

**THE PLANT AND THE SOIL**  
**A COMPARATIVE STUDY IN WORDSWORTH'S**  
**AND WHITMAN'S NON-LITERARY BACKGROUNDS**

By

**ABDELWAHAB M. EL MESSIRI**

*Lecturer, English Department,*

*University College For Women, Ain Shams University*

---

There is certainly some truth to the claim that Whitman's critical views are similar to Wordsworth's. We rightly think of the two poets as belonging to the same literary tradition which stresses the importance of freedom and emotion. Both poets think of man as having some kinship with and similarity to nature. They both subscribe to an expressive, rather than a mimetic, view of art, and address themselves to more or less the same critical questions. Their conceptions of themselves as literary « radicals », creating a new taste and trying to develop a new idiom for poetry, were strikingly similar. Their poetry, they both maintained, was an « experiment » aimed at evolving a new kind of poetry more relevant to their age. Writing in an industrial society, Wordsworth and Whitman tried to underscore the significance of the poet and to defend his rôle.

Yet inspite of all these resemblances, the two poets' visions of reality, as manifested in their poetry and prose, differ in many respects. In Wordsworth's poetry, for instance, man returns to nature to find and define himself, not to lose it. The natural child, leading a life of « glad animal movements », and the « thoughtless youth », bounding « like a roe » among the hills, must both grow up and become aware of « the still sad music of humanity ». On the other hand, man, according to Whitman, identifies himself completely with nature, and therefore he is governed and regulated, not by social laws, but by the divine laws of nature. Wordsworth's social man is aware of limits, but he also liberates himself from the oppressive dominion of nature. Whitman's natural man is completely free, but he is also the slave of nature. For him nature is all in all.

It is worth noting, besides, that there is a pervasive sense of the relevance of history and of tradition in Wordsworth's poetry and criticism, a sense which is quite absent in Whitman's. Both are « romantic » rebels against

tradition, it is true, but whereas the former is selective and creative in his approach, the latter is indiscriminate and simple-minded. There is also a strain of anti-intellectualism in Whitman's writings that is concomitant with his rejection of tradition. In Wordsworth's criticism and poetry, there is a deep-seated respect for the human mind and for all it has achieved. We also notice in Wordsworth's poetry and criticism a high regard for form, structure, and outline rarely found in Whitman's. Moreover, Wordsworth, unlike Whitman, shunned both abstractions and mere cataloguing of details, preferring instead to use concrete and specific images that result from an imaginative perception of reality. Whitman's poetry consists mostly of either longish declamatory passages or formless catalogues.

Finally, Wordsworth, despite all his Britishness, is basically a humanistic poet, with a very broad and universal outlook. Whitman, whose prose and poetry abound in references to the world at large and to all the peoples of the world, tends quite often to be narrowly American and somewhat provincial. In his mind, phenomena were neatly divided into either « American » or « un-American ».

The roots of the differences between the two poets' outlook originate in their respective backgrounds. Wordsworth, unlike Whitman, inherited and operated within a long established historical tradition. His formal and general education, his religious training, and his political background shaped his imagination and helped him develop a complex view of man and of history. Whitman, on the other hand, no heir to any well-defined historical tradition, developed little awareness of the human uses of history. He grew up in an increasingly technological society and accepted many of its moral assumptions, its anti-intellectualism, and disrespect for « art ». Moreover, his unstructured education and his Quaker religious background reinforced his anti-historical and anti-social bias and his disrespect for concrete form.

In this study I have tried to concentrate on those aspects of the two poets' non-literary backgrounds that helped shape their imagination. I have also tried to outline the way they reacted to their respective backgrounds, because their reactions, beside being inherently interesting, might clarify many of their literary views and shed some light on their creative work. The way a poet views politics ( the structure of society or the organization of social life ) is not likely to differ considerably from the way he views poetry ( the structure of human experiences ). The study is divided into four sections, each dealing with one aspect of the two poets' background. While Section A deals with the geographical and cultural aspects, Sections B and C deal with the educational and religious aspects respectively. The last Section deals with the socio-economic background and the two poets' reported

reactions to them. Needless to say that I have not dealt with the literary background not because I underrate its importance, but because of the way I defined the scope and aims of this study (1). The literary background of both poets is far too complex a subject to be dealt with in such a short study.

#### A. GEOGRAPHICAL AND CULTURAL BACKGROUND

The society in which Wordsworth grew up did not only go back for thousands of years but also went through different historical phases and experienced different cultural modes. As a pupil in the Grammar School at Hawkshead, founded in the sixteenth century, Wordsworth learned, for instance, that « the Reformation had paved the way for ( Science ) and ( Philosophy ) » (1) signalling thereby the end of an era in English history. With his friend John Fleming, he read such poets as Milton, Pope, and Thomson, all of whom manifest the cultural diversity of their country (2).

These historical phases and cultural modes were not alien and abstract categories, but a part of historic traditions Wordsworth could relate to as an individual. He wrote, for example, at the age of fifteen, an imitation of Pope celebrating the bicentenary of the Hawkshead school (3). In the poem, he traces the evolution of his school « from superstition to rational ( Science ) » (4). In the same period of his life, he wrote a poem entitled *The Vale of Esthwaite* in which he addresses the Druids and imagines himself walking « through the gloom alone like a Baron » wandering « in his hall in times of yore » (5).

As an English poet living in a relatively small island, Wordsworth was exposed to a variety of long-lived sub-cultures like the Scottish and Irish. A short distance away, on the continent, were the French, Germans, and Dutch who managed to irritate the Briton at times, and to capture his imagination at others. His presence in France during the French Revolution was an experience of major significance in the shaping of his imagination.

A sense of history and of cultural diversity militates against provinciality. It forces one to be relativistic, because the cultural and historical diversity that surrounds one serves to challenge the self and any self-contained notions it may form about itself or the reality outside. The sense of history also forces man to see himself and the culture or history he belongs to as a part of a whole, not as an autonomous unit.

Whitman grew up and died in America. Given the United States's geographical isolation and given its vastness, Americans tend to be the people least exposed to other cultures. Whitman spent his life singing universal brotherhood and cosmic consciousness, and as a cosmic bard he

repeatedly used foreign words. Yet, surprisingly enough, he never learned a foreign language, nor did he ever leave America throughout his life. Late in life, in 1884, Whitman regretted that he « never learned to read German and French ». Yet with the ever bubbling springs of optimism within him, he added :

No doubt it's all just as well as it is ; it all came about according to what they used to describe as « the ordinances of God » : there's no chance in it : may be I'd have been modified if I had ever broken loose from my accustomed ways—become a traveller, become a linguist : that might have meant harm to the Leaves (6).

Whitman also often sang of the sublimity and beauty of the midwestern states, yet he never visited them until late in life. It was partly due to the geographical isolation and vastness of the U. S. A. that Whitman was never exposed to other cultural modes or ethical values such as those of England or the American Midwest or the South. His short trip to Louisiana, the source of many interesting speculations on the part of his biographers, gives us an idea about what might have happened to Whitman had he made a trip to Germany or India. It might have cured him of his mysticism or perhaps deepened it.

American history does not act as a corrective to the United States's geographic isolation. This history started with the great Puritan escape from the European continent and its oppressions. As such it is in a sense an anti-history. One common theme in Whitman's poetry and prose is the rejection of *all* past history, with *all* its virtues and vices.

Furthermore, American history may have its own degree of diversity, but it is definitely not as diverse as English history. There are no sharp contrasts between a Roman and a modern period. American history starts as the history of a Protestant people believing in Protestant ethical values, and has remained fundamentally unchanged. The history of the American Indian is still the speciality of the American anthropologist, not the American historian.

As for the Afro-Americans, Whitman elevated them, at times, to the supra-human and ahistorical level of « picturesque giants » (7). However, he came into direct contact with the Afro-American race during the campaign against slavery in which he, as an editor of the *Eagle* and as a political activist, participated. His espousal of the cause of the Afro-American did not stem from humanitarian considerations : it was largely economic in origin. Whitman's objections were not directed against slavery in general but rather against its extension in the new territories acquired by the Republic (8).

The immigrants to America did not initiate a German or an Irish phase of American history. Unlike invaders, immigrants tend to identify with and accept, too zealously at times, the history and cultural values of their new community. Moreover, people who migrate are usually the dissenting elements, the elements wanting to break away from their history and their culture, and as such they are not quite representative of the cultures they are rejecting. Besides, they usually come as individuals, not as communities, and when they set up their communities in their new homeland, they are quite often the best and most meticulous imitators of the « new » culture. Therefore they present only a very weak cultural challenge.

All these general facts, historical, cultural, or geo-cultural, contributed toward the polarization of Whitman's vision. Because his American self remained largely unchallenged by other cultural values and unaware of other complex historical processes, it saw history and culture as either American or un-American, as either a part of the self or totally unrelated to it. Moreover, because he was never exposed to other cultural modes, his ethical assumptions, derived largely from an industrial capitalist society, also remained unchallenged.

Of course dissimilarities between Wordsworth's and Whitman's geographical and cultural surroundings cannot wholly account for the specific differences between their imaginations. There are more definite elements that helped shape their vision, such as their educational and religious training and their socio-economic background.

## B. EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

The formal educational process is a social and basically conservative act in which the individual witnesses and participates in the communal act of transmitting knowledge from one generation to another. As such, it is a discipline exceedingly helpful, perhaps necessary, for a poet with a romantic bent of mind.

The rejection of social and literary conventions is always more meaningful and radical if the conventions are grasped in their entirety by the rebel. Baudelaire's diabolism is significant and coherent because it is structured by a Catholic French tradition, whereas the diabolic postures of the heroes of Byron's early works are empty of meaning. The full meaning of their rebellion is not entirely comprehended because the cosmic order they are rebelling against is never fully defied. Prometheus cannot exist without Zeus, although he may not be able to coexist peacefully with him.

Wordsworth's Cambridge education enabled him to be a sophisticated Prometheus. Its comprehensiveness helped him avoid an extreme narrow-

ness.. Moreover, « unitarians, disciples of the *philosophes*, sentimental radicals, and liberal Whigs made their strongest thrusts toward liberty and equality during the three years ending with Wordsworth's B. A. degree in January 1791 » (1). Such movements did not fail to leave their impact on the impressionable mind of the poet.

Let us now look at Wordsworth's academic education and general reading. As a Cambridge undergraduate, Wordsworth had to read selections from the writings of all the more important authors of classical antiquity, whether poets such as Homer, Virgil, and Horace; historians such as Xenophon and Tacitus; or philosophers such as Aristotle (2). Wordsworth was so familiar with classical authors that « in his letters are scattered references to Polybius, Cicero, Livy, Nepos, and Tacitus » (3). He told Walter Savage Landor that his « acquaintance with Virgil, Horace, Lucretius, and Catulus » was intimate (4). One of Wordsworth's earliest attempts at poetic creation was an « abortive imitation of Juvenal » (5). Later in life Wordsworth wrote poems, such as « Laodamia », a poem which is distinctly classical and specifically Virgilian in inspiration. Wordsworth, Douglas Bush reminds us, was the « fountain-head of nineteenth-century poetry on mythological themes » (6).

The curriculum at Cambridge also included modern European classics like the works of Ariosto, Cervantes, and Petrarch. Wordsworth learned French and German on his own and also learned « Italian language and literature as extra-curricular subjects under an excellent tutor, with far more enthusiasm than he gave to required subjects » (7).

The Cambridge curriculum included not only such books on moral philosophy as Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, but also Newton's *Principia* and *Optics*. In the spring of 1784, Wordsworth read mechanics and the twenty-first book of Livy's *History of Rome* (8).

As for his reading in eighteenth century literature, Wordsworth's training was not merely in « pre-Romantic » literature, but also in Restoration and Augustan literature proper. He knew English poetry thoroughly, « especially eighteenth-century poetry and that of the great masters », such as Spenser and Shakespeare (9). His writings include frequent references to Dr. Johnson and Sir Joshua Reynolds, and he boasted that he « could repeat, with a little rummaging of my memory, several thousand lines of Pope » (10) . and that he could speak of some parts of Sir Joshua's *Discourses* with confidence (11).

After graduation from Cambridge, Wordsworth rounded off his education by going to the continent (12). Later in life he made several tours of the continent and Scotland. It was in such travels that Wordsworth went

through the broadening and humanizing experience of witnessing, at first hand, the French Revolution and of meeting such complex figures as Beaupuy.

All in all, then, Wordsworth's formal and general education offered him knowledge of the history of his own people as well as that of other peoples. It sharpened his sense of the complexity of historical processes. Later when he rebelled against the established tradition, his rebellion, based on his close knowledge of history, was selective and discriminating.

Whitman was deprived of formal schooling with all its merits and vices. For a « Romantic » poet, the merits of a formal education far outweigh its vices. At the age of eleven, it seems that Whitman put an end to his formal education by leaving school (13). From that point on, his education was highly unstructured. He frequented theaters in New York where he saw many plays and operas (14). His almost daily contact with the city was also undoubtedly an educational experience. He met there for instance Dr. Abbott, the owner and curator of the Egyptian museum, who initiated Whitman into the world of Egyptology by bringing to the poet's attention important books on the subject or by lending him some. Besides Egyptology, Whitman was relatively well-read in as varied subjects as astronomy and phrenology. But the process of self-tuition never followed a definite plan. Newton Arvin's description of Whitman's random reading is instructive. The omnivorous poet read all « the stacks of printed matter that came in his way as a journalist and reviewer; and he read a little of everybody, from the Hon. Mrs. Norton and P. R. James and Martin F. Tupper to Goethe and Lamartine » (15).

Such an unstructured education may have some beneficial effects only on a poet who lives in a stable, highly stratified society; for Whitman it had its inherent dangers. Instead of seeing the history of thought as a complex, highly diversified process, Whitman was always trying to find out whether such and such a book was relevant to him and to America or not. The awareness of the complexity of the history of ideas that helps a writer develop a degree of relativism and skepticism was replaced by an either/or reductive view.

Moreover, such an unstructured education may generate the habit of seeing the historical process as an abstract movement of disembodied ideas rather than as the expression of men's manners at specific times in specific places. Whitman's reported reaction to what he read indicates an inability to respond to the full complexity of literature. In his view all literature was either the expression of the democratic idea or the product of feudalism. Literature for him was never simply French, English, or Greek or even good or bad. With such a skeletal knowledge of the past, it should come as no

surprise to learn that Whitman believed that all history was dead and irrelevant to energetic America. He considered that all historical processes were simply adumbrations of the greatest of all ideas : the United States. Even Shakespeare was a democrat in disguise preparing the ground for that great land.

Whitman, in short, never benefited from the disrupting and revolutionizing impact of a formal education. He accepted his society's view of man and judged other modes of existence in terms of this view, not *vice versa*. His subjective self reduced, categorized, and polarized most of what it read. It remained « natural » and unchallenged even while undergoing the artificial, unnatural process of education or of simple reading.

Whitman, a true grandson of the devil, found even Emerson, the devil's child, too artificially learned and traditional. He described Emerson's writings as performances « based on artificial scholarships and decorums at third or fourth removes » (16). If Emerson simply experimented as « an endless seeker with no past » at his back, he at least knew that past, and knew the value of learning about it. Whitman remained innocent of such knowledge.

### C. RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND

The dissimilarity between the two modes of Christianity Wordsworth and Whitman were exposed to partly explains the differences in their vision. Whereas Wordsworth grew up as a member of the highly ritualistic and hierarchical Church of England, Whitman was primarily exposed to an extremely anti-ritualistic and anti-clerical Quakerism.

In spite of Wordsworth's skepticism and doubts, he accepted the Bible and the Church « as a matter of course » (1). As late as May, 1792, he still intended entering the Church. It was the poet in him, however, rather than any intellectual doubt (2) that prompted him to change his mind. As a poet interested in the specific and the sensuous, he feared that his life as a clergyman would be a continual « struggle between his conscience and his impulses » (3).

Nevertheless the church ritual did not fail to attract Wordsworth's attention and shape his imagination. Ritual humanizes abstract supra-human ideas by making them accessible to our human imagination which thinks in terms of concrete specifics. Wordsworth's interest in ritual underlies his recommendation to a young man that he contemplate the character and *personal history* of Christ. « Work it », he said, « into your thoughts, into your imagination, make it a real presence of the mind » (4). Wordsworth's tendency to see nature as a humanized ritual was undoubtedly reinforced by his training into the Anglican Church. The English romantic's

view of imagination reveals this preference for the concrete ritual. Imagination, for him, is « the faculty by which the poet... produces — that is, images — individual forms in which are embodied *universal ideas or abstractions* » (5).

His view of man as a member of a human community was also deepened by his religious training. Participation in church ritual is a social act in which the individual tries to achieve salvation, not through some miraculous, inner light, but through a communal process.

As Wordsworth's interest in Christianity was social and humanistic, it is not surprising to learn that he had very little to say about « the extreme sinfulness and degradation of man and the Atonement through the death of Christ » (6), and that he turned instinctively to the doctrine which sees in the Incarnation, rather than in the Crucifixion alone, the essence of the Atonement. The doctrine of God becoming man is the doctrine that appealed to him most. It is also the doctrine that emphasizes relationship and love, not vindictive destructiveness and separateness. This interest in ritual, in God incarnate, and in the established church points toward a « catholic » ( rather than a « protestant » ) quality of Wordsworth's mind and imagination. The Catholic mode of Christianity is more communitarian than the Protestant. Whereas according to the latter mode, salvation is achieved through an individual act, according to the former, there is no salvation outside the church. Aubrey De Vere, while admitting the anti Roman Catholic bias of Wordsworth's « prose mind », observed « that it was otherwise as regards his mind poetic » (7). Wordsworth's Catholic sensibility, according to De Vere, manifested itself in his Christian poems, « especially those which refer to the monastic system, and the Schoolmen, and his sonnet on the Blessed Virgin, whom he addresses as ( our tainted nature's solitary boast ) » (8). The Catholic quality of Wordsworth's mind comes out in many of the images he uses in his poetry. In one of the most « pagan » passages in *The Prelude*, he compares man, « that solitary object and sublime », to an « aerial cross », « stationed alone upon a spiry rock of the Chartreuse » ( VIII, 274 - 272 ) (9). Another manifestation of the Catholic bent of his mind is his favorable use of the image of the nun in two of his most beautiful sonnets : « It is a beauteous evening calm and free » and « Nuns fret not at their convent's narrow room ». In the latter sonnet, the Romantic poet, feeling the weight of too much freedom, escapes to the « Sonnet's scanty plot of ground » (10). There, like patient nuns in their « convent's narrow room », he finds solace through the acceptance of limits.

We can also add the fact that the Tractarians, many of whom either became Roman Catholics or showed sympathy for the Catholic mode of

Christianity, « claimed Wordsworth » as their own poet. Wordsworth, in his turn, praised them for « inspiring the age with deeper reverence for antiquity and a cordial conformity with ritual observances » (11).

Wordsworth's mind evidently is Catholic. Yet his Anglican training made it difficult for him to accept the idea of a universal church that could encompass all people in all places. Throughout his life, Wordsworth remained a member of the Church of England, a specific national institution that had its roots in a concrete historical process, even while it embodied ethical ideals and religious visions. His « Ecclesiastical Sonnets » are not a history of Christianity in general or a celebration of God, but a celebration of « the ideal beauty of religion, as it could be traced in the history of an institution » (12). The choice of the sonnet form for these poems also suggests that the poet wanted to delineate specific « persons, events and places ». Yet the course he traced, as Professor Woodring observes, remains « communal, institutional and ideal » (13).

Whitman, in an article written for *The Critic* in 1890, stated that the author of *Leaves of Grass* did not « exhibit and make ado about the stock passion » because he was partly of Quaker stock (14). Quakerism is a mode of worship that eschews « a formal creed », advocates the concept of « Inner Light » as the sole arbiter, and emphasizes « direct revelation » and personal salvation (15). It thus militates against structure, from social sensibility, and awareness of *specific historical process*.

In an article on Elias Hicks, the Long Island Quaker preacher, Whitman found that the central idea characterizing the belief of the Society of Friends was

The Platonic doctrine that the ideals of character, of justice, of religious action ... are to be conform'd to no outside doctrine or creeds, ... Bibles, legislative enactment, conventionalities, or even decorums, but are to follow the inward Deity-planted law of the emotional soul (16).

With such an extreme subjectivism, everyone becomes his own church and ultimately his own Savior and God. In *Democratic Vistas*, Whitman claimed that the « ripeness » of religion was doubtless to be « looked for in this field of individuality and is a result that no organization or church can ever achieve ». True religion, for him, was a part of what he terms « the identified soul, which, when greatest, knows not bibles in the old way ». This soul can « confront Religion when it extricates itself entirely from the churches, and not before » (17).

Whitman tried to extricate religion from the Church to such a degree that in 1872, in his Preface to *As a Strong Bird on Pinions Free*, he pleaded for a totally new American religion outside any Catholic or Protestant

Church. « The time has certainly come , , he thought , . to begin to discharge the idea of religion, in the United States, from mere ecclesiasticism, and from Sundays and Churches and churchgoing ; and assign it to that general position ..... inside of all human character , and education , and affairs » (18).

Having demolished the Church , Whitman turned to his poor Christ and swallowed him. In *Democratic Vistas* , in a rather longish , confusing sentence , Whitman implied that every human individual was equal to Christ (19).

Having shifted the center of religion from the church and Christ to the human self , it was only logical that Whitman should have deified that same self. Whitman indeed saw man as standing « apart from all else, divine in his own right » (20). His poetry and prose always speak of the separateness of the self and its divinity.

But once the self engulfs God and the Church it ceases to be fallen. Whitman , the cosmic optimist , rarely felt the pains of the Fall. Paradisiac imagery and the motif of unfallen sexuality are recurrent in his poetry. Whitman once said that « he could not read Tolstoy's *Confession* , since he had never been worried by the question of whether he should be saved or lost » (21).

Such a concept of the human self and its relationship with God has many grave consequences. Distinctions tend to be blurred and gradations start to disappear. In « Chanting the Square Deific » Whitman sings « the essence of form » , which is also « I the most solid » , which is also Old Brahm , Saturnius , Time , Lord Christ , Hermes , Santa Spirita , and so on (22). This blurring of distinctions makes religion merge with every thing : democracy , the idea of the Republic , the Union , or Poetry. Religion, as Whitman saw it, was as ubiquitous as his grass. « At the core of democracy » , for instance , he found « the religious element » (23). « Essential Poetry » , whatever that is , « expresses and goes along with essential Religion » (24). The list of things with which religion merged could be indefinitely expanded but , in Whitman's imagination , it was mostly with the lonely self that religion was identified.

There is a deep contradiction in Whitman's attitude to religion. It is a contradiction inherent in Quakerism or perhaps in any extreme subjectivistic position. The self as Whitman saw it is both divine and autonomous. Being the only center and arbiter , it is a simple separate self unrelated to any socio-historical processes. But on the other hand , we have the frightening references to the « true religion » , « essence of life » , and « essential Religion » . All of these elements , which correspond to the inner light or the « over soul » , were , according to Whitman , ... « transcendent , [ and ]

incapable of gradation» (25). They obliterate distinctions and transcend all time and place. Though located in the human soul, they are believed to be capable of propelling it with or without its consent. The autonomous divine self is nothing but a helpless medium. Whereas the Anglican Wordsworthian self willingly participates in the social ritual and relates to a human God, willing to take on a human form, the Whitmanesque Quakerish self is both completely free from social bounds yet completely subservient to an abstract nonhuman principle.

If the « Essence » and the Inner light are transcendent, and if their location is the self, both ritual and clergy become subservient to the worshiper, or even unnecessary. Whitman, like most Quakers, was vehemently anti-clerical and anti-ritualistic.

In an article from *November Boughs* entitled « George Fox ( and Shakespeare ) », Whitman made a comparison between « poor plain » George Fox and William Shakespeare (26). The one radiated « all of art's, all literature's splendor », the other stood for the thought latent in the human soul, « of God, merged in the thoughts of moral right and the immortality of identity ». This thought, according to Whitman, was « greater than all else », an essence of all forms, « the deepest depths and highest height of art, of literature, and of the purposes of life ». Art was just one insignificant concrete element among many other elements. Only the transcendent abstract « thought » was of central significance and importance to Whitman :

When the gorgeous pageant of Art, refluent in the sunshine, color'd with roses and gold — with all the richest mere poetry, old or new, ( even Shakespeare's ) — with all that statue, play, painting, music, architecture, oratory, can effect, cease to satisfy and please ... and when all worldly carnal or aesthetic ... values, having done their office to the human character ... — then, if not before, comes forward this overarching thought, and brings its eligibilities, germinations (27).

Whitman rejected concrete images in favour of abstract thought. The consequences of such an anti-ritualistic position are too damaging for any poet because poets cannot operate in the realm of the abstract or the absolute : they have to deal with the specific and the concrete. This is, in a sense, the only *raison d'être* of poetry.

To recapitulate, whereas Wordsworth's religious training helped him to envision man as a part of a human community and sharpened his sense of the importance of the concrete and the specific, Whitman's religious training made him deify the subjective self, accept transcendental, ahistorical abstractions, and fail to see the importance of the concrete ritual and hierarchy.

#### D. SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

The political and social backgrounds of Wordsworth and Whitman played a significant rôle in the shaping of their imaginations. Wordsworth's England and Whitman's America accomplished their industrialization through a more or less free enterprise system. Both poets were quite aware of the changes in their respective societies, but whereas Wordsworth did not accept all the moral and political assumptions of the new industrial society and even rigorously questioned them, Whitman accepted them without much discrimination.

Because Wordsworth had knowledge of relationships of production other than those of capitalist industrial society, he could conceive of the possibility of creating economic relationships between man and his brother man based on love and co-operation and not necessarily regulated by the iron laws of « getting and spending ». He saw and personally experienced the transition from an agrarian semi-feudal society to a highly industrialized capitalist one; he also witnessed and at times felt dissatisfied with the changes which befell human relationships as a result of the transition. It was partly this complexity of economic background that enabled Wordsworth to see industrial society from historical and human perspectives other than those provided by it.

The villages of the Lake counties, toward the end of the eighteenth century, consisted mostly of self contained farms that still had access to « a very extensive commons waste on the mountains where all the sheep and cattle of villages grazed together » (1). The factory system ruined their primitive manual industries, and the new industrial towns attracted the sons of the yeomen (2). John Fisher, who belonged to the class of yeomen or statesmen, used to help the Wordsworths with their gardening. In 1800 he told Dorothy Wordsworth that in a short time there would be only two ranks of people, the very rich and the very poor, « for those who have small estates ..... are forced to sell, and all the land goes into one hand » (3).

« Michael : A Pastoral Poem » is a description of the process of disintegration of the agrarian community of yeomen. In a letter to Thomas Poole, Wordsworth pointed out the agrarian bias of the poem. He said that he had attempted « to give a picture of a man ... agitated [ motivated ] by parental affection, and the love of property ». He then qualified the word « property » by adding the word « landed » and by underscoring it (4). In the letter to Charles James Fox, which he sent along with a copy of the *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth painted a very vivid picture of the same process of « rapid decay of the domestic affections among the lower orders of society ». He then added, « parents are separated from their children,

and children from their parents ; the wife no longer prepares, with her own hands , a meal for her husband , the produce of his labour »(5).

This same preference for an agrarian life is evident in his Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*. He claims that he chose to deal with « rustic life » in his poetry « because in that situation the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can attain their maturity », and « because in that situation our elementary feelings exist in a state of greater simplicity », and finally « because the manners of rural life germinate from those elementary feelings. and, from the necessary character of rural occupations are more easily comprehended, and more durable » (6). Such being his preference, it was only logical that Wordsworth should choose to write many of his finest poems in the ballad form — a genre largely associated with pre-capitalist themes and life. Many of the heroes of Wordsworth's poems, such as the leech-gatherer, Simon Lee, the mother of the « idiot boy », and Martha Ray are products of an agrarian, communitarian society.

Wordsworth , in some of his poems , explicitly celebrates agrarian life and contrasts it with the life of the industrially advanced city. In « The Reverie of Poor Susan », the protagonist , in the midst of a city alien to her and in which she is unable to strike roots , is carried away by her reveries to a world of mountains , rivers , and « green pastures ». There her love could be anchored to specific things such as her « single small cottage , a nest like a dove's . . . The one only dwelling on earth she loves » (7). In « Song for the Spinning Wheel » , Wordsworth celebrates a society not geared to a market economy (8). The wheel is seen as part of a highly integrated world permeated by love and pastoral innocence. To this world of virtue and love , Wordsworth , in other poems , contrasts the world of « getting and Spending » (9) and of « selfish men » , who have turned England into « a fen / Of stagnant waters » , and lost sight of all heroic ideals (10).

Industrial capitalist society did not inspire Wordsworth with enthusiasm because he was aware , like the speaker of *The Excursion* , of « the darker side / Of this great change » ( viii. 151 - 152 ) (11) and the new man it was producing. In the same poem , Wordsworth uses a military metaphor intertwined with a metaphor of stunting death to describe industrial capitalist society ( viii. 170 - 180 ). He also sees the activity of this society as a mindless and mechanized worship of Cain — « the master-idol of the realm » ( viii. 184 ). The priests of this religion never let a moment of the year pass , « When in their land the Almighty's service ceased » ( viii. 195 ).

The stream , which in many of Wordsworth's poems stands for the growth and continuity of the human mind , instead of smoothly and freely

flowing, « turns the multitude of dizzy wheels » in industrial society and « Glares, like a troubled spirit in its bed / Among the rocks below » ( viii. 178, 179-180 ). Industrial society, Wordsworth states in the Preface, tends « to blunt the discriminating powers of the mind », and to unfit it « for all voluntary exertion , [ and ] to reduce it to a state of almost savage torpor » (12). The same idea is reiterated by Wordsworth in a note he dictated to Miss Fenwick. He thought that trade and industry caused his countrymen to be « less sensible to movements of imagination and fancy » (13).

The new man of industrial capitalist society, motivated by self-interest and the desire to accumulate more money ,did not in the least impress Wordsworth. The romantic poet observed that this new man ,the slave of his desires to own more , was also a selfish individual. In his Preface to « The Borderers », Wordsworth gives a description of a man who « has deeply imbibed a spirit of enterprise », whose « master passions are pride and the love of distinction », and who has no « solid principles of genuine benevolence » (14). Utilitarianism was the new man's only moral. But Utilitarian ethics , as Wordsworth asserted in 1844 , were merely « a mask for cupidity and gambling speculations » (15) — expedience raised to the level of ethics. The *laissez-faire* capitalists of Wordsworth's time, he once remarked , did not hesitate to keep « children of 10 years of age employed 11 or 12 hours at work, and some being at work all night, others all day » (16).

If the new man had no ethics , he also had no culture. In the Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth expresses his disgust at the « frantic novels , sickly and stupid German Tragedies , and deluges of idle and extravagant stories in verse » (17) which catered to the taste of the new reading public. The Wordsworths came to know members of the new class at first hand because the Lake country was one of the targets of rich Manchester merchants and Liverpool attorneys who « were putting up big summer homes » in the area (18 ). In the summer of 1806 , the Wordsworths had « living very near them a household who continually dressed in strange Eastern costumes : they wore green leathercaps, turkey half-hoots , and long dressing gowns » (19).

Aware of the human inadequacy of the new economic man , Wordsworth tended to reject many of the theoretical assumptions of bourgeois political economy. Wordsworth the humanist refused to view human beings as mere objects or as mere units in an abstract economic process uncontrolled by man. The « theories of political economy » might have been « right or wrong in the abstract », but what concerned him most was that « reckless » economic laws « have proved a scourge to tens of thou-

sands, by the abruptness with which they have been carried into practice » (20). Wordsworth, whenever he cites any of the arguments of some of the extreme *laissez-faire* economists of his time, tries to see the consequences of this argument not on production but on man and society. The « Economists will tell you that the State » thrives by the destruction of agrarian life. The speaker of *The Excursion*, however, prefers to ask, « Can the mother thrive / By the destruction of her innocent sons » ? ( viii. 283, 285 - 286 ). The abstract and theoretical are rejected in favour of the concrete and real.

Wordsworth, likewise, did not accept the democratic ideal as advocated by many of his contemporaries. He was careful to observe the Miltonic distinction between license and liberty (21), a distinction, that is, between an absolute, selfish freedom which diminishes man's sense of social responsibility, on the one hand, and, on the other, a freedom which is possible only through the self-discipline that results from a willing acceptance of social and human law. That is why Wordsworth wished to see the emancipation of the people taking meaningful and philosophically directed forms (22). Although he was for the franchise, he cautiously endorsed it and, at times, even withheld his endorsement altogether. What made him overly cautious is his awareness that « all schemes of reform which were proposed gave in effect a predominating influence to the manufacturing interest » (23). Universal franchise, Wordsworth recognized, did not necessarily mean universal freedom.

But in spite of his conservative scepticism, Wordsworth, ever distrustful of political simplifications and abstractions, preferred to call himself an « improver », because he remembered that « to preserve our institutions we must be ever improving them » (24).

Indeed nothing could be further from reality than calling Wordsworth a conservative. His outlook was generally progressive in a humanistic sense. The speaker of *The Excursion* makes it clear that he objects only to a « philosophy whose sway depends / On mere material instruments », ( vii. 224 - 225 ) and to « those arts and high inventions » when « unproped / By virtue » ( vii. 226 - 227 ). Wordsworth knew the limits of human sentiments and also knew that technological progress « will not admit of being counteracted by them ». Therefore he had no objection to the railroads when they served as means of promoting « trade and agriculture », or when they connected « large towns ». But when « the staple of the country ... its beauty and its character of retirement » were being threatened by a new railroad that could be constructed in another area, the humanist stood his ground (25). Wordsworth stood for progress, not as a mechanical, mindless movement, but as a movement toward a more complete fulfillment of man (26).

In short, Wordsworth's view of industrial capitalist society and its political and moral assumptions was complex. Though he was cognizant of this society's shortcomings, he had the good sense to recognize the material and human possibilities which might be realized through a proper use of technology. The complexity of his economic background, resulting from his familiarity with pre-capitalist modes of production, enabled him to develop a corresponding complexity of social outlook. His agrarian background made him prefer the concrete, the specific, and the well-defined, and also helped him develop a view of man as a social being who interacts with social processes outside of which man has no existence. For Wordsworth, the human self, no matter how wild or free, exists within limits. The agrarian background also made it possible for him to reject abstract economic processes of capitalist economy, which paraded as scientific and final truths, and which converted man into a mere economic unit. That is perhaps why he refused to consider man a mere thing among things, as if the mind « Herself were nothing, a mere pensioner, / On outward forms » ( vi, 736-738 ). The speaker of *The Prelude* stands in « Nature's presence » « a sensitive being, a creative soul » ( xii, 206-207 ). Finally, Wordsworth's background bred in him a respect for traditions and an awareness of their validity in judging the present.

Walt Whitman's America was an ever-expanding country which dazzled the imagination of a French aristocrat named de Tocqueville. Describing the America he saw, de Tocqueville said that an American « brings a field into tillage, and leaves other men to gather the crops; ... he settles in place, which he soon afterwards leaves, to carry his changeable longings elsewhere » (27).

American society, during Whitman's time, was undergoing a transition from corporate mercantilism to a *laissez-faire* factory system. American business began « to feel the advantages offered by *laissez-faire* » (28) and therefore grew impatient with such regulatory federal institutions as the Bank of the United States. Jacksonian Democrats, especially the « Locofocos », were in the vanguard pleading for complete freedom for business and for rigorous restrictions on the federal government. Jacksonian democracy got its strength from many classes of society, but mainly from « small businessmen, proprietors, intellectuals, and professional men who were striving to find a stable place for themselves in the business world » (29), and who were « fraught with the spirit of enterprise and fired with a sense of what soon would be called manifest destiny » (30).

Walt Whitman, apart from very intermittent and shy moments of dissent, accepted indiscriminately most of the moral and political assump-

tions of his society. Unlike Wordsworth, Whitman was familiar only with the relations of production of industrial capitalist society, and was either unaware of, or simply not interested in, other modes of production, even those which existed in his own United States.

Whitman's failure to conceive of modes of production other than those predominant in his society can be traced back to several sources. First, though there was some kind of a pre-capitalist agrarian tradition in America, it was short-lived and did not produce a strong cultural tradition as was the case in England. The agrarian mode of production in England had a long cultural history and a well-entrenched tradition that supported an « agrarian » feudalistic view of reality long after the material base of this view ceased to make any economic sense. It is a tradition which extends back to the middle ages. Chaucer and his Clerk saw the beginning of its disintegration; Ben Jonson and Herrick in poems such as « Penshurst » and « The Hockcart » celebrated this tradition and showed its moral superiority. It left profound impact on the eighteenth century imagination. As a matter of fact, it still exercises some influence on modern poets like T. S. Eliot, whose concept of tradition and whose critique of industrial society have their roots in some agrarian metaphor of the human community as an integrated hierarchical whole.

Moreover, American agriculture in Whitman's time was not completely independent of capitalist relationships of production. The perceptive de Tocqueville, in a chapter devoted to American agriculture, points out many of the basic differences between the relations of production in an American community and those which predominate in a European one. He first remarks that there are no « farming tenants » in the United States because « everyone owns the ground he tills » (31). Even when there are landlords in the United States, their relationship with their tenants is different from those which obtain in aristocratic societies. In aristocracies, de Tocqueville observes,

the hire of a farm is paid to the landlord, not only in rent, but in respect, regard and duty; in democracies the whole is paid in cash... They meet for a moment to settle the conditions of the agreement and then lose sight of each other; they are two strangers brought together by a common interest, who keenly talk over a matter of business, the sole object of which is to make money (32).

Later in the chapter de Tocqueville demonstrates that the two relationships of production resulted in two totally different outlooks (33). When Whitman went to the American countryside, he did not see a mode of production and of perception radically different from the one that prevailed in American society in general.

If there was no strong pre-capitalist agrarian tradition in America to challenge the assumptions of a believer in *laissez-faire* capitalism, there was definitely a strong tradition of Protestant thinking, which placed such virtues as hard labor, prudence, money-making in the highest esteem.

The absence of any strong agrarian cultural tradition and the strength of the Protestant tradition in America were among the more important reasons which led Whitman to embrace zealously the convictions and ideals of his society and those of his rising class. Whitman belonged to the class of « little » people, carpenters, small merchants, mechanics, and printers, who « felt that the world was all before them and that, with the party of ... Jackson to lead them, they would inevitably prosper and grow fat » (34). Whitman, a sometime Locofoco Democrat himself, championed the cause and shared the aspirations of this class. Even in the eighties he told Carpenter that « the creation of a large, independent, democratic class of small owners is the main thing », and he looked forward to a world « of small owners » (35). His « heroic ideal » has its roots in a small-business mentality. In a curiously obtuse passage from *Democratic Vistas*, in which he attempts to define the attributes of this ideal, Whitman says :

Democracy looks with suspicious, ill-satisfied eye upon the very poor, the ignorant, and on those out of business. She asks for men and women with occupations, well off, owners of houses and acres, and with cash in the bank (36).

Such being his ideal, it is no wonder that Whitman preached the ethics of success and hard labor. Early in life, in an article in the *Brooklyn Eagle* entitled « Young men of Brooklyn, Look at This », he asserts that « the great element of success in life, for young people to start with, is *dependence on one's self alone*, combined with reasonable perseverance » (37). As an editor of the *Aurora*, in 1842, Whitman wrote an article in which he registered his delight in the land of plenty and its vigorous little people. At the beginning of the article he gets completely lost in the sight of the « rich, red sirloins, luscious steaks, [ the ] delicate and tender joints, muttons, livers, and all the long list of various flesh stuffs » (38). ( If there is a streak of irony in this passage, there is none in the article he wrote one month later, in which he assured the American people that they never had it so good and that they were revelling « in the lap of plenty » ) (39).

Whitman, who strongly identified with his class, also tended to accept the broad political and moral assumptions of his society. He was, in fact, so thoroughly immersed in the socio-economic assumptions of his time that he was inclined to believe that money-making and trade are eternal truths of central significance to the human community. He asserted, in 1887,

that the « fact of money's being made ( as it ever must be , and perhaps should be ) [ is ] the paramount matter in worldly affairs » (40). Money and trade , to Whitman , were the very backbone of the Union. He suggested that in case any state secedes, her credit should be « the first thing that goes. A reign of terror is inaugurated. All trade, all business stops ... The best and many of the wealthiest citizens escape by flight » (41). He joyfully reached the conclusion that American democracy was « carried on by all the moral forces, and by trade, finance and machinery, » (42) and he equated democracy with « the hunt for the gold leads and the nugget » (43). He could even wax religious while talking about trade and business. He asserted in 1840 that « we respect trade and admire trade and commerce. They are noble agents ..., for elevating man, breaking down local prejudices, tightening the common bonds of brotherhood, and clearing the strength of thought » (44). He even saw modern history as being propelled by business. In the past, wars were necessary for the progress of mankind, « now Business does it all — opens up China, Japan, Africa, colonizes, builds roads, penetrates, communicates ... [ sic ]. Is there going to be but one heart to the world » (45) ? He was so fascinated with the amoral business genius and its sheer energy that he hailed « with Joy the oceanic, variegated, intense practical energy, the demand for facts, even the business materialism of the current age » (46). In Wall Street, he was swept off his feet by the « hurrying, feverish, electric crowds of men, their complicated business genius, ( not least among the geniuses, ) and all this mighty, many threaded wealth and industry concentrated » there (47).

The business and trade that Whitman, the Locofoco Democrat, had in mind were of the *laissez-faire* variety. He was a « free trader by instinct » as he claimed (48). In 1847, he believed that if the United States were « cut loose from the antiquated tariff system » , and if it were placed « on the broad sea of freedom in trade » , then « it will show the world such a spectacle of solid commercial grandeur » (49). He opposed the protectionists because it was almost divinely ordained that the U. S. A. should have a free trade (50). He joined with other Jacksonian democrats in attacking the Bank , which represented federal power , and in demanding the replacement of paper money by hard money , because then « capital enterprise , and natural advantages ... [ will ] spring forth in a proper and wholesome way » (51).

Whitman , as a believer in a *laissez-faire* capitalism , did not hesitate to declare himself , in 1842 . « among the foremost of those who desire our experiment of man's capacity for self government , carried to its extreme verge ». He suggested that the legislature should « cease meddling with [ the matter of banking ] and let the country settle the whole subject itself » (52). He was convinced that in « this wide and naturally rich

country , the best government indeed is that which governs least » (53). According to Whitman , government « can do little *positive* good to the people », and « an *immense deal of harm* » (54). He was even willing to accept the inhuman consequences of such a doctrine. He believed that « society and individual interests are more benefited by leaving [ wealth ] ... inviolable than by taking any from excessive wealth and giving to the poor » (55). The abstract economic process and mere accumulation of capital were far more important for Whitman than the welfare of specific individuals.

Concomitant with Whitman's acceptance of the moral and political assumptions of industrial capitalist society is his cheerful and unqualified acceptance of the facts of science and technology : « In the labor of engines and trades and the labor of fields I find the developments , / And find the eternal meanings » (56). Love of tools , machines , facts , and objects is emphasized in almost every poem of the *Leaves of Grass*. As for science , Whitman considered it the central fact of his age. *Leaves of Grass* is, in one sense, an attempt to give a poetic expression to the statements of science (57) and « to justify » it (58). In his description of history , literature , and art , Whitman almost invariably uses reductive scientific analogies and metaphors.

Despite his total acceptance of the socio-economic *données* of his society , Whitman , at times , had his doubts about the technological achievement of America and its democratic experiment. He expressed his alarm at « the total want of any such fusion and mutuality of love , belief , and rapport of interest , between the comparatively few successful rich , and the great masses of the unsuccessful , the poor » (59). The republican experiment, so much the center of his uncritical adoration, in moments of scepticism was considered an « unhealthy failure » « notwithstanding all its surface successes ». In 1879 Whitman observed that the republic was growing its own « vast crops of poor, desperate , dissatisfied , nomadic , miserably-waged populations , such as we see looming upon us of late years » (60). The *locus classicus* of Whitman's dissent is in the oft-quoted passage from *Democratic Vistas* in which he unburdens his heart of all its nagging doubts. He finds these States « canker'd , crude . superstitious , and rotten ». He finds « moral conscience » entirely lacking , and the « depravity of the business classes of our country » infinitely greater than had been supposed. Instead of believing in « humanity itself » , he finds all around him that « pecuniary gain » is the sole objective of many people (61). In « Our Real Culmination » , he expresses his desire « to see the agricultural occupation of America at first hand permanently broaden'd. Its gains are the only one on which God seems to smile ». To this agrarian economy he opposes the rest of American economy. « What others — what

business, profit, wealth, without a taint ? What fortune else — what dollar — does not stand for , and come from , more or less imposition , lying , unnaturalness » (62) ?

But neither the agrarian metaphor nor dissent against industrial capitalist society are at all central to Whitman's poetry or prose. For at the heart of his works one always finds a commitment to *laissez-faire* economics and to the ideals of industrial capitalist society. Whitman's rebellion against this society , a later development in his life , never matured , and his dissent was never more than fragmentary and occasional.

Whitman's historical background made him accept without any qualifications his America and all it stood for. This engendered in him a naive and simple-minded way of seeing the world as either American or un-American , here or there , present or past , democratic or feudalistic. For him the only valid image of man was that of man completely free and alone, at times making money and competing with others, and at other times just loafing , but always alone. Whitman's absolute and one-sided faith in *laissez-faire* democracy led him to underrate the value of such « undemocratic » traditions as the English literary tradition and such « undemocratic » writers as Milton and Shakespeare. Besides , his blind acceptance of the hierarchy of values , and the amorality of an aggressive , business society made him place facts and real things above intellect and art , and place mere energy and formless expansiveness above form and controlled structures. Finally, Whitman's socio-economic background made him more disposed to accept the view that man is part of abstract ( economic ) cycles over which he has no control and which propel him incessantly.

## CONCLUSION

The differences in background between Wordsworth and Whitman accounts for the dissimilarity in their outlook. A detailed study of the poetry and criticism of both poets would demonstrate that the « structure » of their ideas and the form of their poetry are deeply influenced, if not also shaped, by their respective backgrounds and the way they reacted to them.

## NOTES

I. For a detailed treatment of Wordsworth's and Whitman's literary backgrounds and critical views, see my study « The critical writings of Wordsworth and Whitman : A Study of the Historical and Anti-Historical Imaginations » , Unpublished Ph. D. dissertation , Rutgers. The State University, ( N. J., 1969 ).

## A. GEOGRAPHICAL AND CULTURAL BACKGROUND

(1) Mary Moorman, *William Wordsworth : A Biography , The Early Years , 1770 - 1803* ( Oxford , 1957 ) , p. 56.

(2) *Ibid.* , pp. 53 - 54.

(3) *Ibid.* , p. 56.

(4) Carl Woodring, *Wordsworth* ( Boston , 1965 ) , p. 2.

(5) Moorman , pp. 61 - 62.

(6) Horace Traubel, *With Walt Whitman in Camden : January 21 to April 7 , 1889* . ed. Sculley Bradley ( Philadelphia , 1953 ) , p. 77.

(7) « Song of Myself », stanza 13, *Complete Poetry and Selected Prose by Walt Whitman*, ed. James Miller, Jr. ( Boston , 1959 ) , p. 32. Henceforth this book will be referred to as *Miller*. For convenience , the stanza numbers are noted in the text itself. All quotations, unless otherwise specified , are from Miller.

(8) Walt Whitman, *The Gathering of the Forces : Editorials , Essays , Literary and Dramatic Reviews and Other Material Written by Walt Whitman as Editor of the Brooklyn Daily Eagle in 1846 and 1847* , ed. Cleveland Rodgers and John Black ( New York , 1920 ) , I, 202. Henceforth this book will be referred to as *The Gathering of the Forces*.

## B. EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

(1) Woodring, *Wordsworth*, p. 4.

(2) See Ben Ross Schneider , Jr. , *Wordsworth's Cambridge Education* ( Cambridge , England , 1957 ) , pp. 263 - 264.

(3) Jane Worthington , *Wordsworth's Reading of Roman Prose* ( « Yale Studies in English » , vol. 11 , New Haven , 1946 ) , p. 17.

(4) Markham L. Peacock , Jr. , *The Critical Opinions of William Wordsworth* ( Baltimore , 1950 ) , p. 296. Henceforth this book will be referred to as *Peacock*.

(5) Woodring , p. 3.

(6) Douglas Bush, *Mythology and the Romantic Tradition in English Poetry* ( New York , 1963 ) , p. 56. The first edition was published in 1937.

(7) Woodring , p. 161.

(8) Schneider , p. 105.

(9) Brian Wilkie , *Romantic Poets and Epic Tradition* ( Madison and Milwaukee , 1965 ) , p. 62.

(10) Lane Cooper , « A Glance at Wordsworth's Reading » , *MLN* , XXII ( 1907 ) , 86.

(11) Peacock , p. 331.

(12) Peter Burra, *Wordsworth* ( New York, 1962 ). p. 35.

(13) Emory Holloway , ed. , *The Uncollected Poetry and Prose of Walt Whitman : Much of Which Has Been But Recently Discovered with Various Early Manuscripts Now First Published* ( New York , 1932 ) , I , xxvii. Henceforth this book will be referred to as *The Uncollected Poetry and Prose of Walt Whitman*.

(14) Gay Wilson Allen, *The Solitary Singer : A Critical Biography of Walt Whitman* ( New York , 1955 ) , pp. 117 - 118.

(15) Newton Arvin, *Walt Whitman* ( New York, 1938 ), pp. 112 - 113.

(16) Walt Whitman , *Prose Works 1892* , ed. Floyd Stovall ( New York, 1964 ), II, 515. Henceforth this work will be referred to as *Prose Works*.

### C. RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND

( 1 ) Raymond Dexter Havens , *The Mind of a Poet : A Study of Wordsworth's Thought with Particular Reference to « The Prelude »* ( Baltimore , 1941 ) , p. 180.

( 2 ) *Ibid.*

( 3 ) Rev. Alexander B. Grosart , ed. , *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth : For the First Time Collected , with Additions from Unpublished Manuscripts* ( London , 1876 ) , III , 456. Henceforth this work will be referred to as *Grosart*.

( 4 ) *Ibid.* , III , 440.

( 5 ) Havens , p. 243.

( 6 ) Edith Batho , *The Later Wordsworth* ( New York , 1963 ) , pp. 280 - 281. The first edition was published in 1933.

( 7 ) Grosart , III , 491 - 492.

( 8 ) *Ibid.* , p. 283.

( 9 ) All quotations from *The Prelude* are from *The Poetical Works of Wordsworth , With Introductions and Notes* ( London , 1960 ) , ed. Thomas Hutchinson and Ernest de Selincourt. The first edition , as revised by de Selincourt , was published in 1936 , Henceforth this book will be referred to as *Works*.

- (10) *Works* , p. 199.
- (11) *Ibid.* , p. 88.
- (12) Quoted by Woodring from Abbie Potts , *The Ecclesiastical Sonnets of William Wordsworth : A Critical Edition*, p. 176.
- (13) Woodring , *Wordsworth* , p. 176.
- (14) *Prose Works* , II , 657.
- (15) Thomas E. Drake , « Society of Friends ( Quakers ) » , *An Encyclopedia of Religion* , ed. Vergilius Ferm ( New York , 1969 ) , p. 721.
- (16) *Prose Works* , 639.
- (17) *Ibid.* , II , 398.
- (18) 1872 Preface , *Ibid.* , II , 462.
- (19) *Prose Works* , II , 380.
- (20) *Democratic Vistas* , *Prose Works* , II , 374.
- (21) F. O. Matthiessen , *American Renaissance : Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman* ( New York , 1964 ) , p. 59. The first edition was published in 1941.
- (22) Miller , p. 309.
- (23) *Democratic Vistas* , *Prose Works* , II , 381.
- (24) *Prose Works* , II , 707.
- (25) *Democratic Vistas* , *Ibid.* , II , 380.
- (26) *Prose Works* , II , 653.
- (27) *Ibid.*

#### D. SOCIO - ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

- ( 1 ) Kenneth MacLean , *Agrarian Age : A Background for Wordsworth* ( « Yale Studies in English » , Vol. CXV , New Haven , 1950 ) , p. 92.
- ( 2 ) *Ibid.* , p. 93.
- ( 3 ) *Ibid.* , p. 90.
- ( 4 ) Quoted by Russel Noyes , ed. , *English Romantic Poetry and Prose* ( New York , 1950 ) , p. 302.
- ( 5 ) Grosart , II , 203.
- ( 6 ) W. M. Merchant , ed. , *Wordsworth. Poetry and prose* ( Cambridge Massachusetts , 1955 ) , p. 222.

- ( 7 ) *Works* , p. 149.
- ( 8 ) *Ibid.* , p. 129.
- ( 9 ) « The world is too much with us » . *Ibid.* , p. 206.
- (10) « London , 1802 » , *Works* , p. 241.
- (11) All quotations from *The Excursion* are from *Works*.
- (12) *Merchant* , p. 225.
- (13) *Grosart* , III , 35.
- (14) Paul M. Zall , ed. , *Literary Criticism of William Wordsworth* ( Lincoln , Nebraska . 1966 ) , p. 3.
- (15) *Grosart* , II , 338.
- (16) Batho , *The Later Wordsworth* , p. 203.
- (17) *Merchant* , p. 225.
- (18) *MacLean* , p. 41.
- (19) *Ibid.*
- (20) *Grosart* , I , 278.
- (21) Batho , p. 121.
- (22) *Ibid.* , p. 168.
- (23) *Ibid.* , p. 179.
- (24) *Grosart* , III , 490.
- (25) *Ibid.* , II , p. 332.
- (26) For an example of Wordsworth's acceptance and even celebration of humanized industrialization see the beautiful sonnet « Steamboats , Winduets , and Railways » ( *Works* , p. 374 ). See also the sonnet entitled « Greenock » ( *Works* , p. 373 ).
- (27) Richard Hofstadter , William Miller , and Daniel Aaron , *The United States : The History of A Republic* ( Englewood Cliffs , N. J. , 1961 ) , p. 237. The first edition was published in 1957.
- (28) « Jacksonian Democracy : Working Class or Middle Class » , *Interpretation of American History* , ed. Gerald M. Grob and George. A. Billias ( New York , 1967 ) , I , 375.
- (29) Hofstadter , Miller , and Aaron , p. 227.

(30) Bray Hammond , « The Jacksonians » . *American Democracy : Myth or Reality* , ed. James L. Bugg , Jr. ( New York , 1964 ) , p. 94.

(31) Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* , ed. Philips Bradley ( New York , 1946 ) , p. 186. The first edition was published in 1945.

(32) *Ibid.*

(33) *Ibid.* , p. 188.

(34) Arvin , *Walt Whitman* : p. 18.

(35) *Ibid.* , p. 103.

(36) *Democratic Vistas* , *Prose Works* , II , 384.

(37) Arvin , p. 86.

(38) Joseph Ray Rubin and Charles H. Brown , eds. , *Walt Whitman of the New York « Aurora » Editor at Twenty Two* ( State College , Pennsylvania , 1950 ) , p. 20.

(39) *Ibid.* , p. 96.

(40) *Prose Works* , II , 569.

(41) Richard Maurice Bucke , ed. , *Notes and Fragments Left by Walt Whitman* ( London , 1899 ) , p. 145.

(42) *Prose Work* , II , 390.

(43) Horace Traubel , ed. , *An American Primer by Walt Whitman : With Facsimiles of the Original Manuscript* ( Boston , 1966 ) , p. 35.

(44) *The Gathering of the Forces* , II , 50.

(45) Bucke , p. 65.

(46) *Democratic Vistas*, *Prose Works*, II. 418 - 419.

(47) *Ibid.* , II , 371.

(48) *The Gathering of the Forces* , II , 58.

(49) *Ibid.* , II , 64.

(50) *Ibid.* , II , 60 - 61.

(51) *Ibid.* , II , 83.

(52) Rubin and Brown , *Walt Whitman of the New York « Aurora »* , p. 90.

(53) *The Gathering of the Forces* , I , 52.

(54) *Ibid.* , I.

(55) Arvin , p. 91.

- (56) « A Song for Occupations » , Miller , p. 155.
- (57) « A Backward Glance » , *Prose Works* , II , 715.
- (58) « By Blue Ontario's Shore » , Miller , p. 250.
- (59) *Prose Works* , II , 533 - 534.
- (60) *Ibid.* , II , 528.
- (61) *Ibid.* , II , 369 - 270.
- (62) *Ibid.* , II , 539 - 540.