collective “Poems” of 1815. These were “a medicine” says Mill “for my state of mind”, because “they expressed, not mere outward beauty, but states of feeling, and of thought coloured by feeling, under the excitement of beauty.” Especially important was the “Intimation Ode”, in which Mill recognized the design of crisis, loss, and compensatory gain attendant upon the growth from youth into maturity.

That Wordsworth’s solution to the problem of evil and suffering, and to the crisis of the human soul, has not lost its appeal even in the twentieth century can be proved by an autobiography published in the 1950s, Bede Griffiths’s The Golden String. “One of the decisive events of my life”, the author tells us in his Prologue, occurred on an evening of his last term at school, when the chorus of birds, the sight of hawthorns in full bloom, the soar and song of a lark struck him with a surprise as great as though he “had been brought suddenly among the trees of the Garden of Paradise”. “It was as though I had begun to see and smell and hear for the first time. The world appeared to me as Wordsworth describes it with the glory and the freshness of a dream” and Nature “began to wear a kind of sacramental character for me”. He soon finds himself a disciple of the Romantics as he writes:

I had begun to read the Romantic poets, Wordsworth, Shelley and Keats, and I found in them the record of an experience like my own. They became my teachers and my guides, and I gradually gave up my adherence to Christianity.²⁴

This is what I have called Wordsworth’s aesthetic solution to the problems of evil and suffering. Romantic poetry itself is a creation of spiritual beauty in the tragic experience of suffering. It is a source of comfort and joy for man’s wounded spirit and agonized soul. Consequently, the Romantics have offered their artistic alternative to the world for man’s redemption from his earthly suffering. The idea is contained in Keats’s famous lines:

When old age shall this generation waste,
Thou shalt remain, in the midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say’st,
“Beauty is truth, truth beauty,” — that is all

²² “To William Wordsworth”, ll. 61-66.

²³ *Ibid.* l. 112.

²⁴ Bede Griffiths, The Golden String (NY, 1954), pp. 9-10, 15-16, 30-31.

Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.²⁵

As the lines reveal, art will remain “a friend to man” in the midst of his sorrow and suffering (of course, unlike that of the Urn), and will bring about the transfiguration of his soul by artistic truth and beauty. “Creative imagination”, says Maurice Bowra, carries man “beyond the bounds of space and time” and gives him a vision the power of which “sustains the universe and gives meaning to life”.²⁶

The second solution that Wordsworth offers is humanistic. The major Romantic poets were all socially and politically conscious, and put their highest emphasis on man and the agonies of the human condition. Wordsworth himself has claimed that he has “given twelve hours thought to the conditions and prospects of society, for one to poetry”.²⁷ Thus the Romantic aesthetics of art is for man’s sake and for life’s sake. Poetry, like all art, Coleridge said, ‘is purely human; for all its materials are from the mind, and all its products are for the mind’. In Wordsworth’s view, the poet ‘is the rock of defense for human nature; an upholder and preserver’. Keats was as certain as Shelley that ‘Great spirits now on earth are sojourning’ and that ‘these will give the world heart/And other pulses’. Keats pressed on ‘a nobler life’ of ‘the agonies/of human hearts’. In his “The Fall of Hyperion” he achieves the necessary awareness that “a poet is a sage;/ A humanist, physician to all men” and is reborn as a poet of suffering humanity. These poets, whatever their religious creed or lack of creed, were all, in Keat’s term, humanists. They upheld the importance and essential dignity of man. Wordsworth was primarily a poet of man, not a poet of Nature. His “Prospectus” to “The Recluse” begins with:

On man, on Nature, and on Human life
Musing in solitude...

He will write about “Not Chaos, not/ The darkest pit of lowest Erebus” but will look

Into our Minds, into the Mind of Man,
My haunt, and the main region of my Song.²⁸

Hence in Wordsworth’s poetry for the first time in English literature the common human figures appeared with their worth and dignity. We have Simon Lee, a female Vagrant, a Martha Ray, a Margaret; Michael, the leech-gatherer, the old Beggar. Wordsworth justifies this democratic and humanitarian vision thus:

...I daily read
With most delight the passions of mankind
There saw into the depth of human souls---
Souls that appear to have no depth at all
To vulgar eyes...
...there I found
Hope to my hope, and to my pleasure peace
And steadiness, and healing and repose
To every angry passion. There I heard,
From mouths of lowly men and of obscure,

²⁵ “Ode on a Grecian Urn”, ll. 46-50.

²⁶ Bowra, Maurice. *The Romantic Imagination*, New York, p. 102.

²⁷ Told, F.M. 1957. *Politics and the Poet: A study of Wordsworth*, London, p.11.

²⁸ “Prospectus” to “The Recluse”, ll.35-36, 40-41.

A tale of honour--- sounds in unison
With loftiest promises of good and fear.²⁹

The mind of man for Wordsworth is a safe place in which one can find peace, hope, healing, and repose in the turmoil of human existence. Wordsworth has thus placed his strong confidence in humanity and human mind, and found dignity and beauty in the mind of man, the value of which surpasses everything else:

.....the mind of man becomes
A thousand times more beautiful than the earth
On which he dwells, above this frame of things
(Which, 'amid all revolutions in the hopes
And fears of men, doth still remain unchanged)
In beauty exalted, as it is itself
Of substance and of fabric more divine.³⁰

Wordsworth's assertion for human dignity, his concern for human welfare, and his reverence for spiritual values of life demonstrate his essentially humanistic approach to the problems of life. We can recall in this connection Wordsworth's memorable utterance:

Thanks to the human heart by which we live
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys and fears.³¹

This is an acceptance of life both with its success and failure, joys and sufferings. From this new dimension of thought, Wordsworth seems to have constructed his idea of the sublimity and the tenderness of the human mind which can respond to "whatso'er of Terror or of Love,/ Or Beauty, Nature's daily face put on"³² and accept life as it is. This is a glorious achievement of the human soul which "in its subtlety and insight had no precedent either in the physico-theology, the aesthetics, or the psychology"³³ of Wordsworth's time.

Thus Wordsworth's solution to the problems of evil and suffering is both aesthetic and humanistic. It is aesthetic in the sense that Wordsworth's poetic creation itself is a source of beauty and spiritual illumination that offers an optimistic vision of life in the experience of suffering. It is humanistic in the sense that it deals, unlike Milton's Biblical story, with man and the mind of man. Milton in his *Paradise Lost* undertakes "to assert Eternal Providence / And justify the ways of God to men".³⁴ Wordsworth in his poetry attempts to justify the ways, if not of God, but of life, to Man. He seeks hope and consolation in human potentialities. Faced by a universe of evil, suffering and death, Wordsworth puts his supreme confidence in human patience, power and dignity, and tries to cheer mankind up by his qualified optimism:

We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind;
In the primal sympathy
While having been must ever be;

²⁹ "The Prelude, XII, ll. 164-168; 178-184.

³⁰ "The Prelude, XIII, ll. 446-452.

³¹ "Immortality Ode", ll. 204-205.

³² "The Prelude, III, ll. 132-133.

³³ Abrams, M. H. 1971. *Natural Supernaturalism*. New York, p. 102.

³⁴ *Paradise Lost*, Book I, ll. 25-26.

In the soothing thoughts that spring
Out of human suffering;
In the faith that looks through death
In years that bring the philosophic mind.³⁵

The consolation here is comparable to Wordsworth's exalted optimism expressed at the close of Book V of "The Excursion":

...the care prospective of our wise
Forefathers, who, to guard against the shocks,
The fluctuation and decay of things, —
Embodied and established these high truths
In solemn institutions: — men convinced
That life is love and immortality;
The being one, and one the element.
There lies the channel, and original bed,
From the beginning, hollowed out and scooped
For Man's affections— else betrayed and lost,
And swallowed up 'mid deserts infinite!
This is the genuine course, the aim, and end
Of prescient reason; all conclusions else
Are abject, vain, presumptuous, and perverse.
The faith partaking of those holy times,
Life, I repeat, is energy of love
Divine or human; exercised in pain,
In strife, in tribulations; and ordained,
If so approved and sanctified, to pass,
Through shades and silent rest, to endless joy.³⁶

To Wordsworth, life is "love and immortality" which, through the acid test of "pain," "strife," and "tribulations," ultimately reaches its "endless joy." Devoid of love and fortitude, life becomes "abject, vain, presumptuous, and perverse." Thus the true end of life is joy and happiness, the means of which is pain, suffering and sacrifice.

Not only Wordsworth, but his eighteenth century predecessors also believed in the supreme good of the world- order. This universe is an orderly universe, and the general eighteenth century notion was a cosmic optimism as expressed in Alexander Pope's "The Essay on Man":

All Discord, Harmony not understood;
All partial Evil, universal Good.³⁷

³⁵ "Immortality Ode", ll. 183-190.

³⁶ "The Excursion", Book V, ll. 997-1016.

³⁷ "The Essay on Man," I, ll. 291-92.

The idea is that much that appears to be evil is simply partial good, or good only partially understood. Nearly all Romantics, as indeed most classicists before them, have been on the side of such optimism. They believe that the universe is rich in potentials for happiness, and not for the despair of man. Secondly, this happiness is to be found not in the Miltonic otherworldly “Paradise, and groves/Elysian, Fortunate Fields...”, but in the very world that is the world of all of us. It originates in the filial bond that connects us with this active universe. “It arises”, in the words of W. B. Gallie “out of that grand elementary principle of pleasure in which all creatures share”.³⁸ Thus the very heart of Wordsworth’s solution is a cosmic optimism that proclaims the honour, dignity, and hope of man. I would like to conclude the essay by echoing the voice of Matthew Arnold who invoked Wordsworth for his prophetic solution of evil and suffering:

Wordsworth has gone from us—and ye,
Ah, may ye feel his voice as we!
He too upon a wintry clime
Had fallen— on his iron time
Of doubts, disputes, distractions, fears.
He found us when the age had bound
Our souls in its benumbing round;
He spoke, and loosed our heart in tears...
Ah! since dark days still bring to light
Man’s prudence and man’s fiery might,
Time may restore us in his course
Goethe’s sage mind and Byron’s force;
But where will Europe’s latter hour
Again find Wordsworth’s healing power?³⁹

Wordsworth’s conception of the true end of man can thus be applied to the social, moral and metaphysical issues of our time—notably the problem of evil, the problem of how moral ideals, ethical values, and the feeling of optimism become, and remain, operative in all spheres of human life, from personal to the universal. In our hours of agony and despair, we can draw both intellectual and spiritual sustenance from all that Wordsworth has left for us, in verse and prose. Therefore, the implications and aspirations of Wordsworth’s poetry, far from being dead, are still very much alive, and can be helpful for the crisis-ridden modern world we live in these days.

In our final analysis, we can say that the major Romantic poets were conscious of Evil and the consequent agonies of the human condition. Keats pressed on ‘a nobler life’ of ‘the agonies/of human hearts’. In his “The Fall of Hyperion” he achieves the necessary awareness that “a poet is a sage;/ A humanist, physician to all men” and is reborn as a poet of suffering humanity. The conclusion of Wordsworth’s creative vision is a kind of ‘optimism’ which, far from denying the reality of evil and suffering, insists that these are indispensable conditions for the development of man’s moral and intellectual insight into life. Thus in Wordsworth’s poetic enterprise, it is his key argument that we can recreate the experienced world, and that this new world, despite its inescapable fact of evil and suffering— will provide a sufficient paradise to which we have ultimate access. Thus Wordsworth’s solution to the problems of evil and suffering is both aesthetic

³⁸ Gallie, W. B., 1979, “Is The Prelude a Philosophical Poem?”, quoted in “The Prelude”, Jonathan Wordsworth, Abrams, and Gills, 1979, New York, 1979, p. 673.

³⁹ “Memorial Verses”, ll. 40-63.

and humanistic. It is aesthetic in the sense that Wordsworth's poetic creation itself is a source of beauty and spiritual illumination that offers an optimistic vision of life in the experience of suffering. It is humanistic in the sense that it deals with man and the mind of man. He seeks hope and consolation in human potentialities. Faced by a universe of evil, suffering and death, Wordsworth puts his supreme confidence in human patience, power and dignity, and tries to cheer mankind up by his qualified optimism.

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