



College of education, English department

- English literature
 - Third stage lecture 1

The world is too much with us, by William Wordsworth

- Presented by: asst.lec .Sakina Hussain

Introductory

Romantic poets weren't only about beauty and peace — they were deeply critical of the world around them. Wordsworth, in particular, was disturbed by the Industrial Revolution, which he believed separated humans from nature. In our next poem, '*The World Is Too Much with Us*', we'll see a voice of protest — same poet, same era, but a completely different tone."

Comparison

Romantic Feature

Emotion over Reason

Nature as Spiritual Force

Common Life / Simple People

Imagination and Inner World

Critique of Modern Life

The Solitary Reaper

Gentle awe and wonder

Song in the field,
emotional memory

Solitary girl in the field

Memory of the song
affects the poet deeply

Subtle, through contrast

The World Is Too Much with Us

Anger and frustration

Sea, moon, and mythical gods

Critique of modern society

Desire to imagine mythical nature

Direct and vocal

Analysis


During the **late 18th and early 19th century**, the **Industrial Revolution** was transforming England. Cities were growing, machines were replacing people, and nature was being exploited. Romantic poets like Wordsworth felt alarmed. In '*The Solitary Reaper*', he escapes into nature and memory. In '*The World Is Too Much with Us*', he confronts what's being lost."

Terms


- Romanticism: reaction to **Industrial Revolution**, war, reason-based society
- Romantic values: **emotion, individualism, imagination, nature**
- Wordsworth: key figure, believed nature heals and teaches
- Display timeline: 1770 (birth) → 1798 (*Lyrical Ballads*) → 1807 (both poems)

Text

The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers;—
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon,
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers,
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;
It moves us not.—Great God! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn.



<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/video/154046/sarah-urist-green-reads-the-world-is-too-much-with-us>



“Today we explored two different moods of the same poet: one peaceful, one passionate. But both remind us of what we risk losing when we turn away from nature—and what poetry helps us remember.”

Alienation

Alienation is a psychological and social condition in which an individual feels separated from their true self, from others, or from the world around them. It involves a loss of connection, meaning, and belonging, often resulting in feelings of isolation and emptiness.

Alienation occurs when external forces such as materialism, social pressure, or rigid systems dominate human life, causing individuals to live according to imposed values rather than their authentic needs and emotions.

In literature, alienation is frequently portrayed as a central theme, especially in modern and Romantic works, where characters or speakers experience disconnection from nature, society, or their inner selves. This state reflects a deeper spiritual or existential crisis rather than simple loneliness.

Overall, alienation represents a breakdown in the relationship between the individual and the surrounding world, leading to emotional, moral, and spiritual imbalance.

Types of Alienation

1. Self-Alienation

Self-alienation occurs when individuals lose touch with their true feelings, values, and identity. They live according to external expectations rather than their authentic selves, which leads to inner emptiness and confusion.

2. Social Alienation

Social alienation refers to a sense of separation from society or other people. Individuals feel isolated, misunderstood, or excluded, even while living within a community.

3. Spiritual Alienation

Spiritual alienation involves a loss of connection to moral, spiritual, or existential values. Life becomes focused on material success, while deeper meaning and purpose are neglected.

4. Alienation from Nature

Alienation from nature occurs when humans become disconnected from the natural world and view it only as a resource rather than a source of harmony and inspiration.