IOC Notes – Wordsworth

IOC Notes – Wordsworth

Introduction to Wordsworth

Romanticism (1789-1850)

- A movement in literature and the fine arts beginning in the late 19th century
- Reacted to and rejected modern era of science and its elements e.g. Industrial Revolution and reasoning
- Emphasis on emotion and individualism
- Glorification of the past and nature (memory)

Basic traits of Romantic poetry

- Isolation of narrator/author
- Sensibility (sensitiveness and susceptibility to strong emotions or reactions to otherwise insignificant things)
- Evocative, sensory description (transporting readers through memory)
- Personal freedom and focus on own response to stimulus
- Criticism of the past (customs and traditions)
- Celebration of a simple/rustic/pastoral life in nature
- Spiritual/supernatural elements
- Romantic heroism (someone who rejects established norms and conventions, is rejected by society and is the center of their own existence)

Wordsworth's writing style

- Solitude
- Nature and man's emotional connection to its tranquility
- *Lyrical Ballads* (1801): written after meeting Samuel Taylor Coleridge, included "Tintern Abbey". *Lyrical Ballads* was an important work in the English Romantic movement. Discussed a new type of verse based on the "real language of men" using common language
- Describes his work as the "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origins from emotion recollected in tranquility."
- The poet and the speaker are conflated

Background

- Lived from 1770-1850
- English poet who debuted in 1787 as a writer
- Magnum opus: *The Prelude*
- Poet Laureate in 1843

Personal life and related themes

- Intense emotions
    - Spent significant time with his maternal grandparents. Entertained thoughts of suicide and was depressed
- Loss
    - Mother passed away when he was 8
    - Father died just before he went to Cambridge, leaving him and his four siblings as orphans

    - Inevitability of loss due to age
- Nature
    - Took a walking tour around Europe in his final semester at Cambridge in 1790
    - Moved back to Grasmere (a secluded cottage) in 1799, and henceforth his work "bears a distinctive style"
    - English Moors were the backdrop of many of his poems
- Common life
    - Witnessed the French Revolution on his walking tour and was privy to the "life, troubles and speech of the common man"
- Love
    - Admiration nourishes love
    - Love is a key word and often used in his poems; also as the turn/shift of the poem
- New perspectives (seeing in a different light)
- Transcendence (awe at the sublime)
- Humanity and morality
- Close to own experiences (individuality)
- Faith
    - Disillusioned with the French Revolution and proceeded to retreat into the known, the fundamentals: nature
- Memory and continuity

IOC Notes – Wordsworth

Lines Written in Early Spring (1798)

About
- Observing and appreciating nature all around him
- Contemplating the direction taken by mankind
- Man and nature are inherently linked but differ in their modes of being
- Published in *Lyrical Ballads* (1801)

Perspective
- Common everyday experience of Man

Tone
- Bittersweet and melancholy
- Pastoral and rustic

Structure/Traits of a Lyrical Ballad
- Musicality/lyricism
    - Iambic tetra (- / - / - / - /) and trimeter (- / - / - /)
    - ABAB rhyme scheme (consistent end rhyme)
    - Abrupt beginning
    - Simple diction
    - Presence of a refrain ("what man has made of man" in line 8 and line 24)
- Involves contemplation, introspection and lamentation
    - Monologue
- Spontaneous overflow
    - Excitement and contemplation as he is "reclined" in nature which invigorates him
- Tragic
    - Reflection and lamentation about the divergence of Man

Relation to other works
- Tintern Abbey, Ode and "I wandered lonely as a Cloud"
    - Recollection and memory as continuity, and pleasures may continue to bring nourishment
- "The world is too much with us"
    - Lamentation of Man's divergence from nature
- To a Butterfly (both) and To The Cuckoo
    - Glorification of the simple

Analysis: Chronological

First Stanza (Lines 1-4)
- Discusses the excitement of the mind in nature that provokes the reflection; an introduction to his thought process

- Subtle onomatopoeia: a wide mixture of sibilant, plosive, fricative, a cluster of consonants and the diversity of vowel sounds (a, e, i, o, u), enhancing the "thousand blended notes" and suggesting faint birdsong, as well as how memories are brought up by other memories, bringing to mind the "recollection in tranquility"—cross-reference to "Tintern Abbey": "still, sad music of humanity"
- Long vowels e.g. "thousand" and "blended" (line 1) add to the lyricism and almost sounds harmonic; recreates the sounds of nature and the pastoral (idealized) lifestyle (cacophony)
- "Reclined" (line 2) suggests tranquility and relaxation
- "Thousand" (line 1) is hyperbolic to show the richness of nature that excites his thought and feeling
- "In a grove" (line 2) suggests his surroundings are natural and is immersed in nature, bringing out the idea of intimacy with nature and the idea of solitude
- Sparse scene-setting and the creation of a "sweet mood" (line 3) and the presence of "pleasant thoughts" (line 3) clashing with the invitation of "sad thoughts" (line 4) gives way to conflict and tension and suggests the susceptibility of his mental state being provoked by his thoughts and how happy thoughts about nature brings up sad thoughts about Man which will be covered later

Second Stanza (Lines 5-8)

- Elaborates on the "sad thoughts" (line 4) in the first stanza, that Man has diverged from its roots and discusses the contrast between humanism and spirituality
- Metaphorical synthesis of nature and man: personification of nature in "her" (line 5) and in the soul being an active force that "ran" (line 6). Suggests that this combination/synthesis is full of life and is active as well as that the human soul is natural
- "Grief" (line 7) is the emotion brought out by the "sad thoughts".
- "What man has made of man" (line 8) is an aphorism that alludes to *Lyrical Ballads* that wished to be "a man speaking to men". Reflexive grammar and the repetition of man forms an infinite loop to show how we have caused ourselves harm, as opposed to the "fair works" (line 5) of nature's creations, thus highlighting the imperfections in man's works, lamenting enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution

Third, Fourth and Fifth Stanzas (Lines 9-20)

- Celebrates nature's "fair works" and Wordsworth's thought and feeling of joy as well as the spirit of life
- Details the different, diverse, complete and incomprehensible aspects of nature
- Growing insistence on pleasure

Third Stanza (Lines 9-12)

- Long and short vowels ("tufts", "sweet", "bower", "wreathes") enhance lyricism and beauty of the lyrical ballad

- "Bower" (line 9), a shaded or enclosed area (leafy shelter), showcases the idea of an intimate relationship with nature and solitude
- The "wreath" (line 10) is a symbol of death, rebirth and coming of spring. Usage celebrates the natural joys, man's harmony with nature and his roots in nature, as well as a return to the natural cycle
- A detailed focus on floral imagery: "primrose" (line 9) and "periwinkle" (line 10). The tufts and trails suggest beauty, vitality and elaborateness, showing the life, vitality and beauty of nature with humanity unable to match up
- Personification in "breathes" (line 12) emphasizes life, rejoicing in its spirit and also gives nature human attributes which elevate and exalt nature
- "My faith" (line 11) highlights Wordsworth's imagination and displays how his thoughts are provoked by the richness of natural surroundings

Fourth Stanza (Lines 13-16)

- Idyllic and celebratory attitude towards the birds which are natural elements
- Why "birds" (line 13)? Perhaps a biblical allusion, but mainly just to glorify these small, seemingly common elements which brings out the beauty of nature and are fragments of something greater
- "Hopped and played" (line 13) suggests a certain jollity and energetic movement of the birds
- "Their thoughts I cannot measure" (line 14) demonstrate the gap between man's comprehension and nature's greatness, especially due to usage of the word "measure" which represents man's attempt to understand and reason. Demonstrates how nature is beyond man's comprehension, promoting naturalism over humanism and leads the speaker into lamenting man's divergence from nature.
- Relates back to the thrill and excitement of enjoying nature's richness in "a thrill of pleasure" (line 16) while at the same time displaying the overflow of emotion. Speculation appears to be present due to "seemed", perhaps displaying the conflict between reason and instinct in his observations.
- A "thrill" at the "least motion" (line 15) betrays a certain sensibility

Fifth Stanza (Lines 17-20)

- Growing insistence on pleasure and rejoicing despite sadness, causing increasing emotional conflict
- "Budding twigs" (line 17) display the vitality of life in nature and early spring
- "Spread out their fan" (line 17) personifies the entity and comments on the greatness of a divine being, also representing an all-encompassing expansion, signaling the greatness of nature
- Significance of spring
- Increased conflict and urging of oneself to enjoy nature manifests itself in line 20, "do all I can", "there was pleasure there", which sees pleasure give way to melancholic thoughts, inviting a struggle between reason and instinct, which links to the idea of the state of excitement that Wordsworth finds himself in from enjoying nature which triggers more melancholic and bittersweet thoughts

Sixth Stanza (Lines 21-24)

- State of excitement culminates in the weak resolution and revival of melancholy and bittersweet mood
- Laments increasingly the actions of man and their divergence as well as their inability to experience similar pleasures
- Poem's mood SHIFTS from pleasure to vague sorrows
- "If I these thoughts may not prevent" (line 21) links to how feelings and ideas are associated in a state of excitement, highlighting the spontaneity of emotions and thought
- "Creed" (line 22) codifies the beliefs and affirms his faith in a divine being
- The refrain in line 24 revives the melancholy and bittersweet thoughts; the aphorism repeated adds to the lyrical nature of the poem and draws a binary between the bright, simple flora and fauna as opposed to the tragedy of the destructive human forces
- The ending with a question reflects Wordsworth's continued struggle with loss of simple, natural pleasures to industrialism

Conclusion

- Sets up positive to compare against the negative
- Excitement from enjoying nature's elements triggers a spontaneous overflow of emotions, giving way to negative thoughts regarding man's role in destroying nature

Lines Written a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey

IOC Notes – Wordsworth

"Strange fits of passion I have known" (1798)

About

- Focus on the speaker's rapturous emotions as he journeys late at night to Lucy's home on horseback while being captivated by the moon
- As the moon sinks, he is suddenly gripped by a great fear of Lucy's death
- Part of 5 "Lucy" poems which contain the ideals of beauty, nature, love, longing and death, dealing with the speaker's love for a character named Lucy
- These poems are characterized by the point of view of a lover who has long viewed the object of his affection from afar and is now affected by a fear of her death
- Who is Lucy? His sister? A fictitious character? Regardless, Wordsworth uses Lucy as a literary device to project, meditate and reflect
- Ambiguity of Lucy's identity contributes to the mystery and enigma of the poems
- Published in *Lyrical Ballads* (1800)

Perspective

- The lover/Wordsworth
- Conflation of speaker and poet are pertinent here

Tone

- Setting of the night illuminated by moonlight—otherworldliness and tranquility
- Expectant and mysterious
- Sudden outflow of powerful feelings (dread and anguish)
- First and last stanzas reflect his mental state while the middle section documents his actual journey

Structure

- Written in common meter—a poetic meter consisting of quatrains which alternate between iambic tetra and trimeter
- Lines have an alternate (ABAB) rhyme scheme
- Rhyming pattern and meter do not change throughout the poem, contributing to the natural, lullaby-like rhythm and also brings out the sense of the speaker being almost under a hypnotic trance

Relation to other works

Analysis (Thematic)

Title

- The title incorporates multiple lexical choices and phrases
- "Strange" denotes the speaker's own confusion and puzzlement at his "fits", suggesting that they are unusual and out of the ordinary

- Diction also hints at a psychological element and the speaker's own mind and imagination as the source of the strangeness
- "Fits" alluding to a sudden burst or flurry of emotional reaction or intensity—much like a sudden, violent attack or illness
- "Passion"—revealing fervor or desire associated with a lover's relationship
- "I have known" sees the adoption of the past tense, suggesting that these feelings were already transient and had passed—no longer existent, and draw on the speaker's past experiences
- Title brings in the main subject matter of the poem: a speaker narrating his admiration for an object of affection, focusing on the intensity and manifestation of emotions towards Lucy, setting the context of the captivated lover ridiculing himself
- The speaker's vision of Lucy's death is akin to a nightmare, a radical fantasy

Emotional and physical intimacy

- "I will dare to tell" (line 2) suggests the need for the speaker to muster up courage to speak, revealing a deep secret that he is willing to share only in "the lover's ear alone" (line 3), in what seems like a taunting and playful recount; "dare" gives this recollection a sense of excitement and mystery—the idea of intimacy and closeness is shown in how he only wishes to share this with his lover alone, the idea of secrecy and trust
- Familiarity in the form of well-worn, walked paths in line 12: "those paths so dear to me"
- Not only does the speaker clearly appear to be close to Lucy, the speaker also appears to be getting quite close to the audience—in using this poem to convey the speaker's own rich emotions, the poem adopts a personal appeal to its readers by containing a degree of intimacy and closeness between the speaker and the audience and putting them in a conversation—the speaker appears to be confiding
- "In one of those sweet dreams I slept" (line 17) suggests the descent of the speaker and lulling into a hypnotic trance while staying awake at the same time—a somnambulistic state
- The repeated references to Lucy's home—"her cottage" (line 7), "the roof of Lucy's cot" (line 15), "cottage roof" (line 23)—show constant reminders of the destination that the speaker is trying to reach, showing a clear focus and goal and a closing gap between him and Lucy
- "I to her cottage bent my way" (line 7) reflects a certain compulsion, a divergence in route or path as the speaker turns unexpectedly
- The speaker's journey on horseback is mapped through "my horse trudged on, and we drew nigh" (line 11), "we reached the orchard plot" (line 13), "we climbed the hill" (line 14) shows progress and the closing of the gap between him and Lucy's cottage, giving way to an increased sense of anticipation and expectation

Loss and death

- Use of the past tense in "what once to me befel" (line 4) and "when she I loved" (line 5)—the usage of "once" brings up the recurring idea of his emotions being in the past and the idea of loss or departure
- "Befel" is a unique lexical choice that suggests unexpected circumstances, fate or unpleasantness, building up a foreboding atmosphere
- Motif of death is reflected in the imagery of the moon which represents time: the speaker's journey towards Lucy's cottage is a race against time as the speaker is transfixed upon the moon moving across the sky—"beneath the evening moon" (line 8), "upon the moon I fixed my eye" (line 9), "the moon descended still" (line 16) and "at once the planet dropped" (line 24)
- Relation of the moon/the light of the moon to time causes the speaker to believe that Lucy may be dead when the moon disappears; the descent of the moon creates tension and the consistent mapping of its descent throughout the poem increases the sense of urgency in the poem
- The sudden "drop" (line 24) of the moon represents a sudden shift and causes the speaker to panic; it shifts from a captivated and enchanted lover into someone who is paranoid, distressed and terrified over losing his lover, shattering the apparent idyll and calmness of the night—the tone and atmosphere grow increasingly sinister afterwards
- Urgency of time is reflected through not only the moon but also the movement of the horse: "my horse moved on; hoof after hoof / he raised and never stopped" (lines 21-22) display the monotony and regularity of the movement, almost like clockwork, contrasting with the seemingly rapid sinking of the moon across the sky, increasing the sense of urgency and panic
- The inconsistent timing and pacing of the poem is evident in how time feels compressed—the moon's descent is steady and unrelenting, but the movement of the speaker on the horse feels draggy and slow, almost like time was stretched, creating a sense of rising tension and foreboding as the speaker approaches the cottage in an apparent race against time
- The movement of the moon is set in opposition to the motion of the speaker, antagonizing him
- "O mercy!" (line 27) displays the spontaneous outflow of powerful feelings while "cried" (line 27) also betrays a deep anguish, fear and despair
- The poem concludes with an irrational terror and panic of the speaker as he comes to realize Lucy's mortality

Romanticisation of Lucy

- Lucy embodies femininity and a ladylike nature, represented as the archetype of the ideal English woman
- Lucy is "strong and gay" (line 5), displaying her vitality and is brought to life through the strong emotive words used
- "Like a rose in June" (line 6) refers to the image of the flower, suggesting beauty and delicateness, fragility; the simile associating her with the flower then elevates her as an object of admiration and captures her beauty in the speaker's eyes—the rose is also the national flower of England, emphasizing the portrayal of Lucy as the archetypal English woman

- "June" is the period of summer time, when the countryside is abundant with life and vitality, is packed to the brim with freshness and is thriving—suggests that Lucy herself possesses these qualities of summer; this imagery attempts to create a presence that cannot be expressed in human form
- The moon may also be a metaphor for Lucy—the disappearance of the moon from the sky is automatically linked with Lucy's death by the speaker—displaying the connection between the moon and Lucy; the speaker is also captivated by the moon, when "upon the moon" (line 9) he "fixed" his "eye" (line 9) and his "eyes I kept / on the descending moon" (line 19-20)
- The association of the moon with Lucy depicts her as heavenly and ethereal, as the moon succeeds in eluding the speaker, Lucy is untouchable and does not belong to this world—her presence is romanticized as that of an untouchable, elusive, ethereal being
- Moon metaphor also associates Lucy with light/moonlight, where when the moon vanishes, the light also disappeared, sparking the speaker's panic and fear that Lucy might be dead
- Enigma and mystery shroud Lucy's characterization, even as attempts are made to develop her identity in the poem, from "lover" (line 3) and "she" (line 5), followed by characteristics (line 5-6) and finally "Lucy" in line 15—this slow development builds an enigma and mystery of her real identity, relying on the speaker's perception of her rather than an explicit realization of her true form

Conclusion

- The title sees the poet condemn and ridicule himself about his inability to understand himself—reinforced by line 25: "fond and wayward thoughts will slide", which acknowledges that his infatuation with Lucy has led to a compelled redirection of his thought and feeling in a completely different direction that was not intended; they meander and deviate, coming to the unpleasant thought that Lucy could be dead
- The "strange fit" is therefore the speaker's sudden dream of mortality which disrupts the trance and suddenly shifts his focus to Lucy's death—the relation of irrational and passionate experiences combines with the speaker's need to contend with his unruly imagination of mortality
- "Lover's head" (line 26) displays his acknowledgement of his own state, role and position in the poem as well as how his fits are disturbingly fantasies of Lucy's death and even a desire for the death to occur; the distinct reference to the head reveals role of the speaker's mind and the emotions that emerge from within
- The exclamation in line 28 is a marked outcry, a spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings, characteristic of Romantic poetry
- The prevalence of melancholy in Romantic poetry and the multiplicity of meaning—for every supposedly romantic/idyllic portrayal, there is a sinister, darker interpretation relating to death and mortality

IOC Notes – Wordsworth

To a Butterfly ("Stay near me") (1802)

About

- Possibly an ode dedicated to a butterfly (butterfly as the essence of humanity as surmised by the Greeks)
- Recollections of days gone by—sentimental remembrance
- Celebration of two loves: nature and his sister Emmeline
- Written in March 1802 and classified in a cluster entitled "Moods of My Own Mind"—a main theme was the return to the original state of nature, lending itself to a purer and innocent existence
- Man was inherently good but corrupted by society's influence
- Published in *Poems in Two Volumes* (1807)
- Orchard garden in Grassmere (memories of childhood) and the butterfly as a symbol

Perspective

- Wordsworth's own

Tone

- Pastoral, nostalgic, emotional
- Simple language

Structure

- Lyrical poem (like a sonnet) to convey emotion and passion
- Iambic tetrameter but very loosely defined (alternating meter, rolling and lullaby-like rhythm)
- Two stanzas of 9 lines each
- Loosely constructed octosyllabic couplet with regular rhyming (AABB) for the first stanza and halfway through the second
- Centrality of focus on the butterfly through the simple language while the rhyming lends it a steady soothing rhythm and a "lilting" feel to paint an image of childlike innocence
- Usage of end rhyme ("flight/sight/Thee/Infancy" from lines 1-4) simplifies the poem for easy reading rather than being forced to focus on the cadence
- They also lend themselves to alliteration through the repetition of parallel sounds
- AABB rhyme scheme lends it rhythm and mimics the sounds of nature
- Enjambment

Relation to other works

- Lines Written in Early Spring
    - Complete immersion in nature

Analysis (Chronological)

First stanza (lines 1-9)

- "Stay near me" (line 1) as an imploration/entreatment for a supposedly personified butterfly to stay near him, conveying nostalgia and longing
- Repeated in line 2: "A little longer stay in sight!" and line 5: "Float near me; do not yet depart!"—Single syllables: rising tempo and almost desperation—float: lightness and joy
- Exclamation marks lend credence to the idea of imploring, almost begging for the butterfly to stay in a rather frantic request
- Lost childhood and desire to relive it in lines 1-4, reinforced by "Historian of my Infancy" (line 4) which suggests the butterfly has caused Wordsworth to recall memories of the past, specifically his childhood (lends credence)
- Elevation of the butterfly through capitalization of letters in "Historian", "Infancy" (line 4) as well as "Creature" (line 7) similar to "My Father's Family!" (line 9)
- Further elevation in his manner of addressing the butterfly: "Thee" in line 3 and ascribes power and authority when he says that "Dead times revive in thee:" (line 6), which is made more credible given the imagery of revival; this line also breaks the iambic tetrameter
- "Thou bring'st, gay Creature as thou art!" (line 7) sees him praise the butterfly and express glee in being reminded of happier times; the gay Creature brings gayness to him
- Exclamation points scattered throughout remind one of his spontaneous outflow of emotion
- Line 8: sudden shift to a more solemn and grave tone, signaling the amount of respect he has for nature and reverence for its magnificence—furthermore, juxtaposition between gay and solemn mark clearly his shift for a more marked effect
- Association of butterfly with "father" in line 9: dual meaning of his personal, intimate connection with nature as his family or rather association of the butterfly with religion; the father, thus reinforcing reverence
- Spondee: "dead times"
- Line 9 also breaks the iambic tetrameter
- Note his background; loss of family

Second stanza (lines 10-18)

- Spontaneous outflow in line 1 of recalling how "pleasant, pleasant were the days", marking the progression of his immersion in the happiness of the past even further—repetition—meter is used to create a rising tempo and a spondee
- "Oh": outpouring of emotion, "pleasant, pleasant": anaphora
- Idea of recalling the past emphasized through tones of nostalgia and literal recollection of the past in lines 13 and 14—the reminiscence of "childish plays" (line 11) and his sister, Emmeline (line 12) who is elevated
- Painting of a lighthearted picture of them when they "chaced the Butterfly" (line 13), recalling the jollity and carefree nature of childhood, bestowing upon the butterfly also the ability to transcend atrophy and attain tranquility that Wordsworth aspires to

- Brief commentary on the savagery of man in lines 14-15 through the use of words such as "hunter" (line 14), "rush" (line 14) and "prey" (line 15), indicating man's tendency to forcefully and selfishly capture beautiful things for themselves, iambic meter
- Heightened urgency in line 15 through usage of "leaps and springs" (kinetic imagery), increasing the rhythm of the poem
- Alliteration and synthetic balance in "brake to bush" (line 16) escalates the tempo and seeks to convey elusiveness of the butterfly as well as their own liveliness of himself and his sister; Wordsworth recreates the excitement of chasing such a creature as a kid for the reader
- Note the reluctance of Emmeline to "brush / The dust from off its wings" (lines 17-18) and thus interfere with the flight of the exalted butterfly ("She" in line 17 elevates the sister too)
- Line 17 conveys the fragility of the butterfly as well as the supposed effect of brushing "dust" (line 18)
- Suggests Wordsworth's fondness for his sister (even proclaiming "God love her!" in line 17—a spondee to highlight the outcry of emotion) stems from his sister's ability to have great care and compassion for the butterfly and ability to appreciate nature—the butterfly provides an illusion she refuses or doesn't want to shatter
- Poem takes a backward trajectory in the second stanza as Wordsworth reminisces and derives happiness from nature—illustrating the power of memory and imagination in deriving pleasure
- Break between stanzas serve to draw out the time spent with the butterfly

Conclusion

- Captures the love and joy he derives from talking to a butterfly
- Butterfly holds significance as a natural creature for ideas of Romanticism and symbolism—representing the highest virtues of the natural world i.e. blissful innocence to the detriments of civilization that he is privy to
- Butterfly exists outside this and is a symbol of the blissful, pastoral existence that Wordsworth hopes to catch—an actualization of Romantic philosophy and ideals

IOC Notes – Wordsworth

To a Butterfly ("I've watched you") (1802)

About

- An innocent and delicate butterfly being offered sanctuary in Wordsworth's garden so that it can live its life of simple pleasures and he can enjoy its lighthearted company
- Individualism
- Butterfly represents the innately beautiful and fragile natural soul that Wordsworth would find great meaning romantically as a Romantic—being able to interact with it on a personal level
- Can be read as a quiet one-sided conversation with a butterfly—except the butterfly carries Romantic and symbolic importance
- Published in *Poems in Two Volumes* in 1807

Perspective

- Wordsworth's own

Tone

- Intimacy in the title "To a butterfly"
- Wonder and amazement
- Invitational

Structure

- First stanza: loosely constructed octosyllabic couplet with an AABBCDCCD rhyme scheme, where the conclusion is a single line rhyming with the sixth
- Second stanza: loosely constructed octosyllabic couplet with an AABBCDCECaD rhyme scheme—line 15 and line 19 rhyme
- Lyrical poem: strong emotions and musicality

Relation to other works

- Ode and "Stay near me"
    - Pleasures of childhood

Analysis (Chronological)

First Stanza

- Wordsworth speaks to a supposedly personified butterfly after observing it sitting on a flower for a stretch of time
- "I've" (line 1) displays his solitude and the idea of being alone
- "Full half hour" (line 1) displays his obsession and fascination with nature to the extent of which he watches the butterfly for such a long period of time
- Elegance of the butterfly and its delicateness is reflected in how it is "poised" (line 2) upon the flower
- Capitalization of natural elements, especially significant for the butterfly: "Butterfly" (line 3)

- Exclamation in line 3 serves to illustrate the spontaneous outflow of powerful emotions and the caesura serves to give a brief break before the intense outflow
- Analogy to illustrate the stillness of the butterfly, suggesting tranquility and lack of disturbance: "I know not if you sleep, or feed" (line 4) and how the butterfly is more motionless than "frozen seas" (line 5)—exclamation in lines 5 and 6, repetition of "motionless" for emphasis—the butterfly has been so still that Wordsworth does not know if its still alive
- Line 6: shift from iambic trimeter to iambic tetrameter
- Description of the lighthearted joy that the butterfly experiences when it is roused by the breeze and flies again: "what joy awaits you, when the breeze / hath found you out among the trees" (lines 7-8)—the rhyme between breeze and trees give it a harmonious sense of being in the pastoral environment, as well as personifying the breeze as an element of nature while the "joy" (line 7) gives it a dreamlike and childlike tone
- Line 9: iambic to a molossus, granting it a sense of vitality and the peace and gentleness of the characterization of the butterfly—iambic tetrameter to iambic trimeter, creating emphasis on the line, detracting on the meter

Second Stanza (lines 10-19)

- The invitation to the butterfly to stay in the sanctuary comprises of his description of his "Orchard" and his "Sister's" flowers as well as an entreatment
- Capitalization of major elements: "Orchard-ground" (line 10) and his "Sister" (line 11)
- Anaphora in lines 10-11
- Rhyme between "weary" (line 12) and "sanctuary" (line 13) draws the association clearly for the butterfly to invite it—the orchard-garden is a fitting retreat for the butterfly when it is tired—restorative quality of nature
- Exclamation: spontaneous overflow of powerful emotion
- Tone is very invitational and open: "Come often to us" (line 14)
- "Fear no wrong" (line 14) suggests the utopia and idyll of the orchard-ground and nature in general
- Idea of the collective: "Ours" (line 10) and "We'll" (line 16)
- Rhyme between "wrong" (line 14) and "song" (line 16) gives it lyricality and musicality
- "Bough" in line 13 refers to the main branch of a tree, gentle image
- The invitation is further sweetened by the speaker's promise to talk of "sunshine and of song" (line 16)—of pastoral and joyous things
- Elements of sunshine, yellow and summer (warmth) throughout the poem: "yellow" (line 2), "sunshine" (line 16), "summer" (line 17), bright imagery bringing about joy
- Idea of recollection in "when we were young" (line 17): idea of childhood as the utopia and the importance of memory, reinforced in "sweet childish days" (line 18)

- Extra line in the second stanza, and indentation of the last line serves to draw out the effect of how a childhood day was "as long / as twenty days are now" (lines 18-19)—serving to emphasize the pleasures and utopia of childhood as compared to the quickness of the present

Conclusion

- The butterfly is a symbol of the highest virtues of the natural world—as symbol of the sweet innocence to death, pain and the blissful ignorance of civilization that Wordsworth tries to emulate as an advocate of Romantic ideals
- The butterfly has no concepts or worries of time, similar to how Wordsworth describes the bliss of childhood
- The butterfly is essentially a chosen cherub of divine natural grace, existing outside the harsh realities of civilization that man is forced to live in; Wordsworth hopes to capture some of that bliss for himself through mere physical proximity, hence his invitation for the butterfly to stay in his orchard-ground
- The butterfly, through living simply and leading a pastoral life, achieves a high state of existence that a Romantic like Wordsworth can only awe at
- The butterfly is without worry or civilized pursuits, and dances angelically on the gentle breeze of fate, ignorant completely of death. The butterfly is an actualization of the Romantic philosophy and a living example of Wordsworth's Romantic ideals.

IOC Notes – Wordsworth

To The Cuckoo (1802)

About

- Welcoming the arrival of Spring
- Contemplation of a "vanished childhood" and an "imaginative response to nature"
- Written in March 1802 as part of a collection of poems focused on youth and recollections
- Memory, sensory awe and individualism
- Categorized under "imagination"

Perspective

- Wordsworth's own

Tone

- Pastoral and an entirely happy poem
- Light-hearted

Structure

- Ballad
- Quatrain
- Alternate rhyme
- Tetrameter to trimeter

Relation to other works

- To a Butterfly ("Stay near me")
    - Quality of sunshine to represent peace, nature and paradise "we'll talk of sunshine and of song" (line 16)
- Ode: Intimations of Immortality
    - Manifestation of the celestial and divine, a "visionary gleam" (line 56)
    - Importance and wonders of childhood "Nature's priest" (line 72)
- Composed Upon Westminster Bridge
    - Suspension in the memory of ones past "In his first splendor valley, rock or hill" (line 10)
- Lines Written in Early Spring
    - "What man has made of man" (line 8) and its lamentations

Analysis (Chronological)

First Stanza (Lines 1-4)

- Strong emotions (sensibility) and a spontaneous overflow in "blithe" (line 1) and "rejoice" (line 2)
- The voice is given a mystical and omnipresent quality through "wandering" (line 4), cross-referencing to line 16 "a voice a mystery"

- "A wandering Voice" in line 4 wonders if the Cuckoo is more than just a bird; its physical absence is unimportant and is something divine pulling him into the past, allowing him to experience these emotions (transcendence)
- The anapestic (- - /) substitution on "wandering voice" (line 4) emphasizes and escalates the rhythm while dragging it out
- Rhyme between "rejoice" (line 2) and "voice" (line 4) sees the jubilance imbued in the sound
- Capitalization of natural elements seeks to put them on a pedestal and elevate them in celebration

Second Stanza (Lines 5-8)

- "Lying on the grass" (line 5) contrasts with the "restless shout" (line 6) to display the vitality and energy of nature
- Rhyme between "grass" (line 5) and "pass" (line 7) to display kinesthetic contrast in displaying the energy of nature
- Though the speaker does not move, nature is still restless and full of energy, which translates to the rest of the poem; despite nature's restlessness it has not changed and the Cuckoo is still the same celestial presence but it is the speaker who has grown up and become the one "lying on the grass" (line 5)
- "I hear thy" (line 6)
- Tri- vs. tetrameter
- Lines 7-8 are playful and lyrical to accompany the Cuckoo's energy

Third Stanza (Lines 9-12)

- "To me" (line 9) reflects on the speaker (and Wordsworth's individualism)
- "No Babbler with a tale" (line 9) reflects the fact that he is waiting on conversation
- Uses the luminous quality of sunshine to reflect peace, harmony and paradise in line 10: "Of sunshine and of flowers"—nature's beauty, symbolism of the sun (jubilance and celestial quality)
- Powerful diction in bringing out the transcendence and mystery of the sublime in "of visionary hours" (line 12), teasing out the sublime which is something beyond human comprehension, a passionate manifestation of divinity

Fourth Stanza (Lines 13-16)

- Evident outflow of emotions in "Thrice welcome" (line 13) to emphasize his acceptance and elation
- Playfulness and lyrical, energetic quality of the Cuckoo and the joy it brings as a harbinger of springtime is reflected in the Cuckoo being the "Darling of the Spring" (line 13) where capitalization is used to bring out the significance of the spring, while the rhyme between "darling" and "spring" in the same line seeks to give it singsong and lyrical qualities
- There is an inversion of meter which begins an anapest in "Even yet thou art to me" (line 14) where "yet" is stressed to emphasize the meaning and the tetrameter seems to force a quick reading to emphasize "yet"

- Rejection of the physical object and instead emphasizes the transcendent where the Cuckoo is "No Bird, but an invisible Thing" (line 15), while "an invisible Thing" (line 15) utilizes anapestic substitution to build emphasis and escalate the rhythm; the meter forces one to read it quickly almost like an exclamation in response to lines 3-4
- "A voice, a mystery" (line 16) right after the anapestic escalation makes this line almost like a whisper, bringing out the mystic and enigmatic quality imbued in the Cuckoo, teasing out the divine and a yearning to discover the secrets of nature

Between the Fourth (Lines 13-16) and Fifth Stanza (Lines 17-20)

- SHIFT: the speaker goes back to revisit his past

Fifth Stanza (Lines 17-20)

- Capitalization occurs yet again for the purpose of emphasizing words of significance, e.g. "School-boy days" (line 17), where "School" is not just a place of learning, but in fact represents an important part of his life and is a place of nostalgia and even a metonym for childhood
- Line 18 is filled with Romantic power "spontaneous overflow of emotion" when his nostalgia is elucidated
- "Cry" (line 18) is capitalized to show it was just not a sound but in fact a sublime, evocative quality which transports Wordsworth through his memory
- The idea of an omnipresent divine and the celestial quality is furthered in line 19 when Wordsworth was made to "look a thousand ways", displaying a yearning and desire to find the sound and source of emotion through the hyperbole, consistent now as well as when it was a "wandering Voice" (line 4)
- Process of searching is characterized as wide and painstaking through how he looks "in bush, and tree, and sky" (line 20) while the monosyllabic iambic meter combined with caesura imbues the rhythmic quality and emphasizes the suspension in memory of the past

Sixth Stanza (Lines 21-24)

- His awe of nature and endless yearning to discover nature and its secrets as well as the incomprehensible are displayed in how "to seek thee did I often rove" (line 21): "rove" suggests aimlessness and fulfillment of his search, thus increasing the yearning and making nature more beautiful and wondrous
- Line 22 reinforces the idea of searching
- Reinforcement of the yearning and the desire to experience nature, except now it veers towards the romantic in "a hope, a love" (line 23) of the quiet yearning that captures one's imagination and results in a spontaneous outflow of romantic emotions
- "Still longed for, never seen" (line 24) lacks any hint of lamentation or resignation, instead the tone seems almost content with not being able to see the Cuckoo because its voice can be heard, but the yearning is clear

Between the Sixth (Lines 21-24) and Seventh (Lines 25-28) Stanzas

- SHIFT: speaker returns to his present

Seventh Stanza (Lines 25-28)

- "And I can listen to thee yet" (line 25) is similar to coming out of a dreamlike state ("yet") and he is joyful and at peace despite the unsolved mystery of his past; the repetition of "listen" here and in line 27 creates a sense of peace and tranquility that surrounds the speaker: an almost sublime moment suspended by recollection of "that golden time" (line 28), perhaps his schooling days
- Rhyme between "plain" (line 26) and "again" (line 28) ties the emotion of jubilee in "that golden time" (line 28) to his memory as he recounts it
- His elevation and nostalgia in recounting his childhood memories is evident in his characterization of "school-boy days" and refers to it as a "golden time"
- Lines 27-28 are almost comforting

Eighth Stanza (Lines 29-32)

- Celestial quality and divinity shows through in the religious language used to address the Cuckoo: "O blessed Bird" (line 29) suggesting the qualities of religious nature imbued in the Cuckoo
- The "O" might also be Wordsworth coming full circle to end the poem with a proclamation
- Suggests that Man does not own nature's gifts and also highlights the monotony of the Earth without nature in "pace" (line 29)
- "Again" (line 30) is a reference where he laments on the prizing of material gain despite it being "unsubstantial" (line 31), but this tone is still somewhat masked by the awe and magnificence
- Line 31 suggests that there is no place in the world for Man; the word "faery" (line 31) gives the characterization of the world a divine, celestial feel as well as a transcendent, ethereal quality that urges one to look at the world's beauty
- Line 32 ends off the poem in tribute to the grandeur of the Cuckoo and of nature at large
- There is still tension between "the earth we pace" (line 29) and the earth that is "fit home for Thee" (line 32), hinting at the suggestion that nature is larger than Man and Man can wonder at nature but will never be at "home" as nature is too large and incomprehensible for man

IOC Notes – Wordsworth

"The world is too much with us" (1802)

About

- Humanity's inability to feel nature
- Materialism and obsession with "getting and spending"
- Context of the Industrial Revolution, which distances man from nature and the response of Romanticism as well as after the French Revolution
- The world is too overwhelming for us to appreciate it and we sell our souls to materialism; the speaker would rather be a pagan to be able to see mythological gods
- Published in *Poems in Two Volumes* (1807)

Perspective

- Wordsworth's

Tone

- Romantic, typically a love poem which reflects Wordsworth's admiration for nature and lamentation at Man's disconnect from it

Structure/Traits of a Petrarchan sonnet

- Usually a gift from a lover to another and usually discusses unrequited love
- Divided into an octave (lines 1-8) and a sestet (lines 9-14)
- Shift (the turn/*volta*) in the ninth line is marked by a change in rhyme scheme (ABBA ABBA CDCDCD)
- Iambic pentameter
- The sestet is supposed to resolve the problem but Wordsworth subverts it by not introducing a resolution

Relations to other works

- London 1802
    - The ideas of Milton to save this decadent era
- Ode: Intimations of Immortality
    - Disconnect with nature from birth
- Solitary Reaper
    - Isolation: collective in the octave and individual in the sestet

Analysis (Chronological)

Lines 1-2

- Opens with a complaint that "the world is too much with us; late and soon" (line 1) which betrays a sense of languishing and weariness while "getting and spending" (monotony of the phrase) (line 2) is the speaker's perceived cause of our problems and suggests that materialism is self-destruction
- The title is not really a title, more like a direct quotation of the first line; it could mean that life in contemporary society is too much or nature is too

much for humanity to appreciate, but alternatively it could mean mankind is a burden
- "Late and soon" (line 1) is paradoxical at first but means what is done in the past will be done in the future as well; the anaphora emphasizes

Lines 3-4
- Rift between nature and humanity is emphasized further as "little we see in nature that is ours" (line 3) suggests we have become so consumerist that nature is now a commodity and we do not respect nature as a elevated creation
- Motif of sight "see" being man's window to the appreciation of nature
- Nature can't be spent, thus here Wordsworth suggests that we do not value nature because it seems like it has nothing to offer us
- "Getting and spending": internal rhyme
- A "boon" (line 4) means a reward or benefit while "sordid" (line 4) describes baser or vile matters, thus leading to "sordid boon" (line 4) being an oxymoron and contradictory, highlighting the incongruity between the "boon" we receive from materialism and the "sordid" nature of man and its destructiveness
- Exclamation mark: outpouring of emotions
- "Given our hearts away" (line 4): feeling, the spontaneous outflow of lamentation and loss (lover to a lover vs. man giving his heart away from nature) as well as the giving up of power
- ABBA rhyme scheme from lines 1-4 is monotonous and reflective of the meaninglessness of materialism

Lines 5-8
- Elaborates on man's removal/disconnect/alienation from nature as it claims that we are "out of tune" (line 8) with the elements of nature such as the "sea" (line 6) and the "winds" (line 7)
- Personification of the sea as it "bares her bosom to the moon" (line 5) and lends credence to the sea as it adds to the usage of capitalization of natural elements, while literally representing the dependency of the tide on the moon, thus here Wordsworth comments on their relationship
- The winds are "howling at all hours" (line 6) while there are "sleeping flowers" (line 7) which suggests the winds are at rest but will "howl" when it arises, appearing discordant—hyperbole showing omnipresence and all-encompassing nature of nature, c.f. Daffodils as well as the contrast showing the dynamic aspect of nature
- "For" (line 8) repetition for emphasis while the usage of the word itself means that either we're not in the right tune for the natural world or we are not in the right tune because of our materialism
- Caesura causes a break which reflects the "out of tune" feature of the poem
- Power and expanse of nature as described in lines 5-6 are dulled by us being "out of tune", highlighting nature's features that we are unable to comprehend

Lines 9-10

- SHIFT in tone and topic of discussion to the personal in line 9 as signaled by the change in rhyme scheme
- Exclamation of "God!" (Line 9) highlighting desperation
- Caesura gives emphasize to "great God"
- Capitalization referring to a specific monotheistic deity
- "Creed outworn" (line 10) signaling weariness
- Enjambment: emphasis to his desperation
- Would rather be a believer of an antiquated, naïve, primitive religion—sacrilege

Lines 11-12

- Being a pagan supposedly would make him feel "less forlorn" (line 12) and in tune with nature as he would be able to have "glimpses" (line 12)
- Sensory: "glimpses" (line 11), "sight" (line 12), "hear" (line 13)
- A "lea" (line 11) refers to a meadow
- Sardonic use of the sestet

Lines 13-14

- Elaboration of the "glimpses" mentioned in line 12
- Proteus is a sea god in Greek mythology that was able to see the future but did not wish to use his power; if someone tried to force him to see, he would change his shape and escape
- Modern word "protean" meaning variable/changing a lot
- Triton was a son of Poseidon and had a conch shell he blew into to excite/calm the waves
- "Wreathed" (line 14) referring to the twisted, coiled, sinewy and the "horn" (line 14) being the conch shell
- Admires nature to the extent of rejecting the monotheistic God in favor of deities that have an intimate connection with nature

The Sensory

- Line 3: blindness in alienation
- Line 8: out of tune: musicality and lack of harmony
- Line 12: sight
- Line 13: sight
- Line 14: hearing
- Appreciation of nature involves the engaging of the senses

Feeling and sentiment

- Line 4: given our hearts away; the organ is most associated with feelings and sentiment, suggests weariness
- Line 9: nature doesn't move us anymore
- Line 12: "forlorn"
- Weariness is usually presented in the octave, which sets up the "problem"

IOC Notes – Wordsworth

Composed Upon Westminster Bridge (1802)

About

- Love for the city from Westminster Bridge
- Beauty of the city and the rising sun's majesty
- London being the subject of the poem is unusual given his tendencies to write about subjects such as Lake District and to criticize city life and industrialization
- Sudden appreciation of London is inconsistent with earlier poems; but the London he writes about is an idealized version—highlighting the difference between the beauty of nature and the devastation of urbanization
- Travelling to France with Dorothy

Perspective

- Wordsworth's own

Tone

- Reverent
- "Composed"—"a calm so deep" (line 11)

Structure/Traits of a Petrarchan Sonnet

- Divided into an octave (lines 1-8) and a sestet (lines 9-14)
- Shift (the turn/*volta*) in the ninth line is marked by a change in rhyme scheme (ABBA ABBA CDCDCD) and also breaks away from the iambic pentameter
- Steady rhyming creates a lulling rhythm and creates a sense of tranquility while also connecting some ideas together
- Iambic pentameter
- Usually associated with love and passion (intense emotions for nature)
- Main subject is the city

Relation to other works

Analysis (Chronological)

The octave (lines 1-8)

- Focuses on Wordsworth's favorable perception of London through his imagination
- Unexpected when Wordsworth opens with a heartfelt appreciation for the city—he usually criticizes industrial progress and material prosperity—in line 1: "Earth has not any thing to shew more fair", where hyperbole is used (a staple in Romantic poetry) to discuss London: the busiest and largest city at the time
- Describes the natural beauty as something everyone would be able to inherently appreciate, save for those who are "dull" of "soul" who would merely "pass by" (line 2)
- Line 2 is monosyllabic

- The city almost comes alive in line 4, when it "doth like a garment wear / The beauty of the morning; silent, bare" (lines 4-5) which personifies the city and gives it a lifelike quality; creation of imagery of the city literally being enshrouded in light/the light dresses the city almost
- Capitalization of the word "city": exaltation and gives it a lifelike and autonomous recognition
- To "wear" the sunlight like clothing gives it a temporal and ephemeral quality
- Line 6 amplifies the scale and activity of the city by listing the different elements present—"Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie" (line 6) and hopes to describe the city in its entirety, while giving it a sense of grandeur when these elements lie "open unto the fields, and to the sky" (line 7)
- "Bright and glittering" (line 8) gives the structures a celestial appearance, though the glittering could also be due to the shining of the sun
- Tracing emotion: hyperbole and specific lines

The sestet (lines 9-14)

- Focuses attention on the splendor of the sun and the river
- The shift is clearly marked when line 8 has 11 syllables, breaking the iambic pentameter along with the change in rhyme scheme which then is added to by the period at the end of line 8 which ends the rhythm altogether in preparation for the sestet
- Wordsworth addresses the sun as having lifelike qualities when he attaches the pronoun "his" to it in line 10, personifying it and implying that it is an embodiment of the natural world
- The cycle of the sun rising and falling is described as "beautiful" in line 9, and is personified as being as autonomous as the river Thames which has "his own sweet will" in line 12
- Spontaneous overflow of emotions in appreciating the beauty and splendor of nature when he feels a "calm so deep" (line 11) which is accentuated by the exclamation mark that follows
- Ironic that he finds calm in an urban setting
- The city has a life of its own as shown in how the river Thames "glideth at his own sweet will" (line 12) and adds to the idea of smoothness and peacefulness; not being disturbed by nature—it soothes Wordsworth into a calm so deep he becomes "composed" (title)
- River is almost like a place of refuge and tranquility
- Spontaneous overflow in line 13: "dear God!" where he reaches the climax of his description of the freedom and tranquility of the river and the sun, attaching an almost religious significance to the beauty of nature, reminding one of the statement made in line 2 that no one was immune to the sight
- Overall tone of the poem is reverent and in awe of the splendor of nature, with the rhyme scheme lulling readers into tranquility which is echoed repeatedly in how he feels a "calm so deep" (line 11), and the city's commercial industry (the "mighty heart", line 14) is "lying still" (line 14)

- Sense of dreaminess in Wordsworth's imagination of the city

IOC Notes – Wordsworth

London 1802

About

- England's poor state and numerous problems which required redemption through going back to the values of nature and fundamental thinking
- Paying homage to John Milton, whose sonnets were subject to his admiration—Milton glorifies England's past and is religious, but had opposing views to Establishment ideals
- Imagery of 1) social degradation, 2) nature and knightly values, 3) the transcendent and ethereal
- Milton's *Paradise Lost* reflects on the biblical fall of man and loss of virtue in peoples
- Written briefly after his disillusionment with the French Revolution
- Published in *Poems in Two Volumes* (1807), written shortly after return from France

Perspective

- Wordsworth's

Tone

- More conservative than his earlier offerings; has flashes of distinct nationalism

Structure/Traits of a Petrarchan sonnet

- Dedication or exaltation of the subject matter i.e. Milton's virtues
- Divided into an octave (lines 1-8) and a sestet (lines 9-14)
- Shift (the turn/*volta*) in the ninth line is marked by a change in rhyme scheme (ABBA ABBA CDDECE)
- Iambic pentameter
- The octave sets the issue up while the sestet typically answers the question or comments introduced in the octave
- Wordsworth uses this structure to move the poem in a thematic order
- Rhyming links ideas and contributes to the lyrical nature of the poem

Relations to other works

- "The world is too much with us"
    - The ideas of a decadent era

Analysis (Chronological)

The octet (lines 1-8)

- Exposition: describes the current problem with England and laments its state
- England is at present a "fen / Of stagnant waters" (lines 2-3) where a "fen" refers to a bog/wetland covered in algae, thus associating the rank and foul nature of a degraded society while "stagnant waters" literally suggests that England is devoid of activity and represent a lack of life in the environment—

note how Wordsworth uses natural elements even in making negative comparisons

- Enjambment of "fen / pen" (lines 2-3)
- Despite economic growth, England has stagnated spiritually
- Milton's core vision of England is summarized in three words: "altar, sword and pen" (line 3) where "altar" is a synecdoche for the Church—reflects Wordsworth's own growing conservatism as he points to the Church rather than nature as a place of worship; "sword" refers to military might and "pen" refers to literature—both are metonyms
- Wordsworth also suggests that England has lost power when he calls on Milton in line 8 for "power", while the pen is a reference to Milton himself, which will be reinforced in line 10—Milton's "voice"
- He recalls the pre-industrial times of Milton in the synecdoche of the "fireside" (line 4) as it was a common feature in average households in those times and departs from his appreciation of grand ideas
- "The heroic wealth of hall and bower" (line 4) displays his nostalgia and admiration for the past, where "heroic" suggests that material prosperity came hand in hand with character, valor and bravery, unlike contemporary "selfish men" (line 6) and also displays distaste for monetary wealth
- He feels that the English are apathetic to their current state and suggests that they are deliberately refusing to address it; he suggests that they have "forfeited their ancient English dower / Of inward happiness" (lines 5-6) and advocates a return to tradition, linking inner happiness to England's achievements (similarly, he links nature to inner fulfillment)
- "Dower" (line 5) refers to dowry, something a bride was entitled to—similarly, he believes that the English are entitled to national pride and success, thus increasing the indignation when they ignore it and suggests that this is due to industrialization; the people have lost their soul
- Explicit condemnation when he proclaims "we are selfish men" (line 6), in iambic, stressing on the selfishness plus the caesura causes it to stand alone
- Exclamations further emphasize the seriousness and the emotions of the situation
- The description sets the stage for the need to call upon Milton—Wordsworth yearns for Milton and attempts to speak to him and invoke his authority, apostrophizing when he suggests Milton "should'st be living at this hour" (line 1), where urgency is suggested through "hour"
- Later, Wordsworth calls upon him to "raise us up, return to us" (line 7) and to "give us manners, virtue, freedom, power" (line 8), where the grouping of these values remind one of the grouping in line 3: "altar, sword and pen" where the alter and pen give rise to manners and virtue; while the sword gives rise to freedom and power—good character before greatness

The sestet (lines 9-14)

- Solution: engages in his eulogy and homage to Milton, who is what he believes as the solution to England's problems and the representation of Milton as part of England's golden age

- Reflection on Milton's deeper nature—his "soul was like a Star and dwelt apart" (line 9), where iambic pentameter focuses on words such as soul and Star, focusing on Milton's inner character and values while using Star to exalt him and compare him to an almost celestial, superior element and adds a feeling of the ethereal; the comparison with nature is significant in Wordsworth's books, as it is probably the highest form of praise and connotes the idea of Milton like a guide similar to a star
- Stress on "apart" (line 9) isolates Milton from the masses
- Images of nature are used positively for Milton unlike for England: "fen" (line 2) vs. the positive usage of aquatic imagery to deify Milton in line 10, which claims his voice sounded "like the sea" and even as "pure as the naked heavens" (line 11), linking it not just to incorruptibility but also to the divine
- Milton, like nature, arouses a sense of wonder and awe in Wordsworth—the comparison to "heavens" (line 11) and the "sea" (line 10) are how he manages to understand Milton, but these are the very pinnacles of nature; inaccessible and "majestic, free" (line 11)
- Humanizes Milton to make him appear closer to the common man from line 12 onwards, claiming that he did "travel on life's common way", thus encouraging those who aspire to live like Milton did
- The usage of "travel" is interesting; it suggests life was merely a liminal space for Milton on the way to something bigger, more divine and celestial
- Even in this down-to-earth representation, Milton possesses a "cheerful godliness" (line 13) which suggests he was so great even human emotions had traces of the divine in them
- Milton also appears to have had sound character and good heart (line 13), when Wordsworth suggests that he did the "lowliest duties" (line 14), in a backhanded stab at the current state of the people running the Establishment—the selfish, materialistic men of the industrial era

IOC Notes – Wordsworth

Ode: Intimations of Immortality

About

- Childhood, remembrance and celestial glory of nature
- Began in 1802—Wordsworth wrote the first four stanzas and ended with the question and was written among a series of poems about childhood (To a Butterfly, To a Cuckoo and Tintern Abbey)
- Took a two year hiatus before he continued in 1804
- Speculated that he needed to overturn the "naturalistic milieu" of his earlier mindset

Perspective

- Wordsworth's own

Tone

- Changes throughout the poem—the strophe is questioning and melancholic, while the antistrophe is explanatory and understands the question; the epode represents a shift in emotions as Wordsworth reconciles and accepts the state of man

Structure

- Pindarick Ode—a type of lyrical poem—meant to praise or glorify an event or individual
- Elaborately structured in describing nature intellectually and emotionally
- Ascending and descending structural curve
- The poem is mainly in iambic meter (base rhythm) therefore heightening the significance of breaks in the rhythm or the resurgence of iambic meter
- Regular ABABA or ABBA rhyme scheme to achieve the lilting feel and lyricality of the poem
- Three sections of the Ode: strophe (stanzas 1-4), antistrophe (stanzas 5-8) and the epode (stanzas 9-11)

Relations to other works

- To the Cuckoo
    - Memory, the past and the present
    - Images of nature
- To the Butterfly
    - Juxtaposition of the past and present
    - Images of children and infancy
- Tintern Abbey
    - Regretting the loss of intensity of nature and its tranquility
- The World is Too Much with Us
    - Dangers of worldliness

Analysis (Chronological)

IOC Notes – Wordsworth

Title

-

Strophe—presenting the issue that Wordsworth is currently facing: he acknowledges the existence of the qualities of nature, but questions why these elements do not hold the same intensity as before

Antistrophe—expounds on his explanation that Man's ability to appreciate nature is caged by worldliness

Epode—realization that this problem can be mitigated by usage of memory and imagination; gives a sense of redemption and acceptance, ending with a call to the reader and a word of caution

IOC Notes – Wordsworth

"I wandered lonely as a Cloud" (1804)

About

- Composed in 1804
- Inspired by a walk in Lake District and an entry in Dorothy's diary where they came across a whole belt of daffodils
- Published in *Poems in Two Volumes* in 1807

Perspective

- Wordsworth's own

Tone

- Lyric poem—romantic poetry, the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings
- Though usually there are spoken in present tense, this is in the past tense, perhaps for the idea of remembrance and recollection
- Typically emotional and romantic feelings

Structure

- Three six-line stanzas, a lyric poem which follows a quatrain couplet rhyme scheme: ABABCC
- Each line is metered in iambic tetrameter, giving it a regular rhythm which is whimsical and allows readers to share in the feeling of joy derived from being in the countryside—a rhapsody

Relations to other works

- Tintern Abbey, Ode and Lines Written in Early Spring
    - Recollection and memory as continuity

Analysis (Chronological)

First Stanza (lines 1-6)

- "Wandered" in line 1 gives a feeling of escape and lack of bounds, perhaps resulting from the joy of being amongst nature—this feeling is paired up with most of Wordsworth's works as a whole to extol the virtues of being connected with nature
- Sounds like an aimless, rambling journey; the melancholy is presented in the form of his isolation and individual experience: "I" (line 1) and "lonely" (line 1), which was a convention of the time
- Capitalization of the word "Cloud" (line 1) to elevate nature's element and also uses the cloud to relate to himself, giving his thoughts loftiness and places himself in the role of an outsider
- "Floats" in line 2 relates to the cloud and gives us an idea of how "high" (line 2) on happiness he is and the immense joy that he feels; the setting of "high o'er Vales and Hills" (line 2) demonstrates the immensity of nature and the

sublime (of the smallness of oneself amidst the wide expanse) while giving almost a birds eye view to the reader

- Regular rhyme and rhythm of the stanza gives a sense of immediacy and personification, which is reinforced by the adjectives used to describe the movements of the elements of nature; the "Daffodils" (line 4) are described as being in a "crowd" (line 3) and are shown to be "dancing" (lines 4, 6 and 7) which, apart from personification, also vividly describes the movement and develops the kinesthetic imagery for the reader
- This "dancing" is the signal for the shift in the emotion of the stanza, from the melancholy of loneliness to the sudden sight of the daffodils: "all at once" (line 3) referring to a burst of joy, a sudden sight, a spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings of celebration and good cheer, resulting from his return to nature
- The kinesthetic imagery is joyous and pulls away from the individual's feeling of smallness and his melancholy to the grandness of nature, drawing man back to it, highlighting its restorative quality
- The fullness and expanse of nature is highlighted in how the daffodils are so expansive that they are "along the Lake, beneath the trees, / Ten thousand dancing in the breeze" (lines 5 and 6); hyperbole in "ten thousand" is used to paint an almost intimidating image of the sublime, the strength of nature to give joy and "produce and overwhelming sense of awe or other high emotion through being vast or grand"
- The rhyme of "cloud" (line 1) and "crowd" (line 3) link the ideas together and juxtaposes the image of the lonely cloud versus the crowd of the daffodils, suggesting the restorative quality of nature through the purging of the melancholy and loneliness that plagued the individual
- Rhyme of "hills" (line 2) and "daffodils" (line 4) link the images together and creates the picture of the pastoral environment, a stylistic choice
- Rhyme of "trees" (line 5) and "breeze" (line 6) serve to create a sense of ease and gracefulness
- Lines 5-6 are especially impactful given the rhythm of the iambic tetrameter which builds intensity as the speaker describes the expanse of the daffodils

Second Stanza (lines 7-12)

- Enjambment between lines 7 and 8 create a sense of flow which attempts to describe the flow of the waves (a sense of movement and grace of the dance)
- "Outdid" (line 8) and "glee" (line 8) serves to describe further the kinesthetic imagery and infuses a sense of playfulness and joy into the pastoral setting, creating a sense of liveliness and overlays the tone with an innocent and whimsical childlikeness
- "Sparkling" (line 8) adds life to a non-living aspect of nature which then causes it to be associated with liveliness, a bursting sense of exuberance and pleasure derived from nature (sense of childlikeness and childhood)
- Attempts some self-reflexivity in line 9, when the speaker claims that a "poet could not but be gay" in a reference to himself reacting and trying to capture the joy around him while the rhyme between "they" (line 7) and "gay" (line 9)

adds to the playful and rapturous atmosphere of the already playful and rapturous waves, infusing a sense of childlikeness and also combating the sense of melancholy which came with the loneliness

- "Laughing company" in line 10 serves to personify the waves and the daffodils to lighten the atmosphere—the message is that nature is company and the antidote to his loneliness; he draws upon nature to replace his sadness with joy and is no longer a mere onlooker or observer, but a real participant in the pastoral environment, causing disjuncture with the title
- Rhyme between "glee" (line 8) and "company" (line 10) link the idea of happiness and joy with the company of the daffodils
- The punctuation of the colons and dashes create a pause in line 11, allowing for the shift in the poem to take place which slows down the pace of the poem and takes on a more contemplative, reflective tone
- Suggests the under appreciation of nature and little thought towards its grandeur when he "gazed – and gazed" (line 11) but had "little thought" (line 11) of the "wealth" (line 12) (referring to the worth of nature) that the sight brought him
- Rhyming of "thought" (line 11) and "brought" (line 12) links the ideas of memory and recollections serving as the catalyst for the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings as well as imagination
- "What wealth the shew to me had brought:" (line 12) sees anastrophe (the inversion of the usual order of words) in order to create a dramatic effect

Third Stanza (lines 13-18)

- A physical shift takes place when the setting changes perhaps to the city that he currently resides in, when he is indoor on his "couch" (line 13)
- The caesura slows down the pace and adds to the pensive nature of this stanza and is somber, dull, in contrast to the happiness of earlier
- The stanza essentially is a huge flash-forward from the recollection in the earlier two stanzas—this stanza is in present tense—and a revelation towards the question of line 12: "what wealth the shew to me had brought"
- Disjuncture from the sense and feeling created by the whimsicality and rhythm and rhyme of the previous images
- Lines 15 and 16 were apparently written by Wordsworth's wife and sees a slight break in the "flash" (line 15) which contrasts with the pensiveness and dullness of the previous two lines and provides illumination
- Rhyming connection between "lie" (line 13) and "eye" (line 15) as well as between "mood" (line 14) and "solitude" (line 16) display a sense of stillness, deep thought and melancholy
- The contrast between the first two and the next two lines in this stanza is stark—the atmosphere completely shifts from the dull to the fantastical as "they flash upon that inward eye" (line 15) where it could refer to imagination and memory
- "The bliss of solitude" (line 16) shows a release from loneliness as the speaker's connection to nature creates the joy and shows that one can use memory as a substitute for actual physical nature

- Memory also facilitates his return to a more blissful time of childlikeness and the entire poem is a recollection—memory and idealistic imagery convey the allure of childhood, an escape from the city and the transcendence of nature
- Rhyming between "fills" (line 17) and "daffodils" (line 18) suggests being filled with the pleasure derived from nature and its ability to drive out sadness, as well as causing a recurring image of daffodils, symbolizing pleasure, bliss, freedom and company

Conclusion

- Wordsworth comments on his own personal memory as opposed to social or general commentaries
- Comments on the role of memory to open the heart to a more innocent time, giving the speaker the lens of childlikeness to draw out feelings of joy, amazement and wonder in awakening to the sublimity of the landscape
- Restorative quality of nature is able to breach physical constraints due to the transcendental quality of the image of daffodils along the pastoral countryside setting due to the role of memory and imagination for the speaker to draw these recollections

IOC Notes – Wordsworth

The Solitary Reaper (1805)

About

- A Scottish highland maiden who sings while she reaps in the field
- Solitary reapers were a common sight in the Scottish highland
- Published in *Poems in Two Volumes* in 1807—asserted that writing ought to focus on the commonplace

Perspective

- Wordsworth's but it is not about his own experience; it is about the experiences of someone else who he passed by: he saw her reaping in the field and singing

Tone

- Composed and calm while giving way to the occasional outflow of emotion
- Melancholic tone, evolving from the imperative, the comparative, the inquisitive and finally to the contemplative

Structure

- Monosyllabic words dominate the poem, for the "common man"
- Ballad arranged into four octets (eight-line stanzas), written in tight iambic tetrameter
- Each stanza has an ABABCCDD rhyme scheme but in the first and last stanzas the "B" words don't rhyme e.g. "field / herself" (line 1 and 3) and "sang / work" (line 25 and 27)
- 1st and 3rd: ABCBDDEE
- 2nd and 4th: ABABCCDD
- Iambic foot (/ -) serves to develop the feeling of calmness and composure that the speaker experiences when in the presence of the Reaper
- Every 1st, 2nd and 3rd lines: iambic tetrameter
- Every 4th line: iambic trimeter (flow that mimics the story of the Reaper)
- First three stanzas use present tense while last stanza uses past

Relations to other works

Analysis (Chronological)

- "I wandered lonely as a Cloud" and Ode
    - Emotions and the role of memory and remembrance

First Stanza (lines 1-8)

- The speaker encounters a maiden working in the Scottish highland, after which he beseeches readers to avoid interrupting her and marvels that the valley is filled with her song
- Imperative tone as Wordsworth "commands" the reader: "behold", "stop", "listen"

- "Behold" (line 1) signals his excitement and exaltation as he introduces the subject of the poem; "single" (line 1) immediately links us to the idea of "solitary" (title and line 2) which describes her isolation and singular presence
- Capitalization of nature's elements are evident in "Highland" (line 2) and "Vale" (line 7) where it aims to serve the purpose of exaltation of nature and its qualities—similarly, "Lass" (line 2) and "Maiden" (line 25) suggest that the maiden is special as well
- The whole poem is written in iambic tetrameter, but the fourth line in the first 3 stanzas are in iambic trimeter, e.g. line 4: "stop here, or gently pass" serving as an imperative caution to the reader to halt and listen or to move on as quietly as possible—"gently" (line 4) lends to the Reaper some form of respect and exaltation
- Caesura in line 4: the comma after "stop here" combined with the change in meter serves to draw audience attention to the line and suggest his earnestness to preserve the sublime in the quotidian setting; the exclamation mark at the end of line 4 is his spontaneous outflow of emotions
- Line 5 describes the physical labor of the reaper and line 6 describes the melancholic quality of her singing; assonance in "grain" (line 5) and "strain" (line 6) both rhyme and are connected as ideas for the reader, emphasizing the long vowels and drawing attention to those words, and as a rhyming couplet directly associates the hard labor with the sorrowful singing
- Hyperbole as the "vale" in line 7 is said to have been "overflowing" (line 8) with the sound of the reaper's lone singing, thus characterizing its expanse, while later on Wordsworth says that her singing was "breaking the silence of the seas / Among the farthest Hebrides" (lines 15-16) where Hebrides refers to the massive archipelago off the coast of Scotland—a hyperbolic exaggeration of distance

Second Stanza (lines 9-16)

- Listing of the other manifestations of nature to demonstrate that the singing of the reaper is so beautiful that these other manifestations cannot compare; stanza takes a more comparative tone
- Singing is likened to that of a "Nightingale" (line 9) and a "Cuckoo-bird" (line 14), both songbirds known for their melodious tunes
- The comparison to the nightingale speaks of the commonness and exclusivity of the singing of the reaper, while the comparisons with the cuckoo-bird and the mention of "spring-time" (line 14) paints a calming, pastoral representation of nature, connoting renewal, alacrity and vitality to her singing
- The mythical reference in the "reposing bands / Of Travellers" (lines 10-11) journeying across the "Arabian Sands" (line 12) is welcomed by the "sweet", mellifluous singing of a "Nightingale … chaunt" (line 9), providing respite and relief to the tired and weary highlighting the restorative qualities of the reaper's singing. This scene parallels that of the speaker's, as the speaker too journeys over the Scottish Highland and is mesmerized by the reaper's singing.

- The Cuckoo-bird's voice is only heard in spring-time, while the solitary reaper's singing is pervasive and "breaks the silence of the seas" (line 15) among the farthest Hebrides; capitalization utilized again to exalt and elevate the birds
- Repetition of "sweet" words in line 10 and 13 ascribe a quality of affection and lovingness to the singing of the reaper, but the usage of the word "no" before "nightingale" in line 9 and before "sweeter" in line 13 suggests that nothing is comparable to the reaper's singing
- The word "no" at the start of each line is anaphoric and both serve to refute and prove that nothing can compare to the singing of the lonely reaper, not even the songbirds
- A sustained tone of fascination, extolment and commendation towards the reaper

Third Stanza (lines 17-24)

- Wordsworth is actually unable to understand what the reaper is singing about and can only speculate as to the subject matter—his inquiry comes in line 17: "will no one tell me what she sings?"
- Rhetorical question suggests a tone of curiosity and slight exasperation as he wonders why the reaper would sing with a "melancholy strain"
- Poetic lexicon in the word "numbers": usage of this word to describe her singing in line 18 reflects the lyrical quality of the reaper's singing as "numbers" is an alternative term for metrical foot
- Wondering about the subject matter: could it be about "old, unhappy, far-off things / and battles long ago" (lines 19-20), where commas signal listing and the search for an explanation by the speaker
- "And battles long ago" is iambic trimeter; it stands out from other lines in the poem and its effect—drawing attention to the phrase itself, probably an allusion to conflicts such as the French Revolution which are from Wordsworth's perspective, blurring the line between speaker and poet
- Usage of queries in opening the lines in majority of the stanza: "perhaps", "or is it", while "familiar" and "natural" open up to speculation
- His wondering carries on into lines 23 and 24 where the speaker mentions of "some natural sorrow, loss or pain / that has been, and may be again", where the comma acts as a caesura and reflects Wordsworth's disappointment and lamentation of the events of the past that may have been the source of the reaper's melancholy
- The speaker essentially catches only the tone of the melody, not the lyrics, thus evoking his speculation and wonder

Fourth Stanza (lines 25-32)

- Serves as resolution to the wonderment of the speaker—he finally accepts that he may never know what the maiden was singing about when he says "whate'er the theme, the Maiden sang" (line 25), where he acknowledges that he is still able to appreciate the singing despite his lack of knowledge and understanding

- Capitalization of "maiden" in line 26 with the usage of the hypercatalectic line consisting of 9 syllables instead of 8 displays the expansiveness and richness of her singing—the extra syllable in the line 26 pervades the constraints of the present tense
- Lines 29-32 suggest an emotional connection with the speaker, as he is solitarily journeying through the mountains as well
- Wordsworth is enveloped in the beauty, richness, elegance and splendor of the reaper's melody amid the valley setting and its resonant quality
- The lyrics of the reaper's song does not matter to Wordsworth in the end, however
- Rhyming couplets in line 29 and 30 as well as 31 and 32 associates the fullness and richness of the maiden's singing that "fills" the speaker as he moves up the hill—that the "music in my heart I bore, / Long after it was heard no more" (lines 31-32) suggest the fullness and transcendental, impermanent nature of the maiden's song as it transcends the limits of physical space and time, filling the "heart" (line 31) and being able to stay with the speaker long after he has passed

Conclusion

- Just like a ballad, it narratively describes a scene viewed through Wordsworth's/the speaker's eyes, exalting a harvester whose singing enraptures a passerby while she works in solitude
- Speaker marvels at the unparalleled qualities of richness, expansiveness and boundlessness of the melodies that the titular solitary reaper possesses