

William Wordsworth's Strategic Use of "Taste" in *A Guide to the Lakes*

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ウィリアム・ワーズワス『湖水地方案内』における“Taste”の戦略的機能

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要旨

『湖水地方案内 (*A Guide to the Lakes*)』は、William Wordsworthがイングランド湖水地方を訪れる観光客や新たな居住者を読者として想定し、1810年から1835年にかけて創作した案内書である。「旅行者への指示と情報」というセクションで、彼はこの本が「よい趣味を持つ人 (“the *Minds* of Persons of taste”）」に読まれることを期待していると述べ、他のセクションにおいてもこの“taste”という言葉を繰り返し用いている。字義通りに解釈するならば、この言葉は美学的素養を指すものと推測される。

近年の『湖水地方案内』に関する研究では、Wordsworthが景観を描写する際に同時代に広く流行したピクチャレスクの観点を取り入れていることが指摘され、“taste”はこの美学的観点と関連づけられてきた。その一方で、地理学・環境保護の観点からの研究はこの“taste”という美学的な用語をより広義の文脈において解釈しようと試みてきた。しかしながら、この言葉が作品全体で担っている戦略的な機能についてはまだ十分な研究がなされていない。

本論文では、『湖水地方案内』における“taste”という言葉をもとに、美学、地理学、環境保護の観点から考察し、湖水地方固有の景観が徐々に失われつつあった時代に、彼がいかに戦略的に読者の関心を惹きつけ、彼らの美的素養を高めると同時に、地史や生態系に関する知識を授け景観を保全しようと働きかけていたかについて検討する。

キーワード：ウィリアム・ワーズワス、『湖水地方案内』、趣味、ピクチャレスク、地理学・環境

Introduction

William Wordsworth's *A Guide to the Lakes* is a series of prose writing about the Lake District, which was published five times with revision and enlargement between 1810 and 1835.¹ At the beginning of the section titled “Directions and Information for the Tourist” in the 1822 edition, he addresses “the *Minds* of Persons of taste” (*Prose Works*, hereafter *PrW*, II 155), and, through the whole section, uses the word “taste” referring to people's appreciation of landscapes of the Lake District. *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines the primary meaning of “taste” as “the sense of what is appropriate, harmonious, or beautiful; especially discernment and appreciation of the beautiful in nature or art” (8a). So, if proper regard is paid to its aesthetic implications, the man of “taste” addressed in *A Guide* can be considered primarily as a connoisseur of works of art. John R. Nabholz, J. R. Watson and James A. W. Heffernan interpret the meaning of “taste” in relation to the picturesque, the aesthetic standard prevailing in the late eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century. They compare his description of landscapes

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with passages from antecedent picturesque writers such as William Gilpin and Uvedale Price and suggest that his reference to "taste" with its aesthetic implications is inseparable from the picturesque tradition.

However, recent geological and environmental studies have placed the word in different contexts, for *A Guide* consists not only of his aesthetic perspective but also his contemporary geological knowledge and awareness of environmental problems taking place when the text was written. Alan Bewell, Theresa Kelley, John Wyatt and Ian Whyte pay close attention to Wordsworth's detailed account of the district's formative process of mountains, lakes, rivers and valleys as well as its natural flora, and discuss that he attempts not only to make readers nurture their aesthetic viewpoints but also to provide contemporary geological knowledge with the purpose of offering a topographical guidebook. Jonathan Bate, Tony Pinkney, Andrew Hazucha and Claus Schatz-Jakobsen put special emphasis on Wordsworth's conservative views on the environment expressed in the third section "Changes, and Rules of Taste for Preventing Their Bad Effects" and regard "taste" as a responsible attitude toward the delicate ecosystem.

Although the preceding studies have given the word "taste" several interpretations, the overall strategic function of the word in this text has not been fully considered. This paper examines *A Guide* focusing on his reference to "taste" with its shifts of emphasis and connotations through the series of editions. By doing so, I aim at illustrating how he appeals to readers' interest in the cult of a picturesque tour and encourages them to gain not only the aesthetic viewpoints that they wish to learn but also geological and environmental knowledge, which potentially would help prevent them from destroying the unique scenery in the Lake District.

I. The Picturesque Viewpoint

"The picturesque" is an aesthetic term widely applied to painting, poetry, prose works and landscape gardening from the eighteenth century to the beginning of the nineteenth century in Britain. The origin of the aesthetic concept is related to the Grand Tour, a cultural trip to Europe from the seventeenth century to the late eighteenth century, taken by young men of the upper classes, as a part of their education. The English on the Grand Tour appreciated and purchased a large number of Italian paintings. The works of Claude Lorrain, Salvator Rosa and Nicolas and Gaspard Poussin particularly moved the English because the mild Italian sunlight and tranquil rural scenery represented in the painterly works of Lorrain and Poussin or the sublime qualities of mountains depicted by Rosa, for example, were considerably different from English scenery (Watson 12). Among the English travelers, collecting such Italian paintings was fashionable and, according to Joseph Rosenblum, approximately eighty works of Lorrain, a hundred of Rosa and three hundred of Gaspard Poussin were imported into England between 1711 and 1759 by those Englishmen (456). Sir George Beaumont, a British art patron and friend of Coleridge and Wordsworth, was one of the avid collectors of such Italian art and himself engaged in landscape painting of England as an amateur painter. Wordsworth got acquainted with him in Keswick through an introduction by Coleridge in 1803 (Moorman 586). Besides Beaumont, painters and writers in England deeply impressed by the landscapes depicted in these Italian works started describing their own country's landscapes in their private diaries and letters (Buzard 20). Although in the mid-eighteenth century their writings were circulated only among a limited number of people, in the following decades an increasing number of books about rural landscapes in England were published, and the aesthetic perspective of the picturesque was popularized (Rosenblum 456).

It was, then, during the cult of the picturesque that Wordsworth undertook *A Guide to the Lakes*, and

the cult itself is reflected in the text. In “Directions and Information for the Tourist,” he gives a detailed account of his favorite routes in some particular places in the Lake District. First of all, he focuses on the lower part of Windermere (*PrW II* 157). After introducing Langdale and Loughrigg Fell at the head of the lake, he depicts Troutbeck, a valley at the eastern shore, which is “distinguished by the mountains at its head—by picturesque remains of cottage architecture; and, towards the lower part, by bold foregrounds formed by the steep and winding banks of the river” (162). Firstly he sketches traditional “picturesque” cottages with a background of mountains, and then proceeds to rough cliffs and intricate channels in the foreground. Emphasizing artistic effects with technical terms such as “picturesque” and “foregrounds,” he stresses the appeal of the basin of Windermere. Wordsworth concludes this section with a landscape of Ullswater, which he regards as “the happiest combination of beauty and grandeur, which any of the Lakes affords” (165). Describing his favorite route from Penrith to Helvellyn, he focuses on Gowbarrow Park on the way, which has the “powerful Brook” (166), and gives an artistic depiction of the scenery from the picturesque viewpoint. Firstly, he arranges “a rich and happy intermixture of native wood” on both sides of the brook, adding indigenous plants and deer to the harmonious landscape, and then draws a winding of the lake surrounded by steep mountains in the “foreground” of the scenery. Finally he recommends that “the Artist or leisurely Traveller” wander around the river running through a small recess and see cottages that “are romantic and picturesque” (167). In this way, “Directions and Information for the Tourist” introduces useful touristic information with technical terms of the picturesque.

The section “Description of the Scenery of the Lakes” re-titled in the 1822 edition is also characterized by the picturesque viewpoint, though in this section his attention is directed toward how an impressive sight has been formed and in what manner local inhabitants have lived in the district. At the beginning, Wordsworth incorporates some picturesque viewpoints into his overview of the scenery of the district. Firstly, he invites readers’ attention to “a cloud hanging midway” between Great Gavel and Scawfell “at not more than half a mile’s distance from the summit of each, and not many yards above their highest elevation” (*PrW II* 171). This setting corresponds to one of the exemplary depictions of the picturesque: “viewing a given scene from an optimum position or ‘station’” (Trott 74-75). He further asks readers to move from the given point to the valleys converging on it in their imagination, comparing their linear movement to “spokes from the nave of a wheel” (*PrW II* 171). Each end of those “spokes,” that is, the horizon, is called “the rim” of the imaginative wheel, though only the valley of Coniston does not stretch to “the nave of a wheel,” and accordingly, he regards the whole landscape as a wheel with a “broken spoke sticking in the rim” (172). The valleys themselves within the range of the wheel are also described in accordance with several techniques of the picturesque which Watson identifies: irregularity, roughness, variety and intricacy (19-20). Numerous rivers west of the fixed point are “winding among plains, rocks and mountains,” flowing into the sands of Duddon. In the valley of Wasdale due west of the same point, a chapel and several cottages are “scattered” on pasture and cornfields divided by stone walls. Wordsworth likens such scenes from the fixed point to “a large piece of lawless patch-work, or an array of mathematical figures, such as in the ancient schools of geometry might have been sportively and fantastically traced out upon sand” (*PrW II* 172), which shows that he recognizes the landscapes of the valley of Wasdale as irregular and intricate patterns. In addition, as to the streams of Ennerdale and Buttermere, he pays attention to the ruins of castles, which are often regarded as symbols of picturesque landscapes (Andrews 46). Thus, his depiction of complex meandering rivers, various dwellings irregularly scattered on fields and ruined castles leads to what critics call picturesque effects.

As to the cottages seen in the Lake District, Wordsworth further describes them in detail, referring to

their colors and materials. The dwellings of inhabitants are made of indigenous rocks and harmonize with the surrounding landscapes. The main buildings with fireplaces are sometimes rough-coated and whitewashed so that they are waterproof and adjusted to humidity. Exposed to wind and rain for a couple of years after settlers plaster their walls, the original white color is faded and they exhibit a mottled pattern. Even when a successor enlarges or renovates the cottages, incongruous "additions and accommodations" are not done because they use only native rocks and trees as building materials. Furthermore, Wordsworth regards the cottages, man-made objects in reality, as "a production of nature" as follows:

[T]hese humble dwellings remind the contemplative spectator of a production of nature, and may (using a strong expression) rather be said to have grown than to have been erected;—to have risen, by an instinct of their own, out of the native rock—so little is there in them of formality, such is their wildness and beauty. (*PrW II* 202)

He specifically addresses "the contemplative spectator," presumably those who have deep aesthetic insight, and invites them to appreciate the appeal of the cottages made of indigenous rocks. The spontaneous growth of the cottages he depicts insinuates its typically picturesque qualities in terms of its "irregularity, roughness, variety and intricacy" as opposed to the regularity, smoothness, unity, and geometrical simplicity of the man-made artifact. In addition, "the numerous recesses and projections in the walls" and "the different stages of their roofs" produce "bold and harmonious effects of contrasted sunshine and shadow" (202). A light and shadow effect upon landscapes is also a distinctive feature of the picturesque viewpoint (Rosenblum 455). Picturesque beauty is thus emphasized, and Wordsworth seems to have been quite conscious of it because his letter to Lady Beaumont on the tenth of May in 1810 clearly shows that the passages of the imaginative wheel and the cottages in "Description of the Scenery of the Lakes" were among his own favorites (*Letters* 404).

From the second edition in 1820 to the fourth edition in 1823, Wordsworth enlarges "Section I," re-titled "Miscellaneous Observations" in 1822, where he provides information about the best season and route on a tour to the Lake District. Inserted at the beginning of this section is his objection to a hasty comparison between a landscape of the district and that of the Alps. First of all, he defines an ideal attitude of tourists visiting the Lake District, making a reference to "taste" as follows: "fastidiousness is a wretched travelling companion" and "in matters of taste," "the best guide" for tourists "is a disposition to be pleased" (*PrW II* 230). With this passage as an introduction, he proceeds to distinguish the district from the Alps by pointing out their different aesthetic features. While the Alps overwhelm the spectator with "the fury of the gigantic torrents" (230) and "the unrivalled brilliancy of water," Cumberland and Westmoreland scarcely agitate a traveler because their small-scale mountains without "perpetual snow" lack "voice of summer avalanches" (231). Against a tourist who "looks out for sublimity in every object that admits of it; and is almost always disappointed," Wordsworth turns the deficiency in the power of nature into special appeal of the Lake District. As to waterfalls in the district, he describes a beautiful view comprised of the dynamic movement of water and the contrastingly static surface of the basin and regards the reflection of their surrounding objects, as "a perfect picture" (232). Stephen J. Spector connects the mirror effects produced on the surface of lakes with the eighteenth-century picturesque tradition. For a picturesque traveler, the unruffled surface of the lakes in the Lake District was a useful device to gain a unified picture of its surrounding landscape consisting of scattered rocks, trees and other natural objects with the lakeshore functioning as a picture frame (Spector 89). In 1822, he added to "Miscellaneous Observations" passages about the mirror effects seen in Ullswater and

Grasmere with special emphasis on picturesque beauty. Wordsworth begins with comparing the lakes in the district, Italy and Switzerland in colors and movement of their surfaces. Compared to the Lake Como and the Lake of Uri extending over Italy and Switzerland, whose surfaces are “disturbed” by the wind and colors are “heavy green,” the English lakes are “less subject to agitation from the winds” and “of a crystalline clearness” (*PrW II* 236). The undisturbed and transparent water of the English lakes reflects its surrounding objects and makes a variety of aesthetic effects on its surface such as “the fine dazzling trembling network, breezy motions, and streaks and circles of intermingled smooth and rippled water” (236-237). His focus on the varied surface of the lakes exhibiting irregular shapes of sunlight and waves accords with picturesque qualities. In the 1823 edition, Wordsworth compares the scenery of the Promontory of Bellagio in the South Europe with that of the district, stating that the former is overgrown with olive trees and vines and “makes but a dull formal appearance in landscape” without an intricate blend of various kinds of plants and that, contrary to “these formal treasure of cultivation” in the North of Italy, the Lake District shows “the natural variety” of indigenous plants consisting of “pastured lawns, coverts of hawthorn, of wild-rose, and honeysuckle, and the majesty of forest trees” (235). These major enlargements in the 1820s suggest that Wordsworth more and more consciously makes use of the picturesque viewpoint in order to emphasize the aesthetic value of the district, distinguishing its variegated, irregular and intricate landscape from bleak and bold landscapes of the Alps and Italy.

Based on the preceding studies maintaining that Wordsworth incorporates the picturesque perspective into his depiction of landscapes in the district in *A Guide*, this section investigated how he makes full use of the viewpoints such as fixed views from an “optimum position or station,” a light and shadow effect and, “irregularity, roughness, variety and intricacy.” In spite of his expressed dislike of “fastidiousness,” his intriguingly detailed and technical descriptions captivate readers, who rank themselves among the men of “taste,” and inspire them to embrace the aesthetic viewpoint he provides. In a word, they are not only educated by him but also, with his special emphasis on the word “taste,” invited to share with him the aesthetic perspective of the picturesque to properly appreciate the beauty of the Lake District.

II. The Geological and Environmental Viewpoints

So far, I have examined how Wordsworth introduces ideas of the picturesque in *A Guide* inviting his readers to share, or educating them about, the aesthetic viewpoint. This section investigates, then, how he, from the 1820 edition onwards, incorporates geological and environmental viewpoints into *A Guide* and tries to inspire his readers to get their systematic understanding of the formative process of the district as well as the aesthetic experience.

Generally, compared to the substantial first edition, *Select Views in Cumberland, Westmoreland and Lancashire*, to which Wordsworth reluctantly contributed at the request of Joseph Wilkinson, later editions reissued under the name of Wordsworth contain a lot of experimental descriptions of geological and environmental features of the Lake District. In the second edition published in 1820, apart from the removal of references to Wilkinson’s engravings and “Section II,” Wordsworth adds to “Introduction” description of the “primary” and “secondary” agents of nature and his concern about an ongoing decrease in the number of native woods and plantation of foreign species. The passage appears after his comparison between the lakes of the district and those of North Wales, Switzerland and Scotland, which was written in the previous edition. In order to emphasize the unique qualities of landscapes in the Lake District, he describes the essence of the beauty born out of the formative process. Firstly, he

refers to the primary operations of nature molding "the primitive frame of the lower grounds" among mountains. Roughly produced, the "mould" is not the source of beauty. However, the "secondary agents of nature" fill the rugged ground with water, into which rivers of different scales flow through mountains. Invoking deep valleys, Wordsworth analyzes the primary and secondary operations of nature on the surface of the land in detail. The parallel opposite slopes formed by the initial force of nature remind him of "the billows of a troubled sea" because their steep ascent and descent arouse awful and sublime feelings in him. He classifies the primary and secondary agents of nature as twofold powers to produce sublimity and beauty, paying special attention to the distinctive aesthetic effect of the latter on the Lake District: uniting "a multiplicity of symmetrical parts in a consistent whole." Focusing on "masses of rock" falling down to the lakes from the cliffs, Wordsworth likens landscapes with the rocks to "stranded ships," "jutting piers" and "peninsulas" (*PrW II* 181). Even small rills sometimes carry sediments into lakes in case of floods and change the appearance of the lakeshore, whereas brooks with a large quantity of water wash out fertile soil and create "ample promontories of sweeping outline" (181-182). He finishes with three minute aesthetic effects on the lakeside caused by the secondary agents: "fine blue gravel" washed up along the shoreline, "reeds and bulrushes" thriving well over years and comprising "groves" on the coastline and finally "plots of water-lilies" whose white petals sway in the breeze (182). This paragraph added in the 1820 edition illustrates his geo-historical interest in the Lake District. In other words, he explains to readers the process of how the original shape in the district was formed by "the primary agents" of nature and has been beautified with "the secondary agents." Wyatt notes that contemporary geologists were also conscious of the twofold operation and disputed the borderline between them, and, compared with the discussion among geologists, Wordsworth's analysis of these two operations of nature is seen to be based on geological theories widely accepted among researchers in the late eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century in England (46).

Besides adding a geological exposition of the scenery of the Lake District, Wordsworth enlarges the original passage of the 1810 edition with ongoing environmental issues taking place in the islands of Derwentwater and Winandermere in the subsequent edition. The former edition gives a brief account of unwelcome changes in the landscapes as follows: "This beautiful country has, in a great variety of instances, suffered from the spirit of tasteless and capricious innovation" (1810 208n), while the 1820 edition adds more detailed information about how "tasteless" people have destroyed the landscapes, focusing on newcomers' preference for planting imported trees. One of the examples is the native wood, which constituted the "venerable" scenes over years around the small building named "St. Herbert's Hermitage," and that was chopped down by its new proprietor. Instead of oaks, the owner planted "Scotch firs" on "the whole island," which are not shaken by strong winds as if they symbolized the newcomers' uncompromising attitude toward original landscapes. Wordsworth refers to a worse instance caused by "an alien improver" in the "Hind's Cottage" on "Vicar's island." The landscape improver removed the Hind's Cottage, its surrounding sycamores and livestock from the scene and built "a tall square habitation" on the highest point at the center of the island (208-209). After clearing the native plants and buildings insensitively, the improver arranged an imitation of "the druidical circle," "the church of the present establishment," "the stately pier, emblem of commerce and navigation" and "the fort to deal out thunder upon the approaching invader" in order to enhance the authority of the sole residence built in the ancient Roman style (209). While Wordsworth criticizes the improver because of his "tasteless" attitude toward the surrounding landscapes of the district, he recognizes the next owner of the Hind's Cottage, who eliminated these additional objects from the island, as a person with "taste." Also, he shows a repulsive attitude toward similar changes in other

places of the district, blaming the “taste” of others who pare the shoreline away and build artificial embankments around the island at Winandermere. His intentional use of “taste” and “tasteless” in these passages suggests that in order for people to have a proper taste, it is essential to learn two points of view: awareness of environmental destruction such as cutting down a large amounts of native trees and concern about indifference to local geo-history that leads to, for example, the construction of exotic buildings made of imported Scotch firs.

From 1822 to 1823, Wordsworth enlarges passages about the climate, seasonal beauty, night scenes and wild swans of the Lake District in the first section of “Description of the Scenery of the Lakes,” giving specific examples of the secondary operations of nature, which add aesthetic effects to the rugged surface of a landscape. In the 1822 edition, he describes how rain, mist, and cloud transform the original rough landscape formed by the primitive agents of nature into a “visionary” (190) and “mysterious” (191) landscape. Firstly, he focuses on unsettled weather with a sudden shower in the district and regards the unfavorable condition for inhabitants as the source of a unique aesthetic quality. When the rain falls and stops over hills in a short period of time, it changes the appearance of the sky from dark to bright and fascinates people with its temporal aesthetic effects (190). Secondly, he pays special attention to mists rising from the lakes and pasture after sunrise and hanging over mountains and valleys, noting that they “give a visionary character” to the whole landscape. Associating the mists veiling the surrounding landscape with “guardian deities of mountains” and “the spirits of their departed ancestors,” Wordsworth appreciates their aesthetic effects on a landscape produced as those by the secondary operations of nature. Lastly, Wordsworth depicts the harmonious mountain scenery of Cumbria with “fleecy clouds” floating in the sky and compares the English landscape with “an unanimated and even a sad spectacle” of Egypt and Italy. While clouds are scarcely seen in the sky in Egypt and Italy because of the dry weather, in the district people enjoy observing a variety of clouds “cleaving to their stations, or lifting up suddenly their glittering heads from behind rocky barriers, or hurrying out of sight with speed of the sharpest edge.” Thus, he emphasizes the aesthetic appeals of the changeable climate such as rain, mist and cloud making the Cumbrian mountains “glorious” (191).

In addition to the climate, Wordsworth elaborates on seasonal beauty and night scenes in the district as specific examples of aesthetic merits caused by the secondary agents of nature in the 1823 edition. Instead of paying attention to spring, when “soft air is breathing over the blossoms and new-born verdure,” which has captivated “the lover of nature,” Wordsworth describes the autumnal scenery with more delicate balance of the heat and the cold as well as light and shadow. The softened atmosphere in autumn renders the sky “more crystalline” and “the coloring” of the surrounding physical landscapes “richer and more finely harmonized.” Along with these aesthetic qualities, he takes particular interest in the stillness of this season, which stimulates not only his auditory sense but also his visual sense. Taking the district’s lakes as examples exhibiting the perfect beauty of autumn, he refers to the mirror image reflected on the lakes as follows: “the clouds gliding in the depths of the lake, or the traveler passing along, an inverted image, whose motion seems governed by the quiet of a time” and “the larger birds, a raven or a heron” “crossing silently among the reflected clouds” (192). The surface of the lakes is adorned by these soundless and momentarily passing natural objects and inhabitants, the secondary agents of nature which enhance the aesthetic quality of the original unembellished scenery. As to night scenes, quoting from the fragment of Dr. Brown, the earliest writer of the scenery of the Lake District, Wordsworth explains that the moon and stars casting light on the unruffled surface of lakes, “the shadowy cliffs, [t]he solemn woods, and spiry mountain tops” soften their roughness and transform the whole landscape into a reposeful place (192-193). Among the various kinds of the secondary agents of nature, Wordsworth draws special attention to “birds that enliven the waters” and

inserts his verse about their restless movement above lakes. At first, a flock of birds forms "[a] circuit ampler than the lake beneath" "in mid air," gradually shapes "[h]undreds of curves and circlets, to and fro, / Upward and downward" and suddenly vanishes away. After their brief absence from his sight, the birds approach nearer to him, flapping their wings. Their shapes are "[p]ainted more soft and fair" "upon the glimmering plain" because they tempt "the sun to sport amid their plumes" and "the water or gleaming ice" "to shew them a fair image." The constantly changing images of flying birds animate the surface of water and enhance its beauty (183).

While in the 1822 and 1823 editions he deals with the operation of the secondary agents of nature on the landscapes, in the 1835 edition he inserts a poetical description of a pass, which is obviously inspired by a contemporary geological theory. "Ode: The Pass of Kirkstone," which is added to the end of *A Guide*, compares a rugged landscape of the pass without any "appanage of human kind" with beautiful and fertile valleys appropriate for human beings to live in, celebrating the aesthetic value of the cultivated lower plain (251). The first stanza presumably echoes the "Catastrophic" or "Diluvial" theory, which regards the world as a "wrecked vestige of a former Eden" (Wyatt 105) and which speculates that the original framework of the earth was formed in 4004 BC (36), for in this stanza Wordsworth depicts the desolate scene of the pass with remains of ancient crustal activities such as an "earthquake" and "the Flood" and assumes that the original surface of the land was created "four thousand years" ago (*PrW II* 251). In this way, in the 1835 edition, besides the primary and the secondary operations of nature, he utilizes this geological theory for illustrating the primitive landscape of the district.

A comparison among the five editions of *A Guide* reveals Wordsworth's growing intention to educate readers about the geological history of the district and environmental issues caused by new proprietors. From his usage of the word "taste" for people with respect for indigenous species and local customs, it is found that he not only uses the word in the original aesthetic meaning discussed in the first section, but also incorporates into it connotations of contemporary geological knowledge and understanding of the local history of the district. With these in mind, the next section will examine how he modifies the meaning of "taste" over the period and invokes the word "taste" strategically when he wants to draw readers' attention to ongoing undesirable changes in the scenery of the district.

III. The Modified Meaning of "Taste"

In eighteenth-century England, a person with "taste" for landscapes gradually changed its meaning from a collector of seventeenth-century Italian paintings to a contemplator of actual landscapes. According to John Barrell, by the mid-eighteenth century the burgeoning interest in Italian painters such as the Poussins, Salvator Rosa and Claude Lorrain, grew so high that the limited number of authentic pictures imported into England was not enough to satisfy the demand of the English. Therefore, imitations of Italian painterly works were widely circulated at high prices among "the cultivated but less well-off portion of the aristocracy and gentry" in England (4). While there was a fashionable trend toward the Italian way of painting in the mid-eighteenth century, "taste" for its aesthetic quality in late eighteenth-century England no longer meant just passive appreciation of Italian fine arts but active interaction between the mind and landscape (4-5). The ability to exercise their association and imagination through physical experience in nature became "an important pursuit for the cultivated" (5) and, in *A Guide*, Wordsworth was also involved in the latter sophisticated movement. Besides the change in the meaning of "taste," it is worth noting that the British Museum was opened not only to the privileged but to the public at the same period. James M. Garrett traces a

significant rise in the number of museum visitors between 1783 and 1831, approximately from 10,000 to 100,000. Noting that the number doubled during the Battle of Waterloo and increased tenfold “in the year before the Reform Bill,” Garrett examines how rapidly new visitors to the museum, in specific terms, “franchised citizens, or those who thought of themselves as franchised” became “the museum public” (153). Needless to say, museums are places for people to gain aesthetic experiences. While museums let visitors enjoy exhibits as they like, the artifacts are carefully chosen and deliberately arranged with the intention of educating the public about a more sophisticated aesthetic perspective. Educated men with much aesthetic experience could follow the implicit intention of museums, enjoy reading symbolic meanings into each painting, and refine and enrich their “taste,” though most new attendees with little aesthetic knowledge saw the paintings just for their pleasure and failed to enhance their “taste” (162). Considering that aesthetic education was a requisite for the public in order to be accepted into “full citizenship” (163), his frequent address to readers with the word “taste” in *A Guide* over twenty-five years seems inevitably related with some intention to educate people in a more sophisticated, mental attitude toward landscapes or landscape painting.

Prior to the influx of new visitors to the museum, the English countryside saw rapid economic growth between 1790 and 1815. According to Ann Bermingham, in order to prepare for the Battle of Waterloo, there was domestic demand for wheat and other agricultural products, and large plots of the countryside were allocated for the cultivation (73). She explains that a huge profit on agricultural commodities during the war led to a substantial rise in rents and taxes, and, as the land prices soared, “the newly rich industrial class” became keen on possessing the land of rural areas including the Lake District. When the wartime agricultural boom ended, the prices of products fell suddenly and numerous landowners and farmers became bankrupt and lost their jobs. Along with the sharp decrease in the population of native agricultural workers after the war, the temporary economic success changed the relationship between employers and employees “from a paternalistic, quasi-feudal system of reciprocal rights and duties to an industrial employer-employee relationship, bonded only by a cash nexus” (74). Such economic and social changes in the English countryside during the war accord with Wordsworth’s account of the current serious situation in the Lake District represented in the last paragraph of the third section “Changes, and Rules of Taste for Preventing Their Bad Effects.” In the paragraph, he parallels the surge of strangers who wish to possess their residences with a decrease in the number of local peasants, concerned with the undesirable changes in the North of England. Traditionally, the native inhabitants called “estatesmen,” who possessed the small-scale land (Oda 180), earned their living by crops, wool and handmade products made by women and children (*PrW II* 223). Although such domestic industry supported their peaceful lives, “the invention and universal application of machinery” took the place of their daily work and forced them into poverty. Some of them engaged in the manufacturing industry and gained a little profit. However, this was “far from making them amends” and domestic industry was “nearly done away” (224). As a result, native proprietors and tenants could not afford to manage farming, their buildings being taken down and the lands bought up by “wealthy purchasers.” As rural industrialization went on, Wordsworth anticipates that it was inevitable for new proprietors to tear down ancient cottages with little enclosures and “unite and consolidate” the plots without considering the traditional customs of the region. Finally, he addresses readers as follows:

It is then much to be wished, that a better taste should prevail among these new proprietors; and, as they cannot be expected to leave things to themselves, that skill and knowledge should prevent unnecessary deviations from that path of simplicity and beauty along which, without design and

unconsciously, their humble predecessors have moved. (224-225)

Hoping that the undesirable manners of new settlers will be corrected, Wordsworth asks them to refine their "taste." Besides, he appeals to readers to make use of their "skill and knowledge" to "prevent unnecessary deviations from that path of simplicity and *beauty* [italics mine]." He does not refer to what kind of skill and knowledge they are, but they can be inferred from his laborious description of the attractions of the Lake District from both picturesque and geological/environmental viewpoints.

As for the picturesque, recent studies have discussed in what manner he incorporates the aesthetic standard widely adopted in his time into *A Guide*. Nabholtz compares *A Guide* with earlier essays of Gilpin and Price, notable theorists of the picturesque, indicating that Wordsworth's depiction is deeply rooted in their works. Although Gilpin only enumerates features of the picturesque and does not consider how the features are produced in landscapes, Wordsworth supplies Gilpin's insufficient explanation with his own analysis of the working of nature, which, in turn, is presumably based on the works of Price and Thomas Whitaker, another influential writer on the picturesque in the early nineteenth century. Watson agrees with Nabholtz's argument that Wordsworth is a successor to the preceding picturesque theory and discusses what an ideal picturesque traveler is, that is, "not the judge of a landscape competition, but the fortunate recipient of a power which is capable of educating him in goodness, beauty and love" (107). Heffernan and Trott focus on Wordsworth's complaint about thoughtless tourists sticking to the rules of picturesque paintings (Heffernan 19, Trott 76-77). While Heffernan and Trott suggest that he disliked fixed patterns of the picturesque viewpoint, it is true that he deliberately utilizes the patterns in order to appeal to readers and make them acknowledge the distinctive features of the district. Moreover, incorporating the picturesque viewpoint into *A Guide* brings him three vantage points. Firstly, he can acquire a wider readership, including those who want to participate in a picturesque tour. Actually, the 1835 edition of *A Guide* went through five editions and set a new record in his book sales. Secondly, a picturesque manner of writing enables him to illustrate the most attractive features of the Lake District. As he notes that the district surpasses other regions in displaying "a perfect picture" (*PrW II* 232) consisting of harmonious component parts, the picturesque is the most appropriate viewpoint to emphasize the unique beauty of the district. Thirdly, when readers become aware of the invaluable local scenery, they will not dare to spoil the landscapes with their self-centered desire. In a word, Wordsworth draws the attention of new tourists and settlers who want to be sophisticated members of society with frequent use of the aesthetic term "taste" and, by doing so, successfully initiates them into the aesthetic sophistication and, at the same time, make them share his geo-historical and environmental points of view.

Apart from the question of the word "taste," his geo-historical and environmental points of view in *A Guide* is a point already established among his critics. Bate argues that the main purpose of *A Guide* is to educate new settlers and tourists "to care for the delicate ecosystem," suggesting that human beings are part of nature and in mutual interaction with the environment (47). Pinkney and Hazucha point out that *A Guide* describes the consequences of exotic architecture and plantation of imported trees on the surroundings by the hands of newcomers to the district (Pinkney 417, Hazucha 64-65). In order to cope with ongoing environmental issues caused by new proprietors and rural developers, Wordsworth gives a historical account of the land formation in the Lake District, which is based on contemporary geology. For example, there was a remarkable development made around the turn of the century. Against "Diluvianism," which insisted that the surface of the earth was originally "designed" by God, some geologists such as James Hutton and John Playfair suggested "Actualism," which explained that changes of the face of the earth were caused by weathering and accumulation in the course of time

(Wyatt 105). As Kelley and Wyatt note, his explanation of the primary and secondary agents of nature is indebted to “Actualism.” However, he does not apply the notion exactly to his description of the formative process of landscapes in the district but modifies the meaning of the secondary agents of nature to include those which attach aesthetic effects to the primitive rugged framework. The enlarged passages of *A Guide* from 1810 to 1835 suggest that not only weathering and accumulation but also the changeable climate of the district and human beings are actively involved in the evolution of the landscape, and they as a whole function as the secondary agents of nature.

This idea is supposedly descended from the Enlightenment theories of the reciprocal relationship between human beings and nature. Invoking the influential statement of Montesquieu that climate and soil shape the spirit of human beings and nation, Alan Bewell indicates that in eighteenth-century England there was an influential discussion that industrious cultivation enriches the environment and the society (242). Supported by contemporary geological studies, Wordsworth analyzes the original appearance of the Lake District and the process of how the animals, plants and human beings became inhabitants of nature, especially in the second section “Aspect of the Country, As Affected By Its Inhabitants.” As Bewell notes, the ancestors were the “secondary agents of nature” and played the most important role in adding beauty to a landscape, following its natural order (274). Such reciprocal relationship between human beings and nature was, however, threatened with destruction because new settlers were so eager to change the age-old landscape into a fashionable “Ornamental Gardening” (*PrW II* 207) or exotic architecture (211) for their temporary pleasure that they forgot about living in the economy of nature. His significant address to “the man of genuine taste” with the ability to appreciate bridges, which he calls “monuments of the skill of our ancestors” (204), symbolically shows his ideological stance concerning the ongoing environmental issues, incidentally illustrating what kind of “skill and knowledge should prevent unnecessary deviations from the path of simplicity and beauty,” and, here again, utilizing the double meaning of the word “taste.”

Conclusion

This paper examined Wordsworth’s strategic use of the word “taste” in the five editions of *A Guide to the Lakes* from the picturesque, geological and environmental viewpoints. The first section illustrated how he incorporates typical picturesque techniques into his depiction of landscapes in the district, emphasizing its unique aesthetic qualities such as “irregularity, roughness, variety and intricacy.” With his consistent reference to “taste,” he appeals to people who believe themselves to have a potential aesthetic insight, not only educating them about the picturesque viewpoint but also having them internalize and make full use of the perspective so that they could appreciate the beauty of the landscapes of the district. Then, as Wordsworth’s interpretation of “taste” can be placed also in geological and environmental contexts, the second section dealt with his exposition of the formative process of the district based on contemporary geological theories such as “Actualism” and “Diluvianism,” and his concern about ongoing environmental issues caused by new proprietors. As a result, I found it clear that he characterizes those who are conscious of environmental conservation and local geo-history also as men of “taste.” The third section examined the growing demand for aesthetic education accompanied by the development in aesthetic theories of the period including the picturesque and, then, the socio-economic changes after the war which led to an increase of visitors and new settlers in the district. Conscious of such situations, with the word “taste” as a common key term, and subtly taking advantage of the double meaning of the word, Wordsworth incorporates the picturesque, geo-historical and environmental viewpoints into *A Guide* and, by doing so, tries to win people inclined for

aesthetic sophistication over to the side of environmental conservation. His continuous enlargement of the text from the aesthetic, geo-historical and environmental viewpoints means that such educational and strategic intention became gradually strong from the first edition in 1810 to the fifth edition in 1835 and, at the same time, it shows how rapidly aesthetic experiences and landholding in the district were popularized among the public during the period.

Notes

- 1 After the fifth edition, *A Guide* was published also in 1842 and 1859 with radical alteration by John Hudson. In this paper, I refer up to the 1835 edition.

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