

<p>College of Education</p> <p>Department of English</p> <p>Third Stage (Morning)</p> <p>Lecture 9</p>		<p>Instructor: Dr.Mugdad</p>
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Wordsworth was one of the most influential of England's Romantic poets.

William Wordsworth was born on 7 April 1770 at Cockermouth in Cumbria. His father was a lawyer. Both Wordsworth's parents died before he was 15, and he and his four siblings were left in the care of different relatives. As a young man, Wordsworth developed a love of nature, a theme reflected in many of his poems.

While studying at Cambridge University, Wordsworth spent a summer holiday on a walking tour in Switzerland and France. He became an enthusiast for the ideals of the French Revolution. He began to write poetry while he was at school, but none was published until 1793.

In 1795, Wordsworth received a legacy from a close relative and he and his sister Dorothy went to live in Dorset. Two years later they moved again, this time to Somerset, to live near the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who was an admirer of Wordsworth's work. They collaborated on 'Lyrical Ballads', published in 1798. This collection of poems, mostly by Wordsworth but with Coleridge contributing 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner', is generally taken to mark the beginning of the Romantic movement in English poetry. The poems were greeted with hostility by most critics.

The Themes of William Wordsworth's Poems in General

The Beneficial Influence of Nature

Throughout Wordsworth's work, nature provides the ultimate good influence on the human mind. All manifestations of the natural world—from the highest mountain to the simplest flower—elicit noble, elevated thoughts and passionate emotions in the people who observe these manifestations. Wordsworth repeatedly emphasizes the importance of nature to an individual's intellectual and spiritual development. A good relationship with nature helps individuals connect to both the spiritual and the social worlds. As Wordsworth explains in *The Prelude*, a love of nature can lead to a love of humankind. In such poems as "The World Is Too Much with Us" (1807) and "London, 1802" (1807) people become selfish and immoral when they distance themselves from nature by living in cities. Humanity's innate empathy and nobility of spirit becomes corrupted by artificial social conventions as well as by the squalor of city life. In contrast, people who spend a lot of time in nature, such as laborers and farmers, retain the purity and nobility of their souls.

The Power of the Human Mind

Wordsworth praised the power of the human mind. Using memory and imagination, individuals could overcome difficulty and pain. For instance, the **Speaker** in "Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey" (1798) relieves his loneliness with memories of nature, while the leech gatherer in "Resolution and Independence" (1807) perseveres cheerfully in the face of poverty by the exertion of his own will. The transformative powers of the mind are available to all, regardless of an individual's class or background. This democratic view emphasizes individuality and uniqueness. Throughout his

work, Wordsworth showed strong support for the political, religious, and artistic rights of the individual, including the power of his or her mind. In the 1802 preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth explained the relationship between the mind and poetry. Poetry is “emotion recollected in tranquility”—that is, the mind transforms the raw emotion of experience into poetry capable of giving pleasure. Later poems, such as “Ode: Intimations of Immortality” (1807), imagine nature as the source of the inspiring material that nourishes the active, creative mind.

The Splendor of Childhood

In Wordsworth’s poetry, childhood is a magical, magnificent time of innocence. Children form an intense bond with nature, so much so that they appear to be a part of the natural world, rather than a part of the human, social world. Their relationship to nature is passionate and extreme: children feel joy at seeing a rainbow but great terror at seeing desolation or decay. In 1799, Wordsworth wrote several poems about a girl named Lucy who died at a young age. These poems, including “She dwelt among the untrodden ways” (1800) and “Strange fits of passion have I known” (1800), praise her beauty and lament her untimely death. In death, Lucy retains the innocence and splendor of childhood, unlike the children who grow up, lose their connection to nature, and lead unfulfilling lives. The speaker in “Ode: Intimations of Immortality” believes that children delight in nature because they have access to a divine, immortal world. As children age and reach maturity, they lose this connection but gain an ability to feel emotions, both good and bad. Through the power of the human mind, particularly memory, adults can recollect the devoted connection to nature of their youth.

The World is Too Much With Us

The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers;—
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;

It moves us not. Great God! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn.

SUMMARY “THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH WITH US”

- **Popularity:** This [sonnet](#) is one of the best compositions by William Wordsworth that connects man with nature. It was first published in 1907. The popularity of the [poem](#) rests in its [theme](#) of how man has lost his connection with nature due to the worldly concerns. This change in man has taken away their pleasures, joys, and comforts of the peaceful nature.
- **Criticism on The Materialistic World:** The poem presents Wordsworth's discontent over the loss of nature caused by the rat race of mankind for material comforts. He [claims](#) that the materialistic approach of mankind has

transformed human beings into senseless individuals. He further adds that humans do not realize their loss as they are obsessed with money, [power](#), and possessions, and fail to perceive [beauty](#) in nature. By discussing the pristine glory of natural [objects](#), he shows that people are missing these delights in the race of the artificial. He swears that he would rather be a poor pagan connected with the natural world rather than a rich man alienated from its bliss. He wants to see and hear the Greek gods and feels less forlorn.

- **Major Themes:** The major themes of the poem are the loss of nature and the natural world and the impacts of the busy life. The poet argues that people have forsaken their souls for material gains. In fact, the whole text of the poem denounces materialism which the poet has seen around him. To him, this approach of mankind deprives them of the true purpose of their life. Using [figurative language](#), Wordsworth highlights the idea that nature gives spiritual pleasure and enjoyment, and that we should know its worth. He adds that the lust of power and money has made people hollow as they have readily given their hearts to the things they need for material comfort.

Analysis of Literary Devices in “The World is Too Much With Us”

1. **Personification:** [Personification](#) is to attribute human characteristics to non-human or even inanimate objects. The poet has used [personification](#) at several places in this poem such as, “sea that bears her bosom to the moon”; “The winds that will be howling at all hours” and “sleeping flowers.” All these

expressions make nature possess human-like qualities like yearning for love, sleeping and soothing.

2. **Allusions:** [Allusion](#) is an indirect or direct reference to a person, place, thing or idea of historical, cultural, political or literary significance. This poem contains allusions to Greek mythology,

“Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn.”

3. **Imagery:** The use of [imagery](#) makes the readers visualize the writer’s feelings, emotions or ideas. Wordsworth has used images appealing to the sense of hearing such as, “winds that will be howling” to the sense of touch as “sleeping flowers;” and to the sense of sight as “Proteus rising from the sea.”
4. **Consonance:** [Consonance](#) is the [repetition](#) of consonant sounds in the same line such as the sound of /s/ in “Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea” and /f/ and /t/ sounds in “For this, for everything, we are out of tune.”
5. **Simile:** [Simile](#) a device used to compare something another thing to let the readers know what it is. There is only one [simile](#) used in line seven of the poem, “And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;” The poet has linked the howling of the winds with the sleeping flowers.
6. **Metaphor:** There are two metaphors used in this poem. One of the metaphors is in the tenth line, “Suckle in a creed outworn.” Here creed represents mother that nurses her child.
7. **Assonance:** [Assonance](#) is the repetition of vowel sounds in the same line such as /o/ sound in “Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn”.

