WORDSWORTH AND THE BEGINNINGS OF MODERN POETRY

Robert Rehder

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Contents

TO CAROLINE WITH LOVE

Notes

Except for works mentioned in the List of Abbreviations, a full reference is given the first time that a work is cited, after which a shorter form is used. All the English books were published in London and all the French books in Paris except where another place is specified. All translations are mine unless otherwise noted.

Unless otherwise indicated, all citations of Wordsworth's poems are from Hayden's edition (Poems), Wordsworth's letters from de Selincourt's edition, revised in part by various hands (WL) and those of Coleridge from Griggs's edition (CL). Citations from these sources have generally not been noted, as the poems can be found easily through the index of titles and the letters through the dates. The references to Wordsworth's autobiographical poem are given in the text. The Roman numerals denote the books, the Arabic, the lines. All references are to the 1805 text as revised by Gill (PG), unless they include the date, 1850, in which case the text is that of the de Selincourt-Darbishire edition.

The Shavers' *Wordsworth's Library* and Butler's edition of *The Ruined Cottage and The Pedlar* appeared as I was preparing my MS for the publisher so I have only been able to make very limited use of them.

Abbreviations

Works by Wordsworth

PTV	*Wordsworth, Poems, in Two Volumes*, 1807, ed. Helen Darbishire (Oxford, 1914)
P	*The Prelude*, ed. Ernest de Selincourt and Helen Darbishire (Oxford, 1965)
PW	*The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth*, ed. Ernest de Selincourt and Helen Darbishire (Oxford), I (1967), II (1969), III (1968), IV (1970), V (1966)
WL	*The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth*: I, *The Early Years 1787–1805*, ed. Ernest de Selincourt and C.L. Shaver (Oxford, 1967); II, *The Middle Years, Part 1, 1806–1811*, ed. Ernest de Selincourt and Mary Moorman (Oxford, 1969); III, *The Middle Years, Part 2, 1812–1820*, ed. Ernest de Selincourt, Mary Moorman and A.G. Hill (Oxford, 1970); IV–VI, *The Later Years 1821–1850*, ed. Ernest de Selincourt (Oxford, 1939)
PG	*The Prelude*, ed. Ernest de Selincourt, corrected by Stephen Gill (Oxford, 1970)
LB	*Wordsworth and Coleridge, Lyrical Ballads, 1798*, ed. W.J. Owen (Oxford, 1971)
Prose	*The Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, ed. W.J. Owen and J.W. Smyser, 3 vols. (Oxford, 1974)
PM	*The Prelude*, ed. J.C. Maxwell (Harmondsworth, 1975)
SP	*The Salisbury Plain Poems of William Wordsworth*, ed. Stephen Gill (Ithaca, 1975)
HG	*Home at Grasmere, Part First, Book First of the Recluse*, ed. Beth Darlington (Ithaca, 1977)
Poems	*The Poems*, ed. J.O. Hayden, 2 vols. (Harmondsworth, 1977)
PP	*The Prelude 1798–1799*, ed. Stephen Parrish (Ithaca, 1977)
RCP	*The Ruined Cottage and The Pedlar*, ed. James Butler (Ithaca, 1979)

Works by Coleridge

CP *The Complete Poetical Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. E.H. Coleridge, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1912)

CS *Selected Poetry and Prose of Coleridge*, ed. D.A. Stauffer (New York, 1951)

CN *The Notebooks of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Kathleen Coburn, 3 vols. (New York and London, 1957–1973)

CL *Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. E.L. Griggs, 6 vols. (Oxford, 1966–1971)

CC *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Kathleen Coburn, 16 vols. (London and New York, 1969–)

Other Works

CLRM *Catalogue of the Varied and Valuable Historical, Poetical, Theological, and Miscellaneous Library of the Late Venerated Poet-Laureate, William Wordsworth, D.C.L., Last, Not Least of the Line of Lake Minstrels;. . .*(the sale catalogue of the 'nearly three thousand volumes' sold by auction by John Burton at Rydal Mount on 19–21 July 1859)

Moorman Moorman, Mary, *William Wordsworth, A Biography*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1967)

Shaver Shaver, C.L., and A.C. Shaver, *Wordsworth's Library* (New York, 1979)

Reed I Reed, M.L., *Wordsworth, The Chronology of the Early Years 1770–1799* (Cambridge, Mass., 1967)

Reed II _____, *Wordsworth, The Chronology of the Middle Years, 1800–1815* (Cambridge, Mass., 1975)

Memoirs Wordsworth, Christopher, *Memoirs of William Wordsworth*, 2 vols. (London, 1851)

JDW Wordsworth, Dorothy, *Journals of Dorothy Wordsworth*, ed. Mary Moorman (Oxford, 1971)

Music Wordsworth, Jonathan, *The Music of Humanity* (London, 1969)

BWS _____, ed., *Bicentenary Wordsworth Studies in Memory of John Alban Finch* (Ithaca, 1970)

Other Abbreviations

DC	Dove Cottage
OED	*The Oxford English Dictionary*, 13 vols. (Oxford, 1933)

Preface

This is a work of hypotheses. The ideas put forward here are tentative. Their starting-point was an observation of the difference between the styles of Pope and Wordsworth. Even though the connection between them was clear and the development from one to the other could be traced through the poetry of Thomson, Gray, Collins, Goldsmith, Cowper, Blake and Burns, the difference seemed to me greater than that between any other two successive, great English poets, and Wordsworth's poetry, this development notwithstanding, radically unlike that of any poet before him. Subsequent poets, however, share so many of his poetic assumptions, beliefs and concerns that the history of the poetry of the last two hundred years seemed most easily comprehensible when considered as a whole and interpreted as beginning with Wordsworth. This book, then, is an attempt to understand the change that takes place in poetry with Wordsworth and the nature of Wordsworth's achievement.

My concern throughout is with Wordsworth's poetry itself. There are two important, related subjects that are only touched upon: the great change in European sensibility of which Wordsworth's work is a part and the effect of his work on other authors. Both are beyond the scope of this book; either would demand a history of *European thought* on the model of Fernand Braudel's *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l 'époque de Philippe II.* Occasionally I have used *modern* as a short way of denoting all the poetry (or literature) from Wordsworth to the present. I have done so in the interests of economy and simplicity without any wish to establish it as a period. The disadvantage of all period terms is that they impose upon the continuous process of change that is the life of every culture a spurious definiteness, and inevitably shift our attention from a particular author or work to the hypostatised period, so that the terminology becomes the reality instead of the literature. As much as possible (and perhaps it is not always possible) we need to make our summary statements in terms of particular authors and works, because this is the only method of making those statements more precise.

Like everyone who is interested in Wordsworth I am indebted to the Herculean labours of Ernest de Selincourt and to those who have

revised his editions: Helen Darbishire, Chester Shaver, Mary Moorman and Alan Hill, and I have made extensive use of the work of Beth Darlington, John Finch, Stephen Gill, W.J. Owen, Stephen Parrish, Mark Reed, Jane Smyser and Jonathan Wordsworth on Wordsworth's texts, relying in matters of chronology, in most cases, on Reed's indispensable two volumes. The ideas in this book were originally worked out in the course in poetics that I gave at the University of Wisconsin (1968–1973) and then in my undergraduate seminars at the University of Stirling (1973–1980). I am indebted to all the students who participated in those courses for what they have taught me and grateful to all those with whom I have discussed this work for everything that they have contributed, in particular, my colleagues at the University of Stirling. I would like to thank the staffs of Stirling University Library (especially Nora Glasgow and Douglas Mack), Edinburgh University Library, the British Library, and Peter Laver and Elizabeth Corey of the Wordsworth Library at Grasmere, and to express my gratitude to the Trustees of Dove Cottage for the pleasure and excitement of working in the Wordsworth Library and for permission to print manuscript material, and to Stephen Gill for his kind assistance. My thanks go to: Neil Keeble, Alasdair Macrae, Ian McGowan and Felicity Riddy for helping with particular points; T.A. Dunn and A.N. Jeffares for their support; Katherine McKenzie, Olwen Peel and Margaret Prentice, who with care and patience typed the final copy as well as some inscrutable rough draft; and Catherine Gray who checked most of my French translations and saved me from a number of mistakes. In addition, I want to mention Arthur Gold to whom I have been talking about literature on and off for more than twenty-five years — inevitably some of his ideas will be found here; David Croom, who asked me to write this book and who has waited for it with great patience; and R.P. Blackmur, from whose teaching I discover every year that I have learned something more. My greatest debt is to Caroline Rehder, the best proof-reader, editor and wife that an author could have. She has improved every page and contributed some of the best ideas.

1
Self-consciousness and English Poetry

The continuity of poetry is more important than any division we make of it, but if we want to speak about modern poetry, we need to begin with Wordsworth. He is the first great modern poet.

Modern poetry is, more than anything else, a poetry of self-analysis, of the exploration of consciousness. That is, the exploration of consciousness is both its explicit and implicit subject. It is a poetry that tries to bring more and more of the life of the mind to consciousness. Thus it becomes a poetry interested in the exploration or representation of the unconscious.

The history of English literature – and English poetry – has been put together in an *ad hoc* manner. Each generation has added its contribution without troubling very much about the structure as a whole or about the relation of English literature to European culture. English literature, however, is not simply a native growth and its development is unintelligible except in the context of European culture. Wordsworth's work is part of the continuous European struggle to come to terms with consciousness.

Development is the pattern of change when change has a pattern, the perception of a direction or drift in events. This is a problematical subject because we tend to project the processes of our own development on to whatever we study. This is inevitable as the forms of our thought grow out of our experience (notably the idea of development itself) and what we are depends on what we have been. And yet this means that we are always going away from our subjects and unconsciously returning to ourselves. When we discover successive golden, silver and iron ages, or a progress from the primitive to the sophisticated, or from renaissance to decadence, we are affirming that children grow up and that men grow old. There is, moreover, a difficulty in distinguishing development from progress, in finding patterns of change that do not depend upon judgements of good and bad. The distinction is important because there is no progress in art.

Michelangelo is not superseded by Rembrandt. Tolstoy cannot take the place of Balzac. Each great writer and each great work is unique.

Wordsworth may be the first great modern poet and a great innovator, but he does not create modern poetry single-handed. His work is part of an immense continuum. To understand his achievement it is necessary not only to think of his poetry in the context of European culture, but also to consider European culture as the record of an increasing consciousness. Wordsworth is radically more self-conscious than any poet before him. His greatest poem is on the growth of his mind. This is the long poem for which he never found a title and which Mary Wordsworth published as *The Prelude*.[1] What could be more self-conscious than to write the history of your own consciousness?

The more or less steady but very irregular increase in consciousness is a distinguishing characteristic, and perhaps a principle, of the development of European culture for over three thousand years. Wordsorth is the heir (as we all are) of this tradition — and an important contributor to it. The exact workings of this increasing consciousness are not clear, although it appears to come about as part of a change in the nature of the feeling of group solidarity, a shift from kinship to individual awareness. According to Bloch, the most striking transformation in the agrarian life of Europe is that which occurs in most of England between about 1500 and 1800: 'that vast movement of the *enclosures* whose essentials can be defined under its double form (enclosure of common land, enclosure of tillage) as: the disappearance of collective servitudes, individualisation of cultivation.'[2] My assumption is that changes in ways of life are related to changes in states of mind. (There is no doubt that the enclosures made an imaginative appeal to that deeply searching autobiographer Rousseau: 'The first man who having enclosed a piece of land said to himself: *This is mine*. . .was the true founder of civil society.'[3]) Namier identifies 'the triumph of linguistic nationality' as the basic factor in European political history during the period 1815–1919.[4] This involved the creation of a new form of group solidarity: the nation of all those who speak the same language. Thus, the idea of a society of individuals comes to replace the old, vanishing sense of a community of households.[5]

The complexity of the development of self-consciousness in Europe can only be hinted at here, and the interpretations can be no more than suggestions. To provide a glimpse of this vast subject, I have considered briefly a number of phenomena: confession and mirrors, self-portraits and words formed with the prefix *self*, and introduced in

turn: Dante, Dürer, Petrarch, Luther, Montaigne and Shakespeare. Their work reveals in the process of formation some of the stylistic modes that can be seen in Wordsworth's poetry.

The history of confession is of a growing self-awareness. Confession is one way of coping with the inner voice, and its continuing practice is a demonstration of how hard it is for us to take our guilt into ourselves and be responsible for it. If the private confession of sins by a believer to a priest existed in the early church, it was extremely rare. Confession and penance were public, and made to God and the group of other believers, as with Augustine's *Confessiones* (398). Private confession, as more than an occasional occurrence, seems to begin in the fifth century, after Leo I in 459 forbids the custom of reading confessions before the congregation. The first evidence of confessors stationed in churches is the statement that Simplicius in 470 set aside a week in each of three Roman churches in which priests were to be present to receive penitents and administer baptism, but this is an isolated case.

The arguments of Peter Lombard (d.1160) and Richard of St Victor (d.1173) that penitence is a sacrament and that confession is necessary to secure pardon for sin are made at a time when confession was becoming more popular, but they were not given any legal form, although the inviolability of the seal of confession was fixed in canon law in the twelfth century. The Latern Council (1216) ordered every Christian to make an annual confession of sins on pain of being denied entrance to church and a Christian burial. Until this decree confession had been voluntary. This established it as an institution. The Council of Florence (1493) made penitence (including confession) a sacrament and empowered the confessor to grant absolution. The first manual for confessors dates from about 1230, but it is the Council of Trent (1563) that required priests to be specially trained as confessors.[6]

During this time confession was usually heard in the open church, between sunrise and sunset, in a place visible from all sides, and if the penitent was a woman there was to be someone else in the church and the confessor was instructed not to look at her face. The idea of the confessional did not occur to anyone until after Luther's death. The earliest reference to it is an order for installation of confessionals by the Council of Valencia (1565). The Roman Ritual of 1614 directs that confessionals should be used in all churches.[7] The new arrangement, where neither penitent nor confessor sees the face of the other, recognises the inwardness of the transaction: the priest hidden in the confessional becomes the voice of conscience.

The psychoanalyst, like the confessor, is only a voice. Compare Freud's description of his technique: 'I hold to the plan of getting the patient to lie on a sofa, while I sit behind him out of his sight.'[8] Both are forms of dialogue used to promote self-knowledge. Authors employ a variation of this technique when they address the unseen reader. This address is not very common before Dante, and when it does occur it is usually brief and casual. Auerbach states that Dante's address to the reader in the *Commedia* is 'a new creation although some of its features appear in earlier texts.' He argues that it constitutes 'a special and independent development of the apostrophe' and marks, by its intensity and seriousness, 'a new relationship between reader and poet.'[9]

Dante writes an autobiography before beginning his greatest work. The title, *La Vita nuova*, stands for his belief that he could change his life. His great poem is also autobiographical and he appears to be the first poet to make his own life in any way the subject of a long poem. As its plot, he uses, like so many autobiographers, including Wordsworth, the metaphor of a journey. Dante makes himself the protagonist of the *Commedia*, and the poem is about his struggle for a new life, it is a poem of change and development.

Dante finds the form of his poem in Christian philosophy. Wordsworth's poem is without any such form. He interprets his experiences as much as possible in their own terms. Dante's great originality lies in the way he uses the world to think with. For his symbolic purposes he employs real people in all their historicity and treats imaginary people as if they were real. He fuses allegory and history. We do not meet Everyman or the Redcrosse Knight in the *Commedia*, but Ugolino della Gherardesca, Guido Guincelli and Dante's great-great-grandfather. The *Commedia* is full of individuals.[10] The power of Dante's conception, of seeing the world in the totality of its history as composed of individuals, is such that it informs one of the greatest achievements in the history of the novel, Balzac's *La Comédie humaine*. (Balzac died four months after Wordsworth.)

Dante is a master of observed detail. The characters in the *Commedia* are described by unique, personal traits and described in action. There is a moment in the twilight of the *Inferno* when he and Virgil meet a group of souls who 'sharpen their brows' at them in the way that an old tailor looks at the eye of his needle. Dante studies everything with this meticulous scrutiny. He is one of the creators of a new consciousness. He notes the texture of a landslide 'that on the flank, on this side of Trent, struck the Adige' and how, when a green

stick is burning, sap oozes and air hisses from the end that is not in the fire. He is alive to the slight movement of Farinata degli Uberti's eyebrows and to the time in a summer evening when 'the fly gives way to the gnat,' and he looks at his own feelings as carefully as he looks at other people's faces.[11] The *Commedia* is the first of many works to show that self-consciousness and world-consciousness are interdependent: they increase together.

This increase in Dante is connected with his increased intimacy with his reader. Wordsworth develops this technique still further. To compose the long poem about his life and deepest feelings, like the pentitent and the patient, he addresses a specific person. This work was commonly referred to in his household as 'the poem to Coleridge' and the title page of MS B makes it clear that this shaped Wordsworth's conception of the work: 'Poem Title not yet fixed upon by William Wordsworth Addressed to S.T. Coleridge.'[12]

The feeling of communication depends on the belief that someone is listening. Thus the mirror is an agent of self-communication. The method of quicksilvering glass that makes possible better mirrors was perfected in Venice in the early sixteenth century, when glass mirrors were first produced in large numbers. Before this they were made of polished metal. The Venetian mirror makers formed a guild in 1564, the year before the Council of Valencia ordered the installation of confessionals.[13] The new mirrors provided people with a clearer, sharper and more realistic self-image. They made possible an exchange of glances between the individual and himself; every man could now study his own face.

The appeal that the mirror makes to the imagination is shown by a silver point drawing of a thirteen-year-old boy inscribed in the upper right hand corner: 'I drew myself out of the mirror in the year 1484, when I was still a child. Albrecht Dürer.' This drawing is the first of many pictures that Dürer made of himself. His first painted self-portraits are dated 1493 and 1498. They, like the drawing, show the artist from the waist up, which suggests that he used a large mirror, therefore one of glass, not of metal. The second painting, now in the Prado, is inscribed: 'This I painted after my image, I was six-and-twenty years old. Albrecht Dürer.' Of this painting, Panofsky says that it 'was painted without any ulterior purpose and is thus perhaps the first independent self-portrait ever produced' and that it could have been painted

> only by an artist become 'self-conscious' — in every possible sense

> of the word — through his providential encounter with the Italian *rinascimento*. There is undeniably an element of vanity and pride in Dürer's attitude. . . But this personal element is outweighed by the gravity of a more than personal problem — the problem of the 'modern' artist as such.[14]

What is remarkable is that the problem of the modern artist could be posed and answered by a self-portrait.

It is, moreover, the inwardly preoccupied Dürer who paints the remarkable *Large Piece of Turf*, a microscopically detailed portrait of grasses and weeds. All the intensity of the artist is lavished on a piece of earth chosen for its ordinariness. The accuracy and freedom of Dürer's studies of plants and animals are matched only by the scientific drawings of the very self-aware Leonardo da Vinci, and Dürer's landscapes are done with such loving precision that they seem forever of the present, as if looking into the mirror gives him a new vision of the world. His work, like that of Dante, demonstrates the mutuality of seeing the world and seeing one's self.

Gusdorf observes: 'Certain Flemish or Dutch paintings of interiors show on the wall a small mirror where the picture repeats itself a second time; the image in the mirror not only redoubles the scene, it adds a new dimension, a perspective of flight.'[15] This dissolving perspective is like a representation of the passage of time, together with a demonstration that every image has another side. The artists enjoyed painting rooms into which they often painted pictures, or a view framed in a window, like the corner of landscape Dürer included in his 1498 self-portrait. The mirror in the picture and the picture in the picture, like the play within a play, testify to the self-consciousness of the artist and they disclose that these pictures are *about* that consciousness. Similarly, the actor who tells us in the midst of a play that all the world is a stage, or that we are but poor players, reminds us, as do prologues and epilogues, that we are participating in an illusion, as perhaps they remind the playwright that, with all his phantasies, he is participating in reality.

Thus, the mirror leads to the self-portrait and daily self-scrutiny, while confession and self-portrait, voice and image, merge in autobiography — the form of Wordsworth's poem to Coleridge. The proximity of their dates suggests that they are part of the same complex process: Dürer's first painted self-portraits, 1493 and 1498; cheaper and better mirrors, after 1500; the Council of Valencia's order for the installation of confessionals, 1565. The first English autobiography of

any length was composed by Thomas Whythorne about 1576, the first English self-portrait is a miniature painted by Nicholas Hilliard in 1577.[16] During this time a new vocabulary also comes into being. The *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)* states:

> *self-* first appears as a living formative element about the middle of the 16th cent., . . . The number of *self-* compounds was greatly agumented towards the middle of the 17th cent., when many new words appeared in theological and philosophical writing, some of which had apparently a restricted currency of about 50 years (e.g. 1645 – 1690), while a large proportion became established and have a continuous history down to the present time.

Barfield concludes:

> Self-consciousness, as we know it, seems to have first dawned faintly on Europe at about the time of the Reformation, and it was not till the seventeenth century that the new light really began to spread and brighten. One of the surest signs that an idea or feeling is coming to the surface of consciousness — surer than the appearance of one or two new words — is the tendency of an old one to form compounds and derivatives. After the Reformation we notice growing up in our language a whole crop of words hyphened with *self*; such are *self-conceit, self-liking, self-love*, and others at the end of the sixteenth century, and *self-confidence, self-command, self-contempt, self-esteem, self-knowledge, self-pity*. . .in the next. . .Locke adopts the new (1632) word *consciousness*, defining it as 'perception of what passes in a man's own mind', and at the same time impresses on the still newer *self-consciousness* its distinctive modern meaning.[17]

The crucial period then — if any time can be said to be more crucial than another — in the development of self-consciousness in Europe seems to be that which runs more or less from Dante (1265 – 1321) and Petrarch (1304 – 1374) to Montaigne (1533 – 1592) and Milton (1608 – 1672), with the earlier dates applying to Italy and the later to northern Europe. These approximations constitute the accuracy of cultural history. This is the time of the Renaissance and Reformation. These terms are perhaps best understood not as events, but as denoting a process of psychological change in which men created a new freedom such that they felt that they were offering themselves a new life. Both terms suggest regeneration. There emerged a feeling for

the human life as a unit of form that disappeared from *poetry* after Shakespeare and is re-invented by Wordsworth. This way of feeling is a function of a new sense of time: the writing of history after the example of the Greeks and the forging of the tools of historical scholarship began again with Bruni (1444) and Biondo (1483) after several hundred years of chronicles.[18] The individual acquires a history by defining himself in time and thus learns to feel himself changing.

Petrarch is the first Christian thinker to separate himself from the past. He introduces a new view of history and produces a new poetry. He is a great lyric poet who determines the nature of European lyric poetry for some three hundred years and who helps to make it a poetry of self-analysis. Cassirer's comment on Petrarch's lyrics that 'The lyrical mood does not see in nature the opposite of psychical reality; rather it feels everywhere in nature the traces and the echo of the soul. For Petrarch, landscape becomes the living mirror of the Ego' is equally true of Wordsworth.[19]

On 30 November 1341, Petrarch writes to Giovanni Colonna of the pleasure he had had walking about Rome with him, and of how, when they were tired of walking, they had often climbed on to the roof of the ruined Baths of Diocletian to rest in its solitude and to continue their talk:

> As we walked over the walls of the shattered city or sat there, the fragments of the ruins were under our very eyes. Our conversation often turned on history which we appeared to have divided up between us in such a fashion that in modern history you, in ancient history I, seemed to be more expert; and ancient were called those events which took place before the name of Christ was celebrated in Rome and adored by the Roman emperors, modern, however, the events from that time to the present.

Petrarch thinks of the time of Greek and Roman culture as a period of glory, and of the time from the adoption of Christianity by the Roman Emperors (337) to himself as a period of darkness, but he feels that a new dawn is near. This is the metaphor that he uses at the close of his long poem, *Africa*: 'This sleep of forgetfulness will not last for ever. When the darkness has been dispersed, our descendants can come again in the former pure radiance.' The notions of the Dark Ages and the Middle Ages are derived from this distinction of Petrarch, as apparently is the designation of the whole ancient past by the collective noun, *antiquity*.[20]

For Petrarch this separation of the present from the past is part of his effort at self-definition. He finds himself in history and hopes to find the knowledge that will rebuild the ruins of Rome. His major historical work, *De viris illustribus*, is a sequence of biographies. He writes history so that others can know themselves. In the same letter to Giovanni Colonna, he complains that the Romans know nothing about Rome: 'Who can doubt that Rome would rise up again if she but began to know herself?'

This sense of living in a new time that is a distinctive feature of Petrarch's work becomes a European mood after Petrarch, a mood intimately connected with the creation of new art and new knowledge. Lorenzo Valla recognises a change without being able to explain it. He states in the preface to his *Elegantiae linguae latinae* (composed between 1435 and 1444):

> I do not know why the arts most closely approaching the liberal arts — painting, sculpture in stone and bronze, and architecture — had been in so long and so deep a decline and almost died out together with literature itself; nor why they have come to be aroused and come to life again in this age; nor why there is now such a rich harvest of good artists and good writers. Happy these, our times, in which if we endeavor a little more. . .all learning will be restored.

Machiavelli sees (1520) 'the perfection' that has been achieved in 'poetry, painting, and writing' as proof that Providence is now given over 'to reviving [*risuscitare*] dead things.'[21] Dürer refers (1523) to the new growing-up (*Wiedererwachsung*) of art that he dates from about 1375 and Rabelais in *Gargantua et Pantagruel* (1542) speaks of 'la restitution des bonnes lettres.'[22] Vasari makes the rebirth of art (*la rinascita*) and the progress of this rebirth (*il progresso della sua rinascita*) the subject of his *Le Vite de' piu eccellenti pittori, scultori e architettori* (1550), and his dates for the start of this new art (which he sees as going from Cimabue and Giotto to Michelangelo) agree with those of Petrarch and Dürer.[23] That Vasari's history is a series of biographies of artists is evidence of a new conception of man as a conscious individual. Pierre Belon combines (1553) the metaphors of awakening and springtime to describe this rebirth:

> From that it has followed that men's minds, which before were as if dormant and lulled in a profound sleep of ancient ignorance, have

> begun to rouse themselves and to leave the shadows where for such a long time they remained buried, and in leaving they have thrown off and put forth all kinds of good disciplines, which at their so happy and desirable *renaissance* are just as new plants after the season of winter which recover their vigour in the heat of the sun and are soothed by the softness of the spring.[24]

The feeling of being reborn is expressed in art as well as in writing. At perhaps no other time in European history are there so many images of mother and baby together — especially of the baby held or nursing at the mother's breast — as there appear to be between Giotto (1267–1337) and Murillo (1617–1682). Each child builds up its notion of reality on its idea of its mother's breast and finds its identity in the mutual recognition of mother and child. The baby looks at the mother and sees its self. Wordsworth sees this exchange of glances as forming the bond that connects the child to the world, and the 'Poetic spirit' (II.237–280). The images of Madonna and Child are symbols of the creation of identity. After Giotto the figures of the Madonna and Child become larger and more realistic, and as part of this realism they show more feeling. They become a subject in their own right, and the child grows up. The child in Leonardo's *The Virgin and St Anne* (1510?) glances over its shoulder at its mother as if about to go its own way. The two children in Raphael's *Madonna of the Goldfinch* (1547) are both standing and seem to be leaning against their mother only for the moment. When the Council of Trent (1563) forbids 'undue nudity' in the representation of sacred figures (from an unconscious feeling that the human body is essentially secular?), the nursing Madonna, 'the most ancient type of Virgin and Child,' disappears.[25]

The far-reaching and thoroughgoing nature of this waking up to the world is shown by the fact that much of Europe changed its religion after 1517. The creation of new consciousness necessitated rebuilding the old structures of belief. *Reformation* means a change of form. A change in religion means a change in our unconscious phantasies about our parents and this, I would hazard, was what was reformed. Certainly the relation between father and son at the centre of Christinity was completely re-interpreted by Luther, and it may perhaps be said that new parents are required for a new birth. The Protestant religions offered to Christians the possibility of conversion, the chance to be born again, the experience that had distinguished Christinity (and Judaism) from the other religions of the Roman Empire. Even those who remained with the old religion were changed, because they