Revisiting Tintern Abbey

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Background Info

- Nature
- Romanticism

Stephanie Chao
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Nature

- Industrialism
  - Spoiled nature
  - Created an urban social life different from the pastoral life

- Development of Sensitiveness to Nature and Physical Surroundings
  - Attractiveness of nature
  - Wordsworth: What nature can do for the urban man
• Did you know?

• There were ironwork factories near Tintern Abbey and River Wye, which caused pollution to the latter.

• Yet Wordsworth believed that the “wreaths of smoke sent up, in silence from among the trees” was caused by “vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods” or a Hermit.

- From “The Song of the Earth” by Jonathan Bate
Nature—
The Objective vs. The Subjective

- The Picturesque: Rise of Modern Tourism
  • Late 18th century: to travel and look for scenery in nature that resembles paintings by masters became popular among the society.
  • Appreciate nature according to a set of rules
  • Ruined abbeys are claimed the most picturesque in English Landscape
- Wordsworth’s “Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey”
  • Does not mention the abbey
  • Appreciates nature through personal emotions, experiences and memories

- From “The Song of the Earth” by Jonathan Bate
Romanticism

- The end of 18\textsuperscript{th} century-19\textsuperscript{th} century
- Artistic, literary
- Against
  - Industrial revolution
  - Age of Enlightenment
  - Scientific rationalization of nature
- Emphasizes emotion and imagination
- Pursuit of “Heroic figure”
Romantic Period Painting

• The Sublime

Wanderer Above the Sea of Fog, by Caspar David Friedrich, 1818.

http://artofmanliness.com/2011/03/03/the-basics-of-art-the-romantic-period/
Liberty Leading the People, by Eugène Delacroix, 1830.


•Freedom
• Nostalgias

The Chancel and Crossing of Tintern Abbey, Looking Towards the East Window, by JMW Turner, 1794.

http://artofmanliness.com/2011/03/03/the-basics-of-art-the-romantic-period/
Romanticism in British Literature

- Started - 1798 *Lyrical Ballads*
- Ended - 1837 Queen Victoria
- Emotions and imaginations prior to reasons and rules.
- Emphasizes the love of nature, shows respect for nature.
- Interested in Medieval, supernatural, mystical, gothic, and the exotic.
Romanticism in Us

Stephanie Chao
Helen Kuo
Analysis (Line 1-57)

Sherry Wu
Q: Why does William Wordsworth ignore Tintern Abbey in the poem?

Ans:

- Focus: beautiful reality → ignore social reality
- Artificial ruins → "genuine" discussion with nature
Analysis

• 3 parts

- stanza 1&2: flashback to the first visit five years ago

- stanza 3&4: present visit to the river Wye

- stanza 5: see nature with a broader perspective
FIVE years have past; five summers, with the length
Of five long winters! And again I hear
These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs
With a soft inland murmur.

---

Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,
That on a wild secluded scene impress
Thoughts of more deep seclusion;
The landscape with the quiet of the sky.

The day is come when I again repose
Here, under this dark sycamore, and view
The speaker is able to hear and see all the beautiful stuff that he remembers from his 1st visit

The word indicates the tranquil feeling and the self-solitude

Reinforce the idea that he has been here before

Emphasize that 5 years is a pretty long time
These plots of cottage-ground, these orchard-tufts,
Which at this season, with their unripe fruits,
Are clad in one green hue, and lose themselves
Mid groves and copses. Once again I see
These hedge-rows, hardly hedge-rows, little lines
Of sportive wood run wild: these pastoral farms,
Green to the very door; and wreaths of smoke
Sent up, in silence, from among the trees!
With some uncertain notice, as might seem
Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods,
Or of some Hermit’s cave, where by his fire
The Hermit sits alone.

These beauteous forms,
Through a long absence, have not been to me
As is a landscape to a blind man’s eye:

But oft, in lonely rooms, and ‘mid the din
Of towns and cities, I have owed to them
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart;
And passing even into my purer mind,
With tranquil restoration:—feelings too

Of unremembered pleasure: such, perhaps,

As have no sight or trivial influence

On that best portion of a good man’s life,

His little, nameless, unremembered, acts

Of kindness and of love. 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

The memory of his view along the Wye could restore him to tranquility or calmness

The analogy of nature to god: spiritual support (heal people by its power)
Of all this unintelligible world,
Is lightened:—that serene and blessed blood,
In which the affections gently lead us on,—
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame (physical body)
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul:
While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power
No longer distracted by our surroundings
We see into the life of things.
If this be but a vain belief, yet, oh! how oft—

In darkness and amid the many shapes of joyless daylight; when the fretful stir unprofitable, and the fever of the world, have hung upon the beatings of my heart—

How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee, Sylvan Wye! Thou wandered thro’ the woods, how often has my spirit turned to thee!
Analysis (Line 58-111)

Lucius Wang
Vague Memories

And now, with gleams of half-extinguished thought,
With many recognitions dim and faint,
And somewhat of a sad perplexity,
The picture of the mind revives again:
From Present to Future

While here I stand, not only with the sense
Of present pleasure, but with pleasing thoughts
That in this moment there is life and food
For future years. And so I dare to hope,
Though changed, no doubt, from what I was
when first
I came among these hills;
The Importance of the Nature to His Childhood

when like a roe

I bounded o'er the mountains, by the sides
Of the deep rivers, and the lonely streams,
Wherever nature led: more like a man
Flying from something that he dreads, than one
Who sought the thing he loved.
For nature then
(The coarser pleasures of my boyish days,
And their glad animal movements all gone by)
To me was all in all.
I cannot paint
What then I was.
The sounding cataract
Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
Their colours and their forms, were then to me
An appetite; a feeling and a love,
That had no need of a remoter charm,
By thought supplied, nor any interest
Unborrowed from the eye.
The Reward of His Mature Mind

– That time is past,
And all its aching joys are now no more,
And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this
Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur, other gifts
Have followed; for such loss, I would believe,
Abundant recompence.
For I have learned
to look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
to chasten and subdue.
And I have felt
A presence that 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*;
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things.

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;
well pleased to recognise
In nature and the language of the sense,
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
Of all my moral being.
Q: Why does Wordsworth ignore Tintern Abbey?

A: Because he feels ruins are artificial, so he concentrates on the genuine "discussion" with nature.
Nor perchance,
If I were not thus taught, should I the more
Suffer my genial spirits to decay:
For thou art with me here upon the banks
Of this fair river; thou my dearest Friend,
My dear, dear Friend; and in thy voice I catch
The language of my former heart, and read
My former pleasures in the shooting lights
Of thy wild eyes. Oh! yet a little while
May I behold in thee what I was once,
My dear, dear Sister! and this prayer I make,
Knowing that Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her; 'tis her privilege,
Through all the years of this our life, to lead
From joy to joy: for she can so inform
The mind that is within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
The dreary intercourse of daily life,
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold
Is full of blessings. Therefore let the moon
Shine on thee in thy solitary walk;
And let the misty mountain-winds be free
To blow against thee: and, in after years,
When these wild ecstasies shall be matured
Into a sober pleasure; when thy mind
Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms,
Thy memory be as a dwelling-place
For all sweet sounds and harmonies; oh! then,
If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief,
Should be thy portion, with what healing thoughts
Of tender joy wilt thou remember me,
And these my exhortations! Nor, perchance –
If I should be where I no more can hear
Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild eyes these gleams
Of past existence – wilt thou then forget
That on the banks of this delightful stream
We stood together; and that I, so long
A worshipper of Nature, hither came
Unwearied in that service: rather say
With warmer love – oh! with far deeper zeal
Of holier love. Nor wilt thou then forget,
That after many wanderings, many years
Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs,
And this green pastoral landscape, were to me
More dear, both for themselves and for thy sake!
Why does Wordsworth treat Dorothy more younger than she really is?

➢ Because he seems to believe that he has reached the apex of understanding nature, something that's not attained by either his past self, the boyish "William," or his sister Dorothy.
Comparison of Tintern Abbey and Ode to Immortality
Recurrent themes used by Wordsworth

- Nature
- Divinity
- Love
- Joy
- Peace
- Rest
I. How does romanticism make relation between Nature and God, between reality and belief?
Two main ideas to describe romanticism view of Nature: sublime and beautiful. The idea of something pure and peaceful (beautiful) and something feared and stronger than human (sublime).

Relation: definition of God somehow: over everything, feared and loved by human kind and which let appears the paradise to us.
II. Relation of Nature with humans?
We heal from reality only because there is something more perfect than us which we think can lead our lives and destiny. This is thing is Nature: the perfect equilibrium. Human find peace when looking at the equilibrium of it's universe.

Beauty of nature is like parents: it can punish, comfort, or suffer from us. We see in nature our on reflection, but we find in extra the perfection of the environment we live. And it's because of what we do with this environment which makes us more able to go further in our life.
III. How Wordsworth make a relation between Nature and Love?
Nature and Love offer the same feelings to Human

They attract by their perfection which give happiness to people

They become also kind of shelter for us

Love protect from pain and distress as Nature offer the possibility to people to forget the reality and let their mind free
IV. Why the human heart can't ever find eternal peace? Why do we need to search for Nature, Love, and god (faith to divinities)?
The imperfection of Humans make him in the incapacity to go over perturbations of his peace of heart. But, he reaches it by contemplating and loving something which give him the feeling to go over its on Nature. Idea of perfection is impossible for people understand because we are not.

Our non-understanding of something perfect gives us a feeling of magic, a feeling of something which we don't understand but rule our lives and give us an equilibrium. This equilibrium is difficult to reach, but people think by giving everything to it could finally give us a little of this peace and perfection.
Tintern Abbey - Multimedia

David Wang
Where is Tintern Abbey?
**Tintern Abbey**

- **Tintern Abbey** (Welsh: *Abaty Tyndyrn*) was founded by Walter de Clare, Lord of Chepstow, on 9 May 1131.
- It is situated in the village of Tintern, on the Welsh bank of the **River Wye** in Monmouthshire, which forms the border between Monmouthshire in Wales and Gloucestershire in England.
- It was only the second Cistercian foundation in Britain, and the first in Wales.
- The village of Tintern adjoins the abbey ruins which are Grade I listed as of 29 September 2000.
Works Inspired

• It inspired William Wordsworth's poem "Lines written a few miles above Tintern Abbey",
• Alfred, Lord Tennyson's poem "Tears, Idle Tears",
• Allen Ginsberg's "Wales Visitation"
• Paintings by J. M. W. Turner. (Joseph Mallord William Turner)
• **Artist:** J. M. W: Turner

• **Title:** The Chancel and Crossing of Tintern Abbey

• **Description:** Looking towards the East Window, 1794, pencil and watercolour on paper, 358 x 255 mm

• **Date:** 1794

• **Source:** Tate Gallery, London
Ruins of Tintern Abbey
Ancient abbey's virtual world
Paddy Fragrance by Jay Chou

- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AwbgA6srls
Discuss the theme of memory as it runs through poems such as “Tintern Abbey,” “Intimations of Immortality,” and “The Solitary Reaper.”

How does (Wordsworth) believe memory works on the human character?

How is memory important in sustaining the connection between the individual and nature?
Memory is crucial to Wordsworth throughout these poems, because it is memory that enables the individual to regain access to the pure communion with nature enjoyed during childhood.

As Wordsworth explains in “Tintern Abbey,” memory works upon the individual psyche even when the individual is unaware of it, and pleasant, beautiful memories of nature work to preserve and restore the connection between the individual and the purity of the natural world. (SparkNotes)
Conclusion

Paul Wang
Romanticism

- It was an artistic movement which countered the Industrial movement

- Also a movement that rebelled against aristocratic and political norms during that time

- Suggested that strong emotions (terror, awe, anxiety) was also a source of beauty – especially those experienced in nature

- The sublime – a quality of greatness, whether physical, spiritual, intellectual, or otherwise, especially beyond all possibility of measurement
In conclusion...

- One of the major themes of “Tintern Abbey” is memory.
- Reappears in other poems such as “Immortality Ode” (the memory of pure communion with nature in childhood works upon the mind even in adulthood).
- Can be defined as 'nostalgia'.
The poem itself...

- Is a monologue, spoken by Wordsworth, who references objects of his memory from his previous visit.

- The language mostly refers to the natural world and the divinity of nature.

- Has a pantheistic view of the natural world.

- Never actually directly references the abbey, though there is no shortage of religious sentiment.

- Although images of an abbey, a spiritual place where one can commune with the divine, can be found throughout, as if the forests and fields themselves were the actual abbey.
What we have learned...

- When stress or anxiety from everyday life begin to invade our mood and actions, we need to live in simplicity, embrace the natural world.

- Remember we entered this world naturally, and the idea of nature, god, and man are linked forever – just as they are linked in Wordsworth's poems.

- Memories are immortal and they can be a place of solace during times of unhappiness.
References

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