Wordsworth's Sense of Geometry: The Revision of *The Prelude* [1]

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I

Although Wordsworth's lifelong revision to *The Prelude*, his autobiographical poem, is often regarded rather regrettable,[2] recently there have been also some critics who try to revaluate the process of revision. Susan Wolfson, for instance, in her essay on the revision of the Drowned Man episode, argues that "the study of plural texts is especially necessary to an understanding of *The Prelude*, for the process of revision is a compelling activity for Wordsworth."[3] And James Heffernan, discussing Wordsworth's poetry in its relation to landscape painting and gardening, demonstrates how sensitively the poet responds to the linearity latent in natural phenomena and how he re-creates that geometry in his verbal landscape.[4] The notable thing is that it is the final version that he and other critics use for demonstration of Wordsworth's sense of structure or that of lineation in *The Prelude*. For those who regard Wordsworth as a visionary poet, the explicative, well-controlled *1850* version may indicate a decline of his imaginative power, while for those who are concerned with his verbal composition of landscape, the clear-outlined *1850* version shows an achievement of the poet's sense of structure.

In this essay, I would like to appreciate Wordsworth's sense of geometry emerging through the prolonged revision. What I am going to examine here is the revisions of the Boat-Stealing, the Drowned Man, and the Snowdon episodes,[5] which are all among "spots of time" experiences, and all of which describe those moments when external landscapes are deeply impressed in the poet's mind. It seems that his attempt to delineate these internalized landscapes is, at the same time, to try to draw the picture of his own mind. In the following sections, through these examples, I would like to consider how Wordsworth's sense of lineation gets sharpened and how it serves to capture the structure of his own mind.

II

First I would like to look at the revision of the Boat-Stealing sequence between *1805* and *1850* versions.[6]

> One summer evening (led by her) I found
> A little boat tied to a willow tree
> Within a rocky cave, its usual home.
> Straight I unloosed her chain, and stepping in
> Pushed from the shore. It was an act of stealth
> And troubled pleasure, nor without the voice
> Of mountain-echoes did my boat move on;
> Leaving behind her still, on either side,
> Small circles glittering idly in the moon,
> Until they melted all into one track
> Of sparkling light.
>
> (*1850*, I: 357-67)

This simple and trimmed opening is the most remarkable revision between *1805* and *1850*. Through deletion of the detailed explanation of the circumstantial situation,[7] tightening up of each sentence, and reduction of repetitive words, Wordsworth has succeeded in shaping up the lengthy, wordy opening of *1805* to half its size. This drastic reduction, on the one hand, takes away a sense of immediacy or an impression of a man writing while remembering; on the other, however, it serves to concentrate the narrative to the point. In any case, particularly the blotting out of the following lines

results in a different impression of the scene, for better or worse:

> from the shore
> I pushed, *and struck* the ores, *and struck again*
> In cadence, *and* my little boat *moved on*
> Even like a man who *moves* with stately step
> Though bent *on* speed.
>
> (*1805*, I: 384–8, italics mine)

This passage, which is to be removed from the middle of line 361 (just before "It was an act of ...") of the *1850* version, is pervaded with the sense of movement, with repetitive "and"s, and same verbs ("strike", "move"). Such repetitions seem to convey the uneasiness of the boy who moves on as if pressed or accelerated by something.

As some critics have pointed out, this passage of *1805* anticipates the rowing motion of the terrified boy at the later stage of the episode:

> I *struck, and struck again,*
> *And*, growing still in stature, the huge cliff
> Rose up between me and the stars, and still
> With measured motion, like a living thing
> Strode after me.
>
> (*1805*, I: 408–12, italics mine)

In *1805*, the motion of the cliff at the climax is proleptically rehearsed by the movement of the boat, which seems loaded with the boy's subconscious guilt and anxiety. In the earlier version, the poet's greatest concern is to convey the boy's troubled emotions and he projects them onto the cumulative description of his motion. The sense of mobility or unstableness thus permeates through the whole sequence.

In *1850*, the focus of narration is slightly shifted from the boy's emotions and actions to the geometry of the landscape around him or the structure of his experience. Instead of diffusing the unstable, uneasy mood throughout the whole narrative, the poet tries to make a contrast between the statics and the kinetics. As quoted above, the opening sketch in *1850* offers a calm and still scene of the lake and the boat. Those words and phrases that convey any sense of motion are restrictively reduced to a minimum. The well-trimmed description makes the boy's action appear as if he were framed in a static picture. Even the floating boat seems halted and rested in a track of idly glittering light. And this stillness of the boat on the lake is later to make a clear contrast with the sudden pressing movement of the boat threatened by the cliff.[8]

The dramatic shift of scenery is elaborately presented in the *1850* version. The stillness of the opening is first followed by a slightly strained mood:

> *But* now, like one who rows,
> Proud of his skill, to reach a chosen point
> *With an unswerving line*, I fixed my view
> Upon the *summit* of a craggy ridge,
> The horizon's *utmost* boundary; for *above*
> Was nothing but stars and the grey sky.
>
> (*1850,* I: 367–72, italics mine)

The italicized phrases have got revision between *1805* and *1850*, most of which emphasize the lines implied in the landscape. The proud rower fixes his eye on "a chosen point" and draws "an unswerving line" to reach it. The "But" in the middle of line 367, which replaces "And" of the *1805* version, makes a more clear contrast between the dull, dormant atmosphere of the wavering track of light, and the sharp, strained "unswerving line". This peculiar sense of potential lines perhaps sharpens Wordsworth's awareness of the boundary of the horizontal line, so he refers to it with a superlative: "The horizon's *utmost* boundary," replacing the mere "bound of horizon"(*1805*, I:399). These fixed lines bracing the landscape, make a calm but tense scene.

In *1805*, the keen sense of boundary is blunted by a circumstantial description: "A rocky steep uprose / Above the cavern of the willow-tree" (*1805*, I: 394–5). The border line is broken through too easily before the majestic, accusing cliff lifts its head. This disruption, in the context of *1805*, could be interpreted as a precursor of the huge cliff's rising, but in *1850*, Wordsworth ingeniously edits out this passage so that the unexpected verticality of the cliff will gain its maximum effect:

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

(*1850*, I: 377–85, italics are the words revised)

The sudden rising of the cliff enlivens the scene. At the moment of the cliff's breaking through the fixed line ("The horizon's bound"), everything becomes unfixed, unstable. In the first half of the narrative, the poet presents a horizontal and vigilant calmness of the lake, while in the latter half, he focuses on the erectness and mobility of the cliff.[9]

Vertical movement is more emphasized in the revised version. The cliff not only "Rose up" (*1805*, I: 410) but "Towered up" (*1850*, I: 382). And it is interesting that what suddenly shows this uprightness in *1850* is no longer recognized as "a huge cliff" as in *1805*, but as "a huge peak, black and huge" or a "grim shape". It seems as if the cliff had already been deprived of its familiar appearance. A particular cliff overlooking Lake Patterdale seems to have completely lost its physical substantiality, and only its shape and precipitousness have been left. It can be said that what the poet tries to recompose here is not the external, physical landscape but the internalized one which has long haunted his dreams, as it were, in its half abstracted form.

This internalized cliff, however, does not seem a mere "obedient servant of [the poet's] will" (*1805*, XI: 272; *1850*, XII: 223). Wordsworth says that this "shape" has its own will. Not only does it move "like a living thing" but also does it seem to have "purpose of its own" (*1850*, I: 383), and live in a different way from living men. The cliff, together with other "huge and mighty forms", has taken on its own life independent both of nature's law and of the mind's will.

What is this that neither obeys the conscious will nor belongs to the natural world? It may suggest something supernatural, lurking behind the phenomenal world, or it may also represent an image of the subconscious or "an under-presence" (*1805*, XIII: 71), which sometimes goes athwart the poet's consciousness. Or it may be a supreme power which reigns over both nature and the human mind.

In concluding this episode, Wordsworth revises the passage: "In my thoughts / There was a darkness" (*1805*, I: 420–1) to "*o'er* my thoughts / There *hung* a darkness" (*1850*, I: 393 - 4). The verb "hang" also implies a vertically extended space, and of course it conveys unstable, suspended mood. We may recall the scene in which the boy William "hung / Above the raven's nest." "On the perilous ridge," "[s]uspended by the blast", he saw "the sky [that] seemed not a sky / Of earth" (*1850*, I: 330–1, 336, 334, 338–9). Now it is not the boy but an unknown darkness that is hanging, and that the darkness is not confined within the mind but hanging "over" the thoughts. The preposition "over" suggests that the darkness named "solitude" or "blank desertion" wields its power over both the external and internal world. The precipitous space dominated by the hanging darkness expands both within and without the mind, and the hanging darkness leaves him in suspense, giving him "a dim and undetermined sense / Of unknown modes of being" (*1850*, I: 392–3).

It could be said that this ominous power is represented by Wordsworth in his poetic landscape with his sharpened sense of lineament. He says that a poet has "a sense that fits him to perceive / Objects unseen before" (*1850*, XIII: 304–5). As Heffernan remarks, "with a painter's sense of spatial definition,"[10] Wordsworth in *1850* sensitively discerns lines or a framework hidden in landscape, which have been unseen or blurred before. And with this sense of geometry he tries to capture the unknown power which seems to lurk both in nature and in his own mind.

III

Another example in which we may expect such a sense of lineation can be seen in the revisions of the Drowned Man episode. This episode is originally placed as preparatory for the argument of "spots of time", but

later it is transferred to Book Five, which contains such various themes as books, education, nature, and death. In the original *two-part Prelude* (*1799*), the disastrous scene of uprising of a drowned man is considered to be a personally experienced visionary dreariness, while in the extended versions (*1805, 1850*), it is treated as one of those fabulous scenes which can be seen in folk tales or romances. Whether the revision is for the better or for the worse cannot be decided easily; but except for the clumsy and farfetched commentary, the presentation of the incident itself seems to become more impressive through the revisions. It seems that as the obscured geometry is clearly outlined, the scene looms with more ominous power. In the following paragraphs, I would like to show how, through the revision, the lines hidden in the scene emerge and exert their power in Wordsworth's poetic landscape.[11]

In *1799* version, the passage begins with the poet's address to his "beloved Hawkshead" — "*thy* vale", "*thy* path", "*thy* shores" (*1799,* I: 260, 261). In the revised versions these second-person pronouns are replaced by less intimate expression: "*that* sweet valley", "*its* path", "*its* shores" (*1805*, V: 452; *1850*, V: 428). The intervening time may have created a mental distance between the poet and the landscape, which enables him to see the whole structure of the landscape. In revising the Drowned Man episode, he first tries to make a clear-cut outline for the scene:

> *While I was roving up and down alone,*
> *Seeking I knew not what,* I chanced to cross
> One of those open fields, which, shaped like ears,
> Make green peninsulas, on Esthwaite's lake:
> Twilight was coming on, ...
>
> ... meanwhile the calm lake
> Grew dark with all the shadows on its breast,
> And, now and then, a fish *up-leaping snapped*
> The breathless stillness.
>
> (*1805,* V: 455–9, 463–6; *1850*, V: 431–5, 439–42, italics mine)

The setting of landscape for the accident is a calm and "beauteous scene". The lake, which is embosomed in trees and hills, in turn, embraces their shadows in its breast, just like a mother cradling her infant in her bosom. And all of them are wrapped in calmness of the night. The ear-shaped peninsulas seem to listen attentively through the "breathless stillness" to the deep water. Now and then, as if to break this strained stillness, a leaping fish disturbs the level surface of the calm lake.

In the revision of the Boat-Stealing episode, we have seen the poet deleting what interrupts the horizontal image so as to bring out the maximum effect of the sudden verticality; in this case, however, Wordsworth not only retains this disturbing element but also emphasizes its verticality. In the revised versions, the fish not merely "disturbed / The breathless stillness" (*1799*, I, 237–4), but "snapped" "up-leaping" (*1805,* V:465; *1850*, V: 441). As Wolfson points out, this motion assumes "the look of a prefigurative image for the corpse that rises 'bolt *up*right' from the lake".[12]

Actually, following the revisions, we may notice that the landscape is presented not so level or smooth, but rather its vertical lines are emphasized. The additional phrase: "I was roving up and down alone / Seeking I knew not what" (*1805*, V: 455–6; *1850,* V: 431–2) will make us more aware of the undulation of the scenery. The lake is surrounded by "trees and hills", and the lake itself, in the *1850* version, is described as "the deep" (*1850*, V: 446), as if to exclude an implication of the level surface of the lake.

The boy's unconscious act of seeking anticipates the search party of the following day, who "Sounded with grappling-irons and long poles" (*1805,* V: 469; *1850*, V: 447). Here lurks another perpendicularity. And the "long" poles seem to embody the boy's "long" vigil on the previous night as well as the "length" of the search that morning. In this way in the revised versions, all the details seem to be constructed so as to correspond with each other in their erectness, and everything unconsciously waits together, with repressed breath, for the bolting up of the dead body at the center of the lake.

While in the Boat-Stealing episode, the uprearing of something dreadful gains its power from its abruptness, in the Drowned Man episode, there seems to

be at work a centripetal power, which gathers the latent vertical lines scattered over the lake scenery, into one strong line of the dead body's uprising. And this power is the most conspicuous in the final version.

> Twilight was coming on, yet through the gloom
> *I saw* distinctly on the opposite shore
> A heap of garments, left *as I supposed*
> By one who there was bathing.
> (*1805*, V: 459–62, italics mine)

This passage, which announces the ominous beginning of the frightful story, is revised as follows:

> Twilight was coming on, yet through the gloom
> *Appeared* distinctly on the opposite shore
> A heap of garments, *as if* left by one
> Who might have there been bathing.
> (*1850*, V: 435–8, italics mine)

The heap of garments is no longer merely waiting for someone to find it out, but it appears through the darkening space, as if with "voluntary power" or with "purpose of its own" (*1850,* I: 379, 383). Its existence does not depend on the "I" who observes it; it takes on its own life like that of the uprearing cliff in the Boat-Stealing episode. And these "unclaimed garments", on behalf of their absent owner, "[draw] to the spot an anxious crowd" to tell "a plain tale" (*1850*, V: 444, 443):

> The succeeding day,
> *Those unclaimed garments telling a plain tale*
> ***Drew to the spot an anxious crowd; some looked***
> ***In passive expectation from the shore,***
> While from a boat others ***hung o'er the deep,***
> Sounding with *grappling* irons and long poles.
> ***At last,*** the dead man, 'mid that beauteous scene
> Of trees and hills and water, bolt upright
> Rose, with his ghastly face, *a spectre shape*
> *Of terror; ...*
> (*1850*, V: 442–51; italics are those added in *1805*; bold strokes, in *1850*)

In the third line, while the *1805* version goes: "Went there a company, ...", the *1850* version makes the people's behavior passive. They do not go there by their own wills; they are drawn to the place as if pulled by some irresistible power. Moreover their "passive" attention is centered on a "spot", rather than being dispersed about "there". To use Wolfson's words, the garments seem to be endowed with "an almost magnetic power".[13] The crowd are gathered around the lake; some of them are pulled further to the center of the lake, and "[hang] o'er the deep." Here again appears the sense of suspense in the vertically extended space. The centripetal movement, when it reaches the heart of the lake, is pulled downward, and causes the dead body to rise "bolt upright" from the bottom of the lake. In the version of *1850*, these two lines, centripetal and vertical, make the coordinate axes of the scene. And the landscape rearranged along these axes seems to begin exerting an extraordinary power on readers.

Heffernan argues that "linearity was crucial to the romantic vision of landscape: ... they [poets and painters] caught from evanescent phenomena the implied geometrical forms", and delineated "the very structure of their motions".[14] This remark may be best fitted for Wordsworth. At the end of Book Five of *The Prelude*, he assumes that "in works / Of mighty poets" does exist "the great Nature"; and further he claims that "Visionary power / Attends upon the motions of the winds / Embodied in the mysteries of words" (*1805*, V: 618–21; *1850*, V: 594–7). These assertions may show his hope of capturing the potential power of nature with his poetic language. Through delineation of the latent framework of a scene and movement of its elements, he tries to give his verbal picture, "[a] power like one of Nature's" (*1850*, XIII: 311–2), which can arouse strong emotions again in other people.

It seems, however, not only the power of Nature that Wordsworth tries to capture in his poetic landscape. In the structure of such scenes and experiences as were deeply impressed in his mind, he also tries to perceive the structure of his own mind, which seems to be sustained by some subconscious power. In the next section I would like to see how the poet tries to draw the picture of the mind through recomposing the

spectacle he saw in the ascent of Snowdon.

IV

In the revision of the Snowdon passage, too, the commentary part rather seems to suffer a loss, but in terms of composition of poetic landscape, the revision is not necessarily for the worse. The sense of space, especially the sense of verticality gets refined, and the geometry of landscape is delineated more clearly.

> It was a close, warm, *breezeless* summer night,
> Wan, dull, and glaring, with a dripping *fog*
> Low-hung and thick that covered all the sky;
> But, undiscouraged, we began to *climb*
> The mountain-side. The mist soon girt us round,
> And after ordinary travellers' talk
> With our conductor, pensively we *sank*
> Each into commerce with his private thoughts:
> (*1850*, XIV: 11–18, italics mine)

The first line is revised from "It was a night, a close warm night" (*1805*, XIII: 10). The caesura is dismissed, and another epithet ("breezeless") is added; the sentence is extended to full three lines without a breath, dragging a procession of adjectives. The sultry, languid, oppressive epithets are all together imposed on the "summer night", which is hanging at the end of a line. The ponderous lines loaded with depressing modifiers correspond to the imagery of low-hanging clouds impregnated with plenty of water; and the "dripping mist" (*1805*, XIII: 11) is thickened into "a dripping fog" (*1850*, XIV: 12).

In *1805*, the water immured in clouds "half [threatens] storm and rain" (*1805*, XIII: 13), while in *1850*, there is no slight wind ("breezeless"), nor do the sagging clouds show a sign of bursting into storm. The enclosed, dull space cannot find an outlet for its compressed vapours, remaining blocked up, stagnated, until it is suddenly broken through vertically.

In this mist-girt enclosure, the water imagery tends to be lowered. It is associated not with a ranging storm, but with still and deep waters. Later we are to hear "the roar of waters" (*1850*, XIV: 59) from far below, but before that, the water imagery is slowly descending; the surrounding fog sinks to rest at the feet like a sea, and below it lies the real ocean.

This downward imagination, paradoxically, begins with an upward movement. In the fourth line of the passage, Wordsworth has altered the phrase, "on we went" (*1805*, XIII: 13) into "we began to climb" (*1850*, XIV: 14). This change may be important, for with the verb "climb", the vertical movement of the passage begins. In effect, in the *1850* version, the ascending and descending imagery is placed symmetrically. As the poet begins to climb the mountain, at the same time, he begins to sink into "commerce with his private thoughts" (*1850*, XIV: 18). We may recall the description of a lake embosomed in the vale of Grasmere, mirroring the landscape around it:

> Behold the universal imagery
> Inverted, ...
> And the clear hills, as high as they ascend
> Heavenward, so piercing deep the lake below.
> (*The Recluse*, I, 571–2, 578–9)[15]

As the water landscape expands as deep as it does high, so in the poetical landscape of Mt.Snowdon, the higher the poet ascends, the deeper he sinks into musing. As he "[pants] up / With eager pace" (1850, XIV: 30–1), his forehead is "bent / Earthward" (28–9) with "no less eager thoughts" (31).

The expansion of the imaginative landscape in opposite directions, heavenward and earthward, reaches a climax when a light suddenly "Fell like a flash" (39) from the heaven. I would like to quote that part with a few preceding lines:

> Ascending at loose distance each from each,
> And I as chanced, the foremost of the band;
> When at my feet the ground appeared to brighten,
> And with a step or two seemed brighter still;
> Nor was time given to ask or learn the cause,
> For instantly a light upon the turf
> *Fell* like a flash, and lo ! as I looked *up,*
> The Moon *hung* naked in a *firmament*
> *Of azure without cloud*, and at my feet

Rested a silent sea of *hoary* mist.

(*1850*, XIV: 33 - 42, italics mine)

During the steady ascending, the poet's eyes are bent down to the earth, so a change in the heaven is noticed as reflection of light on the ground, just as a cleft in clouds is often noticed from a blue patch of reflection in the water.

Then an instantaneous light startles the poet. Contrasted to the preceding lines (33–8), which are rather slackened and roundabout, as if to prolong the readers' expectation, the presentation of the climactic scene (39–42) is exquisitely tight and sharp. In the *1850* version, the poet has altered the phrase "I looked *about*" into "I looked *up*". It is a small change, yet important. To the dropping light the poet directly responds with his eyes turned up to the heaven. As a result, the latent vertical line emerges clearly, which is in a piece with the symmetrically structured line 39: "Fell like a flash, ... I looked up."

The column of the moonlight has the power not only to turn the pensive traveller's eye heavenward but also to make him notice the spectacle spreading at his feet. The grand view newly unrolled vertically is supported by a few contrasts; above his head, there hangs "a firmament" and at his feet lies "a silent sea". The colour of the heaven is "azure without cloud", while the ocean is white with "hoary mist". And the mobility of the moon "hanging" in the sky is contrasted to the stillness of the "resting" sea. (In *1805*, the moon is described as it "stood" (*1805*, XIII: 41) in the heavens. The replacement of the word "stood" with "hung" (*1850*, XIV: 40) lends mobility to the moon. And besides, as in the Boat-Stealing and the Drowned Man episodes, the word "hang" may imply an unstable, uneasy condition suspended in the vertically extended space.)

The mists spreading around the poet's feet create a fantastic vision. On the one hand, they form a vast ocean, which overwhelms the land, leaving only the heads of high hills floating like islands. On the other, the vapors become "solid" (this modifier is added in the *1850* version) and shape an expanse of land to cover the real ocean. Though paradoxically, while watching the "solid vapours" stretching over the whole view, the poet senses that the receding Atlantic is steadily spreading out under the clouds as "far as the sight [can] reach" (49). Though blocked by the thick vapours, he perceives a vast expanse of unseen waters far below, which seems to suggest some "under-presence" (*1805*, XIII: 71) lying deep in his own mind. And this presence is to begin a vertical movement.

As I have said above, the landscape of Mt. Snowdon is composed in such a way that if the space extends upward, it deepens downward at the same time. Once our sight has reached the "sovereign elevation" (54), where the moon is hanging, we are to look down from there, upon the sea of mist; then further piercing through the clouds, our ears, in turn, fetch the roaring waters from immeasurable abyss. Just as the oppressive clouds above the head were broken through to the heaven, so now the mists gathering around the feet find a vent towards the sea. Here the space expands between a dizzy height and a dizzy depth:

...the full-orbed Moon
.... *from her sovereign elevation, gazed*
Upon the billowy ocean, as it lay
All meek and silent, save that through a rift—
Not a distant from the shore whereon we stood,
A fixed, *abysmal,* gloomy, breathing place —
Mounted the roar of waters, torrents, streams
Innumerable, roaring with one voice
Heard over earth and sea, and, in that hour,
For so it seems, *felt by the starry heavens.*

(*1850*, XIV: 53–62, italics mine)

After saying "through a rift", the poet pauses a short while. During two lines of parenthetical explanation of the rift, the focus of description shifts slightly from the visible to the invisible or the audible. Although it is the eye that observes the rift as "abysmal" and "gloomy", these epithets suggest something invisible. And "breathing place" suggests sounds of wind to be heard through it. So far, it has been a silent night; with only one exception, nothing has been heard, even a slightest wind. Here at last the poet finds a "breathing place", which is a breakthrough not only for the space to

expand earthward but also for sounds to come up. In practice, what is to be heard is the roar of waters. The moon's gaze upon the billowy clouds is unexpectedly responded by sound of waters from beneath the clouds.

The sound that "Mounted" from below is contrasted to the light that "Fell" from the heaven. Here also we can find a symmetrical framework of space. Or we may say that by the falling light and the mounting sound, the shut-up space is broken through and rearranged according to the vertical line as a coordinate axis. The concluding two lines may be a "concession to orthodoxy",[16] but the roar of waters, sounding from the deep sea, and mounting through the earth, to the high heaven, seem to serve as a prop which penetrates the expansion of the space.

We have seen above that in the revision of *The Prelude,* Wordsworth's sense of geometry or his sense of space is ready to respond to verticality implied in natural phenomena. The latent lines may indicate the power of nature hidden behind the phenomenal world. In the Boat-Stealing episode, the horizontal and tense lines of the calm lake serve to make the sudden perpendicularity of the cliff more powerful. In the Drowned Man episode, the centripetal movements gather energies onto the erectness of the dead body. In both cases, the power of the scenes are revealed through the rearranged lines; and especially the vertical lines seem to express the strong impact of each experience on the boy's mind.

What Wordsworth tries to describe in these passages is, in a way, internalization of a scene or an experience. He tries to capture the Nature's power to give a great impact on the human mind. It could be said that to delineate the geometry of a scene or an experience is to draw the structure of the mind.

In the Snowdon passage, the fantastic vision created by the sea of mists and the sound of the invisible water piercing through the clouds, reminds the poet of the "perfect image of a mighty mind, / Of one that feeds upon infinity, / That is exalted by an under-presence" (*1805*, XIII: 69–71). Halting on the way to the mountain top, the poet does not look up at the summit, nor is he content with the sublime of the external landscape around him; instead, he looks down into the sublime of his own mind. The vertically expanded space of the mountain scenery has now entered into the mind, becoming the internal depth. And the roaring of water ascending from under the clouds sounds as if it were coming up from under the consciousness, from unfathomable depth of the mind.

For Wordsworth, the mind is captured in the image of something deep, and he tries to look down into it hanging from its brink. As we have seen above, Wordsworth, in the *1850* version of *The Prelude*, seems to like the word, "hang". This word indicates not only unstableness or mobility but also verticality, and that pointing downward. The moon hanging in the firmament (the Snowdon passage), the men who hang down-bending from the boat-side upon the water (the Drowned Man episode), and the darkness hanging inside the poet's mind (the Boat-Stealing episode): all of these images indicate an eye looking down into a depth, and this downcast eye causes the presence lurking in that abysmal depth to lift up itself abruptly.

The passages recording the poet's meditation at Mt.Snowdon, on the analogy between the mind of man and Nature is rather confused and difficult to follow; and his attempt to rewrite them makes them still worse, though this clumsiness may indicate difficulty in contemplating and describing one's own mind. (*1805*, XIII: 66–119; *1850*, XIV: 63–129)

It may safely be said that Wordsworth is more successful in drawing a picture of the mind by delineating the geometry of experiences, rather than by abstract, prolix explanation. It is certain that the *1850* version of *The Prelude* has lost the emotional immediacy of the earlier versions, but it is also true that it has got sharpened the sense of geometry, which is likely to respond to both the external and internal space expanding vertically. And the poetical landscape whose geometry is clearly outlined seems to take on a peculiar power to affect our minds, too, and make us perceive the structure of our own mind.

Notes

(1) this essay is a revised version of a part of my

master thesis submitted to the University of Tokyo in December 1995.

(2) Those who appreciate more than anything else the poet's passionate, mystical communion with Nature in his early childhood, naturally regret his later self-restraint or self-moralization. They regret that through the revisions of *The Prelude*, obscurity of visionary experiences has given way to explicative plainness, and that the power of imagination has been restricted or attenuated.

(3) Susan Wolfson, "The Illusion of Mastery: Wordsworth's Revisions of 'The Drowned Man of Esthwaite' 1799, 1805, 1850" in *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* (1984), p.918.

(4) James A. W. Heffernan, *The Recreation of Landscape: A Study of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Constable, and Turner.* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1984).

(5) All quotations from *The Prelude* are from *The Prelude 1799, 1805, 1850. A Norton Critical Edition.* ed. Jonathan Wordsworth, M. H. Abrams and Stephen Gill. (New York: Norton, 1979). In this essay, the three versions are referred to as *1799, 1805,* and *1850,* respectively.

(6) Between *1709* and *1805* versions of the Boat-Stealing episode, there are few remarkable revisions; so in this section, the comparison shall be made between *1805* and *1850.*

(7) This circumstantial explanation is inserted only in the *1805* version (l.376–382).

(8) That the revision between *1805* and *1850* is done in such a way as to preserve the sudden verticality of the cliff is demonstrated by Jonathan Arac, in his *Critical Genealogies: Historical Situations for Postmodern Literary Studies.* (New York: Columbia U. P., 1989). And Susan E. Meisenhelder, though without reference to the revision, remarks that "the surprise effect of this uprearing, growing and towering is achieved by the emphasis early in the episode on the horizontal dimension" (*Wordsworth's Informed Reader: Structures of Experience in His Poetry.* (Nashville, Tennessee: Vanderbilt U. P., 1988), p.34).

(9) In *1850*, Wordsworth crosses out from the opening portrait of the lake these beautiful lines: "The moon was up, the lake was shining clear / Among the hoary mountains" (*1805*, I: 383–4). This deletion may seem rather disappointing, but it serves to preserve the levelness of the opening scene. As Meisenhelder points out, the moonlight in *1850* is "experienced and described only as a reflection in the flat water of the lake" (p.34).

(10) Heffernan, p.172.

(11) The biggest revision of this episode occurs between the two-part and the extended versions. The comparison shall be made first between *1799* and *1805*, and then between *1805* and *1850.*

(12) Wolfson, p.920.

(13) Wolfson, p.929.

(14) Heffernan, p.200.

(15) *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth.* ed. Ernest De Selincourt. 2d ed. rev. Helen Darbishire. vol.5. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1959.), p.332.

(16) Footnote 6 in Norton critical edition of *The Prelude*, p.461.