

# LINGUISTIC INTERPRETATION OF WILLIAM WORDSWORTH AND ROBERT BURNS' POEMS

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*The present article deals with stylistic analysis of Romantic poetry of Robert Burns and William Wordsworth. Literature of Romanticism often references nature as a source of inspiration and artistic value, the fact emphasized in the structure, message and figures of speech used in their literary works.*

**Key words:** *Romanticism, expressive means, symbolism, rhyme, rhythm, emotions.*

Romanticism in poetry arose in response to the enlightenment ideals that prevailed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The movement validated strong emotion as an authentic source of aesthetic experience, placing new emphasis on such emotions as trepidation, horror and terror and awe especially that which is experienced in confronting the sublimity of untamed nature and its picturesque qualities, both new aesthetic categories. It elevated folk art and ancient custom to something noble, made of spontaneity a desirable character (as in the musical impromptu), and argued for a “natural” epistemology of human activities as conditioned by nature in the form of language and customary usage. Romanticism appeared in conflict with the Enlightenment.

William Wordsworth (1770-1850) was a Romantic poet and a major influence in bringing about the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries' Romantic Age of Literature. An original poet for many different artistic qualities, his personality and emotional intelligence had made him the perfect forefather for a literary movement that would resound philosophically and poetically to this day. Romanticism, defined by its predisposition towards nature and its deep emotional connection with the feelings of the poet, is what makes William Wordsworth's “I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud” such a perfect example of Romantic poetry [3, p. 58].

The poem ‘Daffodils’ is also known by the title ‘I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud’, a lyrical poem written by William Wordsworth in 1804. It was published in 1815 in ‘Collected Poems’ with four stanzas.

William Wordsworth wrote Daffodils on a stormy day in spring, while walking along with his sister Dorothy near Ullswater Lake, in

England. He imagined that the daffodils were dancing and invoking him to join and enjoy the breezy nature of the fields. Dorothy Wordsworth, the younger sister of William Wordsworth, found the poem so interesting that she took 'Daffodils' as the subject for her journal. The poem contains six lines in four stanzas, as an appreciation of daffodils [5, on-line].

The title, 'Daffodils' is a simple word that reminds us about the arrival of the spring season, when the field is full of daffodils. Daffodils are yellow flowers, having an amazing shape and beautiful fragrance. A bunch of daffodils symbolize the joys and happiness of life.

The theme of the poem 'Daffodils' is a collection of human emotions inspired by nature that we may have neglected due to our busy lives. The daffodils imply beginning or rebirth for human beings, blessed with the grace of nature. The arrival of daffodils in the month of March is welcome and an enjoyable time to appreciate them [6, on-line].

The 'Daffodils' has a rhyming scheme throughout the poem. The rhyming scheme of the above stanza is ABAB (A – *cloud and crowd*; B – *hills and daffodils*) and ending with a rhyming couplet CC (C – *trees and breeze*). The above stanza makes use of 'Enjambment' which converts the poem into a continuous flow of expressions without a pause.

The last line mentions "the show" and produces images of dancing daffodils, a lasting impression of an impression Wordsworth discusses.

Meter and Rhythm. The poem is written in iambic tetrameter. The meter creates a song like rhythm, a rhythm to which daffodils might dance. Wordsworth also uses alliteration and consonance to create rhythm. Alliteration is the repetition of similar sounds, is applied for the word 'h', in the words – *high and hills*.

William Wordsworth's "I Wandered as Lonely as a Cloud" opens with the narrator describing his action of walking in a state of worldly detachment; his wandering "*As lonely as a cloud /That floats on high o'er vales and hills*". What he is thinking of we never really uncover, but his description leaves us to analyze his words as a sort of "*head in the clouds*" daydream-like state where his thoughts are far away, unconcerned with the immediate circumstances in which he finds himself [5, on-line].

Wordsworth, ever the Romanticist, perhaps uses these two introductory lines to describe the disconnected and dispassionate ways that we all live our lives; walking through life in a haze of daily ritual

and monotonous distractions in a pointless and spiritually disinterested state where we fail as emotional creatures to appreciate the quiet beauties of life that we as human beings need for spiritual sustenance. William Wordsworth's "lonely cloud" is our own private impersonal perception of the world, floating miles above it and missing the quiet virtues of nature, beauty, and other sources of emotional nourishment.

Figures of speech.

Line 1 contains a simile comparing the narrator to a cloud, making him at one with nature: *I wandered lonely as a cloud.*

The comparison to the cloud suggests free floating and drowsiness. The narrator is relaxed. A "host of golden daffodils" attracts his attention:

*When all at once I saw a crowd,  
A host, of golden daffodils;*

Line 7 uses a simile to compare the procession of daffodils to the eternity of the stars in the milky way, creating a link between Nature and the Universe which links the narrator to the Universe:

*Continuous as the stars that shine  
And twinkle on the milky way,  
They stretched in never-ending line.*

Line 9 uses hyperbole to express the vastness of the vision, an eternal vastness perhaps: *They stretched in never-ending line.*

Line 12 uses personification. The daffodils have become a living entity: *Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.*

Line 13 uses personification and comparison. The waves danced too, but they do not produce the glee the daffodils have created:

*The waves beside them danced; but they  
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee.*

In their gleeful fluttering and dancing, the daffodils outdo the rippling waves of the lake. But the poet does not at this moment fully appreciate the happy sight before him.

In the last line of the stanza, Wordsworth also uses anastrophe (an inversion of the normal word order), writing: *the show to me had brought* instead of *the show brought to me*.

A message can be so drawn from this state, whether William Wordsworth intended it or not, in a Post-Modern dissection and personal interpretation of a theme that holds as much true to the cannon of Romanticism as to Wordsworth's own personal philosophy.

The second poem is “To a Butterfly”. William Wordsworth’s “To a Butterfly” is a beautiful work of Romantic poetry. Philosophically, “To a Butterfly” can be analyzed as a intimate work of Wordsworth-typical Romanticism, its deeply personal connotation of an innocent and delicate butterfly being offered sanctuary in Wordsworth’s garden [6, on-line].

The butterfly in Wordsworth’s “To a Butterfly” can be seen as a symbol of the fragile and innately beautiful natural soul that Wordsworth, as a Romanticist, would find great meaning emotionally from being able to interact with on a personal level. Perhaps this is why we have a softly spoken narrator, presumably meant to be Wordsworth himself, extending an invitation to a little butterfly to stay in his orchard where it can live its life of simple pleasures in safety and Wordsworth can enjoy its lighthearted company as well [2, p. 216].

The first stanza of William Wordsworth’s “To a Butterfly” is a loosely constructed octosyllabic couplet concluded with a single line rhyming with the sixth. It begins with Wordsworth speaking to a, supposedly personified, butterfly after having observed it sitting on a flower after a stretch of time. Wordsworth mentions that the butterfly had been so still that he couldn’t tell if the butterfly was feeding or simply asleep:

*indeed / I know not if you sleep or feed.  
How motionless! – not frozen seas  
more motionless!*

Wordsworth’s analogy of “frozen seas” would give the reader an understanding that the butterfly has been so death-like still, that Wordsworth honestly doesn’t know if the butterfly is even still alive, its “motionless” (5, 6) so complete. Wordsworth then describes the lighthearted joy that the butterfly will experience when it is roused by the breeze and it leaps into flight once again:

*What joy awaits you, when the breeze  
Hath found you out among the trees,  
And calls you forth again!*

It is these final three lines that give the butterfly an almost childlike personality, it happily being roused to play by its friend, the breeze.

The second stanza of William Wordsworth’s “To a Butterfly” is, again, an octosyllabic couplet concluded with, notably, two lines; the first rhyming with the sixteenth and seventeenth lines, and the second

with the fifteenth. Wordsworth describes in “To a Butterfly” how the orchard is his and the flowers that the butterfly enjoys were planted by his sister, Dorothy Wordsworth, but the butterfly is more than welcome to stay and Wordsworth writes as if it narrator is almost desiring the butterfly to stay: *Here lodge as in a sanctuary!*

Wordsworth goes on to solicit the butterfly to stay with the Wordsworth family and live in the orchard as their cherished guest: *Come often to us, fear no wrong.*

Wordsworth even goes so far in “To a Butterfly” as to implore the butterfly to visit him and converse on the sweet things that a simple life as a butterfly would possess, “*sunshine and of song*” (16). Wordsworth promises the butterfly that they would talk about the:

...summer days, when we were young;  
Sweet childish days, that were as long  
As twenty days are now.

The author states that, perhaps, the butterfly is living in a natural state of perpetual youth-like innocence that would have much in common with Wordsworth’s own childhood. Note Wordsworth’s extra line on the second stanza, the second half of the lines, “*Sweet childish days, that were as long /as twenty days are now*”, perhaps emphasizing the sweeter days of youth when a summer day seemed to stretch on for over twenty days of adulthood with an extra line at the end of the stanza to help punctuate his theme.

William Wordsworth’s “To a Butterfly”, analyzed as a work of Romanticism, can be read as a quiet one-sided conversation with a butterfly, in much the same way that we have all done at some point in our lives to some small mute creature that has caught our fancy. A significant difference, however, would be the Romantic and symbolic importance of the butterfly as a natural creature. Wordsworth, having watched the butterfly, a small, delicate insect, lighthearted and joyous in its actions, asks it to stay as a tiny guest in his orchard. It is invited to live its happy, simple life dancing and feeding on the flowers, stopping only to rest or have quaint little conversations with Wordsworth about the weather and childhood memories [4, p. 318].

“To a Butterfly” is a wonderful poem by Wordsworth, and an endearing work of Romantic literature. By living simply as nature had intended it, innocent and beautiful, the butterfly has achieved a state of existence that a Romantic, such as Wordsworth, can only contemplate

in awe. The butterfly is without worry or civilized pursuits, and dances angelically on the gentle breeze of fate, ignorant completely of death. The butterfly is, though perhaps not a personification, an actualization of the Romantic philosophy and a living example of Wordsworth's Romantic ideals.

Scottish writer, Robert Burns (1759-1796), was an accomplished and very well known Scottish poet whose works went well beyond the borders of Scotland. Often writing in English as well as a light Scot-English dialect, Burns' writing was readily accessible to readerships throughout Europe and North America.

"Red Red Rose" is a love poem written to be sung. Robert Burns based it on a folk version of a song he heard on his travels. Burns completed the poem in 1794 in an English dialect called Scots for publication in collections of traditional Scottish ballads [1, p. 18].

Burns try to take attention people to what is love? It is one of the most difficult questions for the mankind. Centuries have passed by, relationships have bloomed and so has love. But no one can give the proper definition of love. To some Love is friendship set on fire for others Maybe love is like luck. You have to go all the way to find it. Burns try to explain his love with a rose.

Structure of the poem. Robert Burns wrote the poem in four quatrains (four-line stanzas) with the following characteristics:

- a) End rhyme. In each stanza, the second and fourth lines end with masculine rhyme. End Rhyme also occurs in the first and third lines of the third and fourth stanzas.
- b) Meter. Most of the longer lines are in iambic tetrameter; the shorter ones, in iambic trimeter. Iambic tetrameter is an eight-syllable line with alternating pairs of unstressed and stressed syllables. Each pair makes up a foot so that each tetrameter line has four feet, as in line 5:

1                      2                      3                      4  
*AS fair/ art thou / my bon, / nie lass*

Iambic trimeter is a six-syllable line with alternating pairs of unstressed and stressed syllables. Each pair makes up a foot so that each trimeter line has three feet, as in line 2 of the first stanza:

1                      2                      3  
*That's new / ly sprung / in june*

Theme. Robert Burns tries to take attention people to the essence of love. It is one of the most difficult questions for the mankind. Centuries have passed by, relationships have bloomed and so has love. But no one can give the proper definition of love. To some Love is friendship set on fire for others Maybe love is like luck. Burns try to explain his love by a rose [1, p. 59].

His love also likes the music which gives intensive emotion. His love will not finish describing by something that vanish the end of the work such as sea. It is our basic need and for him same thing as well. Her sea would disappear at the end of world and he would love her till the end of the world. There are many signs that indicate his love will not end for example *sea gangs dry, rocks melted by the sun*. It seems he been away with her but committed that he will with her definitely only for short period of time. A man who is falling love with her describes the love endless story like the signs also shows that he will not give up the end of the world. He is missing her even they are away each other.

Stylistic devices. The speaker presents two similes, the first comparing his love to a rose and the second comparing his love to a melody. The speaker also uses repetition to echo his sentiments – *my luve's like* in lines 1 and 3; *that's newly* and *that's sweetly* (pronoun, verb, and adverb combinations) in lines 2 and 4:

*O my Luve's like a red, red rose,  
That's newly sprung in June:  
my Luve's like the melody,  
That's sweetly play'd in tune* [1, p. 63].

In the second stanza the speaker addresses the young lady as bonnie (pretty). *Bonnie* is derived from the French word *bon* (good). In the last line of the stanza, *a'* means all and *gang* means go. This line introduces to the poem hyperbole, a figure of speech that exaggerates.

*As fair art thou, my bonnie lass,  
So deep in luve am I;  
And I will luve thee still, my dear,  
Till a' the seas gang dry.*

In the third stanza the speaker links the first line of the third stanza with the last line of the second stanza by repetition. The speaker continues hyperbole in the second and fourth lines. He also again relies on repetition in the third line by repeating the third line of the second stanza.

*Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,  
And the rocks melt wi' the sun:  
And I will luv thee still, my dear,  
While the sands o' life shall run.*

In the last stanza the speaker again addresses his beloved, noting that though he must leave her for a while he will return for her even if he must travel ten thousand miles. Repetition occurs in the first and second lines, and hyperbole occurs in the last line. *Fare-thee-weel* means fare thee well.

*And fare-thee-weel, my only Luve,  
And fare-thee-weel, a while!  
And I will come again, my Luve,  
Tho' 'twere ten thousand mile!*

In conclusion in “A Red Red Rose” Robert Burns teach us the importance of love is hard to accept those memories if fall in love to someone. The similes he uses are meant to show us the grandness of love. He compares his love to a rose and to a melody, showing us that love is beautiful and precious. Burns also shows us how loves transform a red rose. His love crash in summer but they are quite far each other.

Thus, the Romantic poetry validated strong emotion as an authentic source of aesthetic experience, placing new emphasis on such emotions as trepidation, horror and terror and awe – especially that which is experienced in confronting the sublimity of untamed nature and its picturesque qualities, both new aesthetic categories.

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