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**Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona**

**TREBALL DE FI DE GRAU**

**The Unfolding of the Process of Creation in William  
Wordsworth's Meditative Poems**

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## Introduction

According to William Wordsworth in his Preface to the 1802 edition of *Lyrical Ballads*, there are four stages of development in his poetry, which are observation, recollection, contemplation and imaginative excitement of past emotions. Louis Martz would state later on in the conclusion of *The Poetry of Meditation* that ‘The term “meditation” designates a process of the mind, rather than a particular subject-matter’ (1969:324). These statements would imply that Wordsworth’s meditative poems which deal with higher states of consciousness present a definable common pattern that can be recognized repeatedly in his poems.

Studies which have focused on poetic patterns and structure of texts derive from theories of literary criticism and from linguistic studies. Formalist and structuralist studies have dealt with text structures and their inherent features such as linguistic features and literary devices without taking the performer of such text as part of its focus – the term ‘structuralist poetics’ was coined by Jonathan Culler in the first book in English language dedicated to structuralist approaches to literature in 1970. In American literary criticism, the formalist movement had its own expression through New Criticism, which primarily engaged in close reading of texts – a central figure of which was Cleanth Brooks, who provided an analysis of the structure of Wordsworth’s *Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood* in *The Well-Wrought Urn: Studies in the Structure of Poetry* (2002), which has been central for the analysis of such poem. Other fields that have attempted to establish patterns in poetry are such as the Myth Critics; Maud Bodkin was a great influence for this group, who applied Jung’s theory of the collective unconscious to establish patterns of selected poems in her study of *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry* (1978).

Furthermore, a recent field of study which has been developing for several years is cognitive literary criticism, which focuses on the process that takes place in text production by linking literary studies with the sciences of the mind, on issues concerning text production and reception in order to establish an interpretation of texts. Of the many subgenres of this field, cognitive poetics and cognitive rhetoric engage in studies of texts and of their patterns. Cognitive poetics has still many variants but can be seen as a continuation of Russian formalism ideas. This subgenre has been approached by Peter Stockwell in *Cognitive Poetics: An Introduction* (1978), which links cognitive literary analysis with cognitive linguistics and a more general approach of cognitive poetics can be found in the works of Reuven Tsur in *Toward a Theory of Cognitive Poetics* (1992; 2008), who has been developing studies in this field from the early 1970's. As well as these two studies, Mark Bruhn's study focusing on place deixis – a common concern in cognitive poetics – has also been considered for the present study. Another variant of cognitive studies of texts is that of Mark Turner, who coined the term 'cognitive rhetoric' in *The Literary Mind*, whose approach derives from cognitive linguistics.

Concerning specifically meditative texts, the following studies have been highly regarded for this project: Reuven Tsur's *On the Shore of Nothingness*, which applies a cognitive poetic approach in the analysis of religious and mystic poetry and which also includes interpretations of Wordsworth's meditative poems; and Louis Martz's *The Poetry of Meditation*, which explores seventeenth century poems that present higher states of consciousness; the last chapter of his study centers on meditative texts by Romantic poets and tries to establish what a meditative poem is and the patterns it can have.

Deriving from these studies, the present project offers an innovative approach by attempting to provide a common pattern among William Wordsworth's meditative poems. This will be done by engaging in a close reading analysis of *A few Lines written above Tintern Abbey, I wandered lonely as a cloud, A night-piece* and *Intimations of Imortality from Recollections of Early*

*Childhood* and by presenting a discursive essay describing how the poems develop and which patterns can be found in and among his poems. The objective firstly is to analyze the structure of each poem – how the poem develops and which linguistic features in terms of grammar, syntax, semantics and rhythm are relevant for such development – and finally, by taking the analysis of the previous features, to determine whether there exists a poetic pattern and if so, what this pattern is.

### ***1. Lines Written a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey***

The primary focus of meditative poems is the ‘self’ and the quality of being in the ‘now’. L. Martz defined a meditative poem as ‘a work that creates an interior drama of the mind’ which is ‘usually (though not always) created by some form of self-address’ (Martz, 1962: 330). Beyond simply being created, *Lines Written a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey* – particularly the opening lines – suggests that the work is instead derived from dramatic experience. This can be seen in the verbs used in the first lines where those which are in first person singular are linked to use of the senses to perceive and grasp the landscape in which the poet is in (‘hear’, ‘behold’, ‘view’, ‘see’). These are verbs which indicate that the sensory information is being entered and not ‘sought’ – that is to say, the verbs are not ‘listen’ or ‘look at’ – and therefore not only ‘created’. The quality of nowness achieved in such states of consciousness would account for the high presence of perceptual deixis (‘these waters’, ‘these steep and lofty cliffs’, ‘I again repose here, under this dark sycamore’, ‘while here I stand’) (Culler, 1975:167).

From this point, the poet establishes a connection between the physical experience with qualities which either convey sensory information related to pleasure or admiration – being the idea of beauty linked to the idea of spiritual experience –, emotional intensity or solitariness and which are present throughout the poem – ‘with a soft inland murmur (v. 4)’, ‘that on a secluded scene impress thoughts of more deep seclusion’ (v. 7), ‘and connect the landscape with the quiet of the sky’ (v. 8), ‘thou wanderer thro’ the woods’ (V. 58), ‘lonely streams’ (v. 71), ‘the deep and gloomy wood’ (v. ), ‘the living air’ (v. ), ‘this fair river’, ‘this delightful stream’, ‘these beauteous forms’ (v. 23). To these forms, the poet experiences feelings which are described as ‘sensations sweet’ (v. 28), which are ‘Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart;/ And passing even into my purer mind,/ With tranquil restoration.’ (v. 29-31). Three stages of perception can thus be derived from the two first stanzas:

see (physical) → feel → see (spiritual)

The sensory act of beholding the objects found in nature leads to a feeling which derives into a spiritual experience – which leads to either a recovery or an insight. The imagery related to sight is highly present in *Tintern Abbey*, which in turn focuses either on the physical act of seeing and on the spiritual insight achieved by the sensory experience. The image of the ‘eye’ in the last verses of the second stanza focuses on the last two stages of the process described above where ‘‘While with an eye made quiet by the power/ Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,/ We see into the life of things’ (v. 48-50).

The gradual progression towards sublimity achieved through this process can be moreover traced in two other aspects: the use of nouns to describe the undergone experience and the tense in which these lines are written. The nouns which are used present a growth from a basic perceptual level, ‘sensations sweet’ towards a deeper emotional stage, ‘unremembered acts of kindness and of love’, and finally a spiritual phase ‘another gift of aspect more sublime’. Each of these experiences is more thoroughly detailed as the stanza develops by dedicating more lines to describe them, which furthermore produces a heightened emotive effect. Concerning the tense of the verses, lines 24-59 are written in the present perfect simple – that is to say, the poet explains his experiences which are related to nature which have occurred in the past but which still take place in the present. The use of this tense throughout the poem always leads to the end of the stanza – second and third – which is written in the present tense:

‘[...] Nor less, I trust,  
To them I may have owed another gift,  
Of aspect more sublime; that blessed mood,  
In which the burthen of the mystery,  
In which the heavy and the weary weight



Of all this unintelligible world,  
Is lightened: -- that serene and blessed mood,  
In which the affections gently lead us on, --  
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame  
And even the motion of our human blood  
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep  
In body, and become a living soul:‘  
( v. 36-42)

‘[...] And I have felt  
A presence which disturbs me with the joy  
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime  
Of something far more deeply interfused,  
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,  
And the round ocean and the living air,  
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;’  
(v. 95-101)

During this process the focus moves from the personal and physical account, which is set in the recent past, to a universal experience, written in the present tense, which coincides with the peak of emotion described earlier. Furthermore, the scarcity of first-person singular verbs, in contrast with the first stanza, would be explained by the emphasis on this process rather than on the persona.

Throughout the poem and particularly in this stanza, a relevant structure that is recurrent is the ‘noun of noun’, such as ‘the quiet of the sky’ (v. 8). The objective of this structure is to focus

on the information provided by the first noun, which is usually of an abstract or general kind, in contrast with the second noun, which is more specific. As Tsur explains, ‘This is a conspicuous device to direct attention *away from* the objects and concepts *to* their felt qualities.’ (Tsur, 2003:136; emphasis in the original).

In the third stanza Wordsworth begins by questioning the spiritual insights that have been achieved and revealed in the previous stanza: ‘If this be but a vain belief’. It is important to note the words he uses, ‘vain’ and ‘belief’: a belief is an accepted thought about something and therefore comes into being through reason. This verse is thus of a different nature from the vocabulary used in the previous stanza, where as we have seen earlier, there is no single reference to the act of reason. In the same verse however the tone switches back to the spiritual mood achieved in the previous stanzas. The reader perceives in this fragment an exalted and more dramatic tone towards crescendo which is caused by the use of interjections (‘yet oh!’), vocatives (‘O Sylvan Wye!’), and anaphors (‘How oft in spirit have I turned to thee!’, ‘How often has my spirit turned to thee!’).

These verses move back again to the present tense (‘while here I stand’ v. 64) and hence achieves the reflective mood which the persona had reached in the first and latter part of the second stanza. The stanza however, moves to the past tense as the poet recounts his experience with nature in his former years and presents different devices in comparison to the other stanzas such the presence of longer sentences, no interjections or vocatives, use of colons and full stops, appositions (‘though changed, no doubt, from what I was when first I came among these hills’) and subordinate clauses, which suggest that the content would have less emotional intensity due to the fact that it does not take place in the present moment.

The words used in this part to describe the way the poet was related to nature are such as ‘all’, ‘passion’, ‘appetite’, ‘feeling’, ‘love’, ‘haunt’, ‘aching joys’, ‘dizzy raptures’, which suggest

ideas related to desire, obsession and ecstatic experience – which are explained by the poet's youth –, and which are contrasted with the words that the poet uses in the previous stanzas as they project images which are related to the poet's maturity such as seclusion, feelings of sublimity and even sadness. However, there is also a basic idea of unity, 'all in all', which is present in the latter lines of the stanza but it is described in higher detail and hence presents a more experienced view on this concept:

'[...] a sense sublime  
Of something far more deeply interfused  
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,  
And the round ocean and the living air,  
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;  
A motion and a spirit, that impels  
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,  
And rolls through all things.'

(v. 97-104)

The unity that Wordsworth describes in this fragment is perceived as 'a presence' (v. 96), as a supernatural influence that can be felt, and furthermore as 'a sense sublime/ Of something far more deeply interfused'. In these verses the structure [NP of NP] mentioned above can be recognized again, as the poet seeks to focus on the feeling suggested by the 'sense sublime', thus deviating the attention from the vagueness conveyed by the word 'something'. The presence of abstract nouns which convey vagueness is explained by the ineffability of the content of the poem, which creates an antithesis with the clear statements or revelations that the poet achieves at the end of certain fragments (Tsur, 253: 2008); 'Therefore am I still a lover of the meadows and the woods,/ And mountains; and of all that we behold/ From this green

earth; of all the mighty world/ Of eye and ear, -- both what they half create,/ And what perceive (v.104-109). The process through which this insight is achieved can be traced from the use of verbs placed at the beginning of each sentence: 'For I have learned' (v. 90) – 'And I have felt' (v. 95) – 'Therefore am I' (v. 104). This way, revelations come to Wordsworth in terms of 'feeling' and 'sense of being'.

The concept of unity is derived ultimately from the use of verbs and the repetition and use of certain adjectives. These verbs – 'interfused', 'dwells' and 'impels all thinking objects' and 'rolls through all things' – express not only the fact that this presence is merged in nature, but also that this presence has some sort of active movement. Moreover, the high use of the adjective 'all' and the presence of the adjective 'mighty' describe the perception of this unity as a powerful and grand integrity. Together with the high use of polysyndeton, these verbs and adjectives create an exalted effect and the impression of a faster rhythm.

The last stanza of *Tintern Abbey* presents a different tone in comparison to the other stanzas, as the focus of the poem moves from nature to the poet's sister. However, his sister creates upon the poet a similar process involved in the contemplation of nature, which can be recognized in the use of verbs – 'catch' (v. 119), 'read' (v. 120) and 'behold' (v. 125) – which express the act of contemplation that the poet is found in. Moreover the stanza is structured in a similar way as in the latter part of the third stanza (v. 95-113). The verses such as 'lead/ From joy to joy', 'she can so inform/ The mind that is within us' 'so impress with quietness and beauty', 'feed with lofty thoughts' (v. 128-131) correspond to syntactic structures found in lines 96-97 which are dedicated to nature: 'disturbs me with the joy/ Of elevated thoughts'. These verses from the last stanza also lead to the perception of a feeling of sublimity – in this case, 'that all which we behold is full of blessings' – and finally to a conclusive insight, which is also in this case introduced by the connector 'therefore' (v. 104, 137). This advice that

Wordsworth provides to his sister makes reference to concepts which were also present in the previous stanza, such as the dichotomy between youth and maturity.

A faster rhythm can be recognized furthermore throughout the stanza due to the use of repeated structures ('so inform', 'so impress', 'so feed'; 'nor the sneers of selfish men', 'nor greetings where no kindness is', 'nor all the dreary intercourse of daily life') and the quick change from a verbal tense to another. All this creates a rapturous effect together with the use of noun phrases which convey the idea of veneration towards nature: 'worshipper of Nature', 'warmer love' 'far deeper zeal' and 'holier love'.

## ***2. I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud***

In *I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud* the poet reflects upon two scenes: the first stanzas of the poem express the meditative act of beholding nature and the last stanza focuses on the act of remembering the scene in nature, which reveals the conclusion or result of the previous meditation. Contrary to *Tintern Abbey*, the poem is not set in the present moment, as the poet offers a meditative scene which has occurred in the past and in which he often reflects upon in the last stanza. Despite this last stanza being written in the present tense, the sense of 'nowness' is not presented in this case, as the use of this tense shows the frequency in which the poet contemplates the scene in his mind. This temporary aspect mirrors at the same time the low presence of deixis, which would provide a loss of immediacy (Bruhn 2005: 389) if it were not for the location of the poet in a specific place.

The poem presents two similes in the first verses of the first two stanzas – I wandered lonely as a cloud (v. 1), 'Continuous as the stars that shine' (v. 7) –, which cause a blending effect: in the first simile the poet is related to nature and in the second, two elements of nature are

connected (daffodils-stars). The first simile, as the poet is compared to a cloud, leads to the personification of the daffodils as a 'crowd' that engages in 'sprightly dance'. These metaphors, thus, from the first verse, indicate the process of visualization that the poet produces in his mind from an act of seeing an object in nature. The poet is using the faculty of imagination from the first verses of the poem before he beholds the daffodils before him, which causes to personify the flowers in the following verses; the rest of the poem until the beginning of the last stanza develops further the personification of the flowers and the other elements in nature: 'Tossing their heads in sprightly dance' (v. 12), 'The waves beside them danced; but they / outdid the sparkling waves in glee: / A poet could not be gay in such a jocund company:' (v. 13-16).

The third line of the first stanza introduces the notion of 'sight', which is especially relevant in this poem, being the words and expressions related to sight present in each stanza: 'saw' (v. 3, 11), 'at a glance' (v. 11), 'gazed' (v. 17), 'inward eye' (v. 21). An aspect which is important in this poem is that the faculty of sight implies the absence of rational thought. This can be clearly seen in lines 17-18 where the poet 'gazed--and gazed--but little thought what wealth the show to me had brought'; the act of beholding, therefore, implies that nature creates an effect upon the poet or rather *brings* (v. 18) something to him.

The last stanza offers the conclusive revelation introduced by this last verse and presents the habitual situation that the poet experiences when he recalls the scene which is developed above. Firstly, the stanza introduces the notion of memory and therefore a rational aspect which is represented linguistically through the conjunction 'for'. The focus of the stanza is furthermore directed within, which is reflected in the mood of the poet, 'vacant' and 'pensive', and in the expression of the 'inward eye'. The final revelation achieved comes to the poet in the third and

fifth verse of the stanza: it is shown as a ‘flash’, a suddenness which can be traced in the first verses of the poem when the poet beholds the physical vision of the daffodils (v. 3) – in this case, the poet ‘sees’ (in a spiritual sense) ‘the bliss of solitude’; moreover, the penultimate verse also introduces a suddenness through the conjunction and adverb ‘and then’ which presents the last insight: ‘my heart with pleasure fills, / and dances with the daffodils’ (v. 23, 24). Hence, the poet moves in both fragments from *suddenness* to *sight/insight*.

The rhythm of the poem, hence, is paused and constant, and there are only a couple peaks of emotion achieved by the progressive intensity of nouns. The stable rhythm is explained by the use of iambic pentameter, which causes a stable development of the poem, and the only emotional climaxes that are reached in the poem are located in the first stanza (line 3) and the last stanza (line 21). The first two verses prepare the sudden emotion achieved in the third line as the paused rhythm conveyed in the first two verses through the predicates ‘wander’ and ‘float’ prepare the emotional background for the poet to achieve the heightened emotion in the third line (‘when all at once’). The same occurs for line 21, as the words which convey joy or ecstatic experience (‘sprightly’, ‘glee’, ‘gay’, ‘jocund’) create an intensified path towards the climax found in this verse (‘bliss’) (Tsur 2003: 25).

### **3. *A Night-Piece***

The first verses of *A Night-Piece* are placed in a landscape scene. In a purely descriptive manner, the verses unfold linking each other with the next one: each noun leads to the following noun through the verbs, as the ‘sky is overcast / With a continuous cloud’, which in turn is ‘all whitened by the Moon’ that is ‘indistinctly seen, [...] yielding light / So feebly spread’, that ‘not a shadow falls / Chequering the ground--from rock, plant, tree, or tower’. This scene is

seen from an outer perspective, which can be seen in the following verses as the figure of the traveller is presented.

In this fragment, the poem is set in motion with the image of the ‘pleasant instantaneous gleam’ (v. 8) – an image that conveys both the idea of agreeable feelings and immediateness – by ‘startling’ the traveller who is unaware of the scene described above. These two verses: ‘At length a pleasant instantaneous gleam / Startles the pensive traveller [...]’ (v. 8-9) contain two temporal aspects which are fundamental in Wordsworth’s poem: the first expression ‘at length’ suggests that there has had to be a mental space to internalize the scene described in the first part, and the verb ‘startles’ conveys the suddenness of the surprise that overcomes the traveller – which is moreover conveyed in the emphasis placed on lines 11-12 with the use of the hyphens: ‘[...] he looks up-- the clouds are split / Asunder,-- and above he sees’ [...]. The traveller is presented as a ‘pensive’ and ‘lonely’ figure who ‘treads his lonesome path, with unobserving eye / bent earthwards’, which conveys solitariness and the idea that the poet is absentminded, unaware of nature while he walks. Beyond this initial idea of mental ‘isolation’, a correlation between lines 8-9 and lines 9-11 can be traced through the dichotomies: ‘at length-startles’ and ‘pensive-looks up’. The thoughtful attitude of the traveller and the span of time before he ‘looks up’ provide the traveller with the inner, emotional space necessary for beholding the scene (Owen, 1983: 15).

From this stage, the poet ‘sees’ ‘the clear Moon, and the glory of the heavens’, which shows the duality of the moon, a physical and real element of nature, and ‘the glory of the heavens’, a product of the poet’s mind and conveys once more the idea that the verb ‘to see’ represents sight in a physical as well as a spiritual sense. The poet locates from this point onwards all the elements of nature which he has seen (in a physical and literal sense) in ‘the glory of the



heavens' – a non-literal image; hence, the elements which follow are also built up by the use of metaphor (v. 14-22).

It is suggested, then, that the presence of a contemplative eye modifies the description of nature compared to the description in the first verses of the poem. This description is infused with an intense feeling, which can be drawn from the use of devices such as polysyndeton ('small / And sharp, and bright'), hyphens (--the wind is in the tree, / But they are silent--) and exclamation (how fast they wheel away, / Yet vanish not!). Moreover, the noun phrases used in these verses such as 'black-blue vault', 'dark abyss', 'multitudes of stars', 'enormous clouds' express ideas which suggest depth and grandeur; and the verbs employed – 'sails along', 'followed', 'drive as she drives', 'wheel away', 'roll along' – convey the idea of continual motion.

The last four verses of the poem end with the same temporal expression 'at length', used in line 8. In this case, the expression is employed to mean that the 'Vision' (the nature scene contemplated by the traveller) has closed at last – that is, the clouds have covered the sky –, but it again suggests the importance of the mental space the observer has to create in order to achieve spiritual insight, as the following verses move the focus from nature to the mind. A line can be traced from the feelings that the traveller experiences as the result of the contemplation: the poet moves from a 'disturbance' caused by the 'delight' the mind feels, which turns into 'peaceful calm' and finally into a 'meditation'. Thus, three stages are recognized in the feelings that the scene evokes in the poet:

'joy' → 'serenity' → 'meditation'

Moreover, that which had set the vision in motion in the traveller's mind is heightened: 'the pleasant instantaneous gleam' leads to a grandeur, the 'solemn scene', not only in terms of feeling, but also in terms of 'totality', for that which began as a detail leads to other elements which finally result in a global image.

#### ***4. Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood***

In contrast with the poems analysed earlier, *Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood* begins with two stanzas which switch from the present tense to the past tense and vice-versa, which indicate semantically that the poet does not feel the spiritual enlightenment that he had experienced in the past. This spiritual enlightenment which nature aroused in the poet was 'apparelled in celestial light, the glory and the freshness of a dream', and attributes to elements of nature adjectives which convey delight, beauty and moreover, glory. This last concept creates an initial ambiguity in comparison with the following verse:

'The sunshine is a glorious birth;  
But yet I know, where'er I go,  
That there hath past away a glory from the earth.'

(v. 16-18)

The concept of 'glory' appears twice, both in the present tense (absence of spirituality) and in the past tense (enlightenment); however, the verb which introduces the clause from line 17 expresses 'knowledge' and hence, 'rationality'; this way, the poet perceives that there is still a condition of spirituality in nature despite knowing that in his mind something has changed. These elements of rational thought are contrasted with the verbs used above such as 'see' and 'seem', which convey visual passivity.

In the third stanza, the same idea of rational thought can be traced further on in the third stanza with the verse 'To me alone there came a thought of grief' (v. 22), but the process is brought back to spirituality in verse 23 'a timely utterance' which 'gave that though relief' and 'strength'. From this point, a relevant concept can be drawn from this passage and the next stanza: the impossibility to see brings about the faculty of hearing. The last verses of the third stanza and the lines from the fourth stanza are related to sound, such as 'utterance' (v. 23), 'blow their trumpets' (v. 25), 'I hear the Echoes through the mountains throng' (v. 27), 'I have heard the call / Ye to each other make' (v. v. 37-38), 'I see the heaven laugh with you in your jubilee' (v. 39) – despite the use of the verb 'see' in the verse, the result of the image of laughter would suggest a sound –. Moreover, there is again the idea of surrender and passivity of the poet and of nature with the following verbs: 'The Winds come to me from the fields of sleep' (v. 28), 'Land and sea give themselves up to jollity' (v. 30-31). As Brooks explains: 'The effect is that of a blind man trying to enter the joyful dawn world. He can bear the blessed creatures as they rejoice in the world, but he himself is shut out from it.' (Brooks, 1942: 135). This idea would represent therefore a previous step in Wordsworth's process towards sight, feeling and insight. It should be noted that these concepts appear from the moment that the poet obtains relief from his sorrow and the presence of vocatives from the last part of the third stanza furthermore represents this step towards enlightenment.

This process is nevertheless reversed back to the absence of spirituality that appeared in the first stanzas – as Brooks defines it, 'a sudden collapse of his afflatus occurs', due to the fact that the poet can only 'hear' and not yet 'see' (p. 136). In this stage, Nature has the quality to 'speak' and can be recognized as both the source of spirituality, but also of the knowledge that 'something' 'is gone' (v. 54): The poet can 'hear' both the 'sounds' which have a spiritual

quality – ‘an utterance gave that thought relief’ (v. 23) – as well as the ones which negate this spirituality:

‘A single Field which I have looked upon,

Both of them speak of something that is gone:

The Pansy at my feet

Doth the same tale repeat:

Whither is fled the visionary gleam?

Where is it now, the glory and the dream?’

(v. 53-58)

The vagueness conveyed by the word ‘something’ (v. 54) is clarified in the following verses: ‘the visionary gleam’, ‘the glory and the dream’ (v. 57, 58) and is further explained by stating when and the way it originates and leaves: although the life’s Star sets somewhere else and although there is at ‘birth’ a ‘sleep and a forgetting’ (v. 59), there is not a complete forgetting, as the image of heaven and divinity is still perceived by the boy, who comes ‘trailing clouds of glory’ (v. 65). In this passage, the images of light-darkness and sight-blindness are salient (images which are further developed in stanza VIII), as the sight of the growing boy begins to cover with ‘shades of prison-house’ (v. 68). The boy, despite that he still ‘beholds’ and ‘sees’ ‘the light’ with joy, still knowing where it originates from, starts to become confined in a state of oppression – conveyed through the images of ‘prison-house’ and the ‘travels’ that he is obliged to make – which progressively turns him away from the vision (a vision which eventually, resembling a light, diminishes and disappears ‘into the light of common day’).

In the next stanza, the focus moves again to the idea that Nature itself is the one who makes the poet forget 'the glories' and 'the palace whence he came from', which causes a semantic suddenness in relation to the previous stanza.

The process of maturity and forgetting becomes again the focus of attention in this passage as in the fifth stanza; the focus in this passage is more general, as the process describes the growth process of the child, not of the soul. The Child moves from having 'new-born blisses' (v. 86) to 'framing' 'his song' and 'fitting' 'his tongue / To dialogues of business, love, or strife' (v. 97-99) – an idea which echoes the image of confinement from line 68. Furthermore, from this point onwards the stanzas achieve a more exalted tone due to the high presence of a vocatives – 'Thou whose exterior semblance doth belie' (p. 109), 'Thou best Philosopher' (v. 111), 'Mighty Profet! Seer blest!' (v. 115), 'Thou little Child' (v. 121), and the use of repetitive structures: 'A wedding or a festival, / A mourning or a funeral; / And this hath now his heart, / And unto this he frames his song;' (v. 94-96).

The eighth stanza moves from an apostrophe addressed rhetorically to a third person to another apostrophe addressed to the child, who had been the main focus in the past stanza – therefore, the poem goes deeper into the object of focus, since it moves from the child to the soul of the child. The poet asks him not to forget the spiritual knowledge that he possesses; this spirituality is referred to as 'heritage', 'the eternal deep', 'Immortality' and 'Presence', which is something that has always existed and which can still be felt. Moreover, the imagery of sight-blindness and light-darkness is again prominent, as the following structures are used: 'Eye among the blind' (v. 112), 'read'st the eternal deep' (v. 113), 'seer blest' (v. 115), 'in darkness lost, the darkness of the grave' (v. 118), 'thus blindly' (v. 126). The blindness that the Child

experiences, according to these verses is not caused by nature, but rather by the child, who ‘with such earnest pains’ provokes ‘The years to bring the inevitable yoke’ (v. 124-125).

In the ninth stanza the object is now the joy that comes from recognizing the trace of spirituality that still exists in his soul (‘in our embers’, v. 132), for which the poet feels gratitude and worship. As the poet is focusing on his feelings, the poet moves from a personal experience (‘I raise the song of thanks and praise’, v. 140) to a universal one (‘[...] for those obstinate questionings of sense and outward things, fallings from us, vanishings’ v. 142-144), a characteristic that accounts for the fact that the stanza presents verbs conjugated in first-person singular and object pronouns in first-person plural. The poet uses again in this fragment the pronoun ‘something’ (v. 131), which is a vague idea that is developed further when he sets to explain the things for which he feels gratitude: the concepts which represent this ‘something’ are ‘those first affections’ and ‘shadowy recollections’; the poet acknowledges both the idea that has been presented in the previous stanza (‘Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie / Thy Soul’s immensity’ v. 109) – that is, that there is a spirituality behind the physical reality and that this spirituality comes from an early stage of life. Moreover, both these ideas are accompanied by ‘fallings from us, vanishings’, which confer this spirituality with a hidden and an eluding component. Also, despite the inability to grasp and know what this spirituality exactly is, there is the sense that it is a guide and has power to enliven and bring peace to the mind (v. 151-157). These ‘affections’ and ‘recollections’ are ‘truths’ that ‘perish never’ – and here there is the link with immortality, the link which connects the poet with something beyond, which is paraphrased metaphorically in the following verses: ‘Though inland far we be, / Our Souls have sight of that immortal sea / Which brought us hither / Can in a moment travel thither’ (v. 163-166).

Once the poet has recognized this immortality, can he then be fully present in Nature, as the last two stanzas show an invocation to Nature, which is infused with 'joy'. The dichotomy of 'sight-blindness'/'light-darkness' can be recognized again as in previous stanzas: even though the poet knows that 'the radiance which was once so bright' cannot be grasped anymore by his sight, he can still find comfort and joy from the memory of past feelings. The stanza presents a heightened exaltation in comparison with the previous stanza, as there is a greater shift in tense: the poem moves from the present tense, which dominated virtually all the poem, to the past and future tense, and therefore portrays a to and fro in semantic terms. Furthermore, the last stanza goes further deeper in feeling, since the poet moves from having 'soothing thoughts' to having feelings of 'might' – 'Yet in my heart of hearts I feel your might' (v. 190). The conclusion which the poet finally reaches to is that of a less exalted tone, as 'The Clouds that gather round the setting sun / Do take a sober colouring from an eye / That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality': the poet can perceive the immortality of the soul, but he can also see 'man's mortality'. The clouds of which he speaks are no longer 'clouds of glory' (v. 65), as they are modified by the person who has experienced the mundane.

## Conclusion

If we take the poems as a whole, these do not always share the same type of development; nevertheless, there are common aspects to be drawn, particularly in specific conceptual patterns which are shared.

The poem *I wandered lonely as a cloud* offers a situation in which the poet remembers the scene in nature. The initial stanzas are therefore not set in the present tense nor present as much spatial or temporal deixis as the other poems (particularly, *Tintern Abbey* and *A Night-Piece*, the first fragments of which present a great similarity in semantic terms). Nevertheless, it is noteworthy to comment that despite this, in the first stanza of *I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud* ‘sight’ verbs which serve to show the passiveness of the poet’s experience of nature and the absence of rational thought are present. This notion of ‘sight’ is the first element of development towards feeling and finally insight (except for *A Night-Piece* and *Intimations of Immortality*), which introduces some verses with objective description previous to the verses which present verbs of passive sight. As we’ve mentioned, *Intimations of Immortality* does not begin its development with the concept of sight, but rather negates this idea: what sets the poem in motion is the notion of ‘hearing’, which will then develop into ‘sight’.

This is hence a common metaphor among all poems and is relevant for the development of sight towards feeling and finally towards spiritual insight (or relief in *Tintern Abbey* and *Intimations of Immortality*) – although this is a metaphor which is moreover present throughout the poems generally. The step after sight is presented as the union of the physical reality with the poets feelings. These feelings, and this is especially clear in *A Night-Piece*, present a development from joy/ecstatic experience, to serenity or feeling past emotions and finally to meditation/deeper emotion. Furthermore, the notion of suddenness is a concept that appears in the poems of *I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud* and *A Night-Piece*, which comes either before the wakening of feelings or before the appearance of spiritual insight.



The conclusion, as a result, is that a common pattern of specific development on the whole of the poems cannot be drawn, as they all develop in different ways. These have steps towards the notion of 'insight' in common – with moreover, linguistic features in common –, but the way each poem develops is not the same. Therefore, similarities in development of ideas can be established in certain passages of the poems whether they coincide in the same order or not. These results thus give support to the fact that there are certain patterns which can be recognised among Wordsworth's poems, but invalidates the idea of there being a single and specific pattern which is common to all poems.

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